



# 2024 ACTION PLAN

December 2023



## I. Executive Summary

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The Northeastern Votes Coalition (NU Votes) was conceptualized in 2016 and formally established in 2019. We have accomplished much, fallen short in some areas, and re-evaluated many goals. We have adapted to changing landscapes in our democracy, in higher education, and a society recovering from a global pandemic. Throughout everything, a small team of dedicated individuals have driven the work, while also creating an inviting space for many others to join in whatever capacity they are able.

A small NU Votes leadership team developed this action plan with input from the larger NU Votes coalition. This leadership team consists of two full-time staff members and one part-time student based in the office of Community Service and Civic Engagement. The implementation of this plan has been codified in all three of their updated job descriptions (as described in section XX.) This plan will build upon our exiting work, acknowledge pivots and modifications to past goals, and will be implemented January – November 2024 throughout Northeastern’s campus in Boston, as well as our growing global network of 14 campuses.

While we know that democratic engagement is ever-present, we also recognize the heightened energy around presidential elections. Therefore, our current goals center around solidifying infrastructure in order to optimize and harness that energy to advance our ongoing work. This involves codifying **voter registration** and mobilization information within existing systems accessible to all students; giving **faculty and staff** easy-to-use tools to promote democratic engagement; and having a diverse, dedicated, and well-trained group of **student** Ambassadors poised for presentations and outreach in curricular and co-curricular spaces.



## II. Leadership

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### **Coalition leadership team**

To institutionalize this work and ensure a plan of succession, NU Votes has been formally added to the job descriptions of two full-time professional staff members. Additionally, and part-time paid student position has been supported with increased funds to build capacity. (Note: a goal listed in this action plan to add a faculty member in an official capacity.)

1. Hilary Sullivan, *Director, Community Service and Civic Engagement & founding member of NU Votes*
2. Lisa Morde, *Associate Director, Community Service and Civic Engagement*
3. Sydney Husky, *NU Votes Student Coordinator* (part-time position)

### **Student Ambassadors**

We have been revising a Student Ambassador program, experimenting and adjusting the role over the last year or so. The current committed students for 23-24 academic year are:

1. Lilith Zartler
2. Isabella Cuthbertson
3. Shannon Damuth
4. Niya Flemming-Rodriguez
5. Olivia Hirsch
6. Sophie Matje
7. Jillian Mills
8. India Norris
9. Sydney VanDeusen
10. Matt Zuccaro

### **Key Advisors & Coalition Members**

In addition to the leadership team, the NU Votes is made up of a coalition of students, staff, faculty, and local community members. Membership is widely open and flexible to allow individuals to commit to whatever level they are able. Below we've outlined several key advisors, as well as active faculty, staff, and student coalition members.

#### Key Advisors

1. Ted Landmark, *Distinguished Professor and Director, Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy*
2. Kim Lucas, *Professor of the Practice in Public Policy and Economic Justice, School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs*
3. Rebecca Riccio, *Director Social Impact Lab and Lecturer, College of Social Science & Humanities*

#### Faculty Members

1. Mark Henderson, *Professor of Public Policy, Mills College Northeastern*
2. Linda Kowalcky, *Associate Director Public Policy & Urban Affairs*
3. Costas Panagopoulos, *Chair of Political Science Department, College of Social Science & Humanities*

#### Staff Members (Student Affairs & other campus offices)

1. Erena Hriskos, *Assistant Director, Asian American Center*
2. Bob Jose, *Dean of Cultural & Spiritual Life*
3. Alex Kern, *Executive Director Center for Spirituality, Dialogue & Service*
4. Chelsea Lauder, *Director of Outreach & Programming, City & Community Engagement*
5. Mike McFadden, *Assistant Director of Leadership, Center for Student Involvement*
6. Minna Natsuko Ito, *Assistant Director, Social Justice Resource Center*
7. Richard O'Bryant, *Director, John D. O'Bryant African American Institute*
8. Mallory Perna, *Director, Off Campus Engagement & Support*
9. Sara Rivera, *Associate Director, Latinx Student Cultural Center*
10. John Tobin, *Vice President, City & Community Engagement*

#### Student Groups

1. Alliance of Civically Engaged Students
2. Bi-partisan disagreement
3. Student Government Association
4. Students Demand Action

#### Local Elections Office

1. Ellen Rooney, *Republican Commission, City of Boston*
2. Alameda County Election Officials, Mills College at Northeastern University

#### Engagement with Local, State, and National Organizations

1. League of Women Voters
2. Vote from Abroad
3. MassVOTE
4. All in Campus Democracy Challenge
5. TurboVote
6. Ask Every Student
7. Every Vote Counts

### III. Commitment

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Northeastern University is “renowned for our experiential learning model...From day one, we’ve pursued innovative ways of teaching and research that place a premium on experience and engagement with the world. Today, our signature approach erases traditional boundaries, empowering not only students, but faculty, alumni, partners, and innovators to solve problems and pursue impact.” The goal of the current academic plan is “to be the indispensable university for learners and innovators who want to see their work make a direct impact on the world; and restore trust in higher education’s capacity to solve the world’s hardest problems and prepare learners for lives of accomplishment.” This plan was developed upon democratic principles, explicitly naming that “No strategic plan will be successful without representation of our full community at the table from the start.”

NU Votes believes that voter engagement exemplifies this experiential model that enables learners to solve problems and pursue impact. At an institutional level, we have solidified commitment in the following ways:

- President Aoun and Chancellor Henderson have signed and endorsed the President’s Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation
- Renewed subscription to TurboVote system through 2024 election
- Revised job descriptions for Director and Associate Director in Community Service and Civic Engagement to include work with voter engagement
- Continued funding a part-time, student worker position dedicated to voter engagement: NU Votes Coordinator.
- Committed to funding a Faculty Fellow Co-Director through a course-buy out in Fall 2024



## IV. Landscape

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Northeastern University's experiential and global model presents unique challenges to voter engagement. On the surface, Northeastern enrollment consists of 23,000 undergraduates and 22,400 graduate students. A deeper look at Northeastern programs reveals the decentralized nature of the student body, particularly the graduate student population.

### **Graduate students**

Northeastern University's original campus is in Boston, Massachusetts, but in the last ten years has opened graduate campuses throughout the United States and Canada in the following locations:

1. Arlington, Virginia
2. Burlington, Massachusetts
3. Charlotte, North Carolina
4. Miami, Florida
5. Nahant, Massachusetts
6. Portland, Maine
7. Seattle, Washington
8. Silicon Valley, California
9. Toronto, Ontario
10. Vancouver, British Columbia
11. Worldwide through College of Professional Studies (CPS) online programs

Additionally, 64% of graduate students are international students. We recognize the immense value of engaging with our graduate students, including international students. Given our current capacity, we have concluded that our efforts will be more impactful to focus primarily on undergraduate students while simultaneously sharing resources and identifying key collaborators to implement this work across our vast graduate network. The goals outlined below will predominately focus on Boston-based undergraduate students.

### **Undergraduate students – first semester**

One way to codify voter registration in higher education is to make it synonymous with starting college for eligible students. Northeastern offers several unique pathways for students to begin their college careers. While the majority of undergraduate students begin their first semester at the main campus in Boston, this is not the case for all incoming students. In the current fall 2023 semester, the undergraduate makeup is as follows:

Boston campus: 2,600 students

Global Scholar program: 700 students on our undergraduate campuses in London, England and Oakland, California

NUin program: 1,600 first-semester students who begin by studying abroad at the university's international partner locations throughout Europe, including Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy (Florence and Rome), Northern Ireland, Portugal, Scotland, Spain.

### **Undergraduate students – upper class**

In addition to this national and international mobility during the first year, more than 90% of students participate in Northeastern's cooperative education program, or co-op. Students alternate between full-time enrollment in courses and full-time employment in positions related to academic and/or career interests. Students typically complete two co-ops during their undergraduate experience. The demographics for the fall 2023 semester include 4,400 students participating in full-time co-ops in Boston, across the US, and abroad.

Despite all of this, Northeastern’s student voter engagement is consistently higher than the national average for this age group. As we develop this latest action plan, we must consider ways to institutionalize processes not just on the Boston campus, but with collaborations and partnerships on the London and Oakland campuses, as well as systems utilized by partner locations for NUin. We must also build student leadership models that accommodate co-op schedules.

Other considerations in our strategy include an awareness of students’ home state and academic area of study. About 75% of Northeastern students come from out of state, and about 18% come from out of the country. Therefore, voter engagement efforts cannot focus solely on Boston or Massachusetts. Academic areas with the highest enrollment are D’Amore-McKim School of Business, College of Engineering, College of Science. Therefore, we must consider ways to engage faculty members in these colleges and connect voter engagement initiatives through fields of study or other interests.



## IV. Landscape (continued)

Enrollment, Fall 2022							
	Undergraduate Full-Time   Co-op	Undergraduate Part-Time	Total	Graduate Full-Time   Co-op	Graduate Part-Time   Co-op	Total	
Bouvé College of Health Sciences	1,993   225	0   0	2,218	1,290   86	177   0	1,553	
College of Arts, Media and Design	1,331   292	0   0	1,623	317   32	27   0	376	
College of Engineering	2,756   1,036	0   0	3,792	5,281   770	203   0	6,254	
College of Professional Studies	0   0	1,325   0	1,325	0   0	5,785   361	6,146	
College of Science	2,883   750	0   0	3,633	1,154   91	189   5	1,439	
College of Social Sciences and Humanities	1,680   320	0   0	2,000	629   48	66   3	746	
D'Amore-McKim School of Business	3,743   1,036	0   0	4,779	767   78	573   0	1,418	
Khoury College of Computer Sciences	2,409   741	0   0	3,150	3,062   467	110   0	3,639	
School of Law	0   0	0   0	0	640   184	14   0	838	
University Programs	536   1	0   0	537	0   0	2   0	2	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>17,331   4,401</b>	<b>1,325   0</b>	<b>23,057</b>	<b>13,140   1,756</b>	<b>7,146   369</b>	<b>22,411</b>	

+ The "Co-op" column refers to the number of students in each college enrolled in our cooperative education program as of Fall 2022.

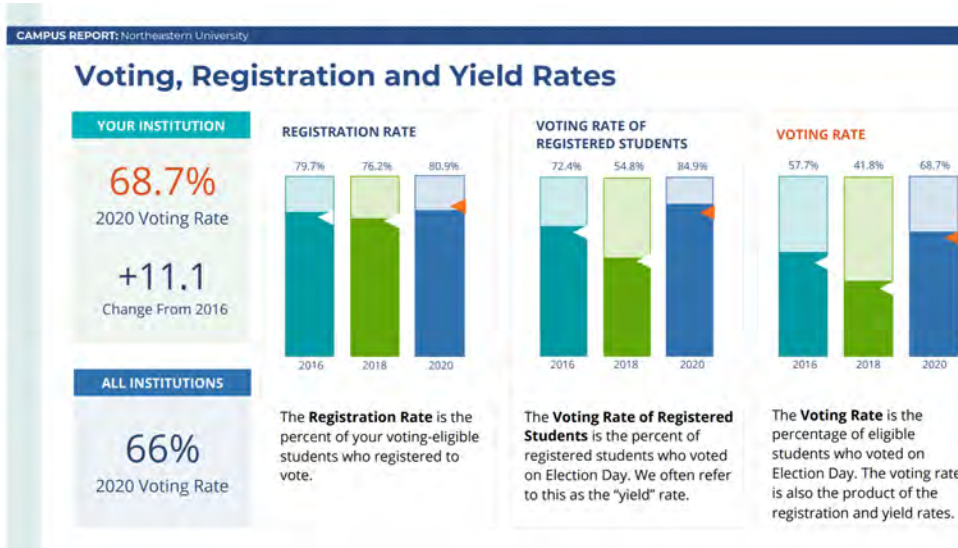
Enrollment by gender and race/ethnicity, Fall 2022								
	UNDERGRADUATE				GRADUATE			
	Female	Male	Other or Unknown	Total	Female	Male	Other or Unknown	Total
International	1,536	1,715	2	3,253	6,467	7,897	19	14,383
Hispanic or Latino	1,549	1,024	8	2,581	438	275	2	715
American Indian or Alaska Native	9	7	0	16	3	1	0	4
Asian	2,470	1,745	4	4,219	726	496	5	1,227
Black or African American	939	397	1	1,337	434	219	1	654
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	4	1	0	5	0	1	0	1
White	5,307	4,475	32	9,814	2,743	1,879	29	4,651
Two or more races	851	593	2	1,446	209	129	3	341
Race and ethnicity unknown	234	150	2	386	255	171	9	435
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,899</b>	<b>10,107</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>23,057</b>	<b>11,275</b>	<b>11,068</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>22,411</b>

+ Note: UG and GR Fall Enrollment excludes non-degree seeking students.

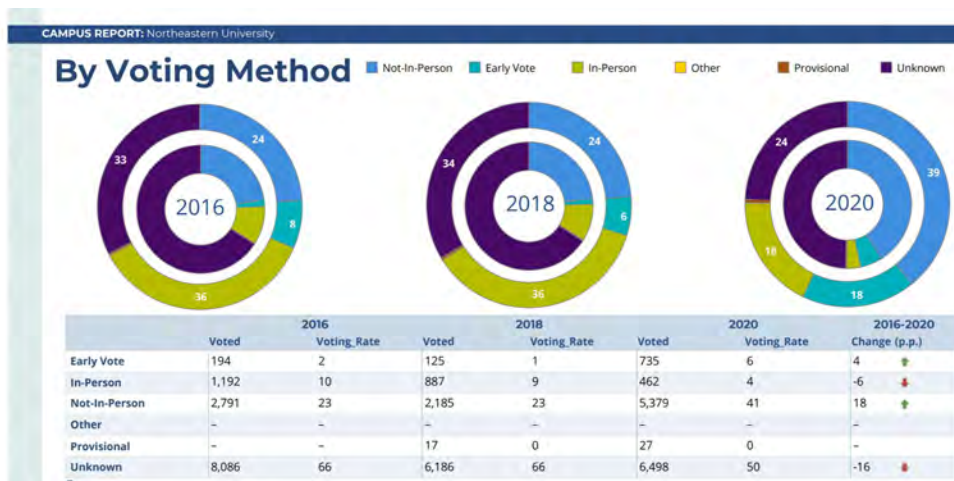


## National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

Our most recent NSLVE data is from 2020, and we reported on this in our 2022 Action Plan. We were pleased to see voter engagement increase across many categories. Currently, our institution does not report race and ethnicity data, so we are unable to evaluate this area using NSLVE data. (One of our goals includes pursuing the inclusion of this data in the future.) While we do not currently have a method in place to evaluate racial equity in voter registration and turnout, we are now tracking this data more explicitly in participants of our coalition and Student Ambassador program.



Not surprisingly, we saw an increase in voter turnout through early voting and not-in-person. We expect this trend to continue as many pandemic measures remain in place that make it easier to vote early and not in person. This made us reconsider our former goal of election day as a holiday, and instead are turning our attention to supporting early and vote by mail options.



We were pleased to see voting rates increase across fields of study and hope this trend continues. We will be doing specific outreach to faculty across disciplines to build knowledge and confidence on democratic engagement knowledge and best practices.

CAMPUS REPORT: Northeastern University

### By Field of Study

FIELDS	2016			2018			2020			2016-2020 Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Voting_Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Voting_Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Voting_Rate	
Architecture	200	114	57	162	65	40	171	117	68	↑ 11
Area, Ethnic, Cultural, and Gender Studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	1,352	728	54	1,565	624	40	1,667	1,227	74	↑ 20
Business, Management, and Marketing	4,174	2,316	55	3,937	1,527	39	3,092	1,973	64	↑ 8
Communication and Journalism	749	458	61	658	314	48	495	348	70	↑ 9
Communications Technologies/Technicians	-	-	-	18	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unknown	107	64	60	88	52	59	126	78	62	↑ 2

FIELDS	2016			2018			2020			2016-2020 Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Voting_Ra..	Enrolled	Voted	Voting_Ra..	Enrolled	Voted	Voting_Ra..	
Education	1,491	1,082	73	1,467	919	63	426	321	75	↑ 3
Engineering and Engineering Technologies	3,031	1,685	56	3,370	1,252	37	3,403	2,463	72	↑ 17
English Language and Literature	191	120	63	145	76	52	89	57	64	↑ 1
Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Lingui..	55	35	64	60	29	48	61	48	79	↑ 15
Health Professions	3,218	1,823	57	3,232	1,304	40	2,332	1,578	68	↑ 11
History	101	69	68	85	52	61	65	49	75	↑ 7
Law Enforcement, Firefighting, and Protec..	332	200	60	384	178	46	308	211	69	↑ 8
Legal Professions and Studies	564	322	57	703	335	48	409	246	60	↑ 3
Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Humanities	980	430	44	1,355	357	26	1,299	804	62	↑ 18
Mathematics and Statistics	172	90	52	219	88	40	212	157	74	↑ 22
Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies	318	179	56	251	131	52	114	68	60	↑ 3
Natural Resources and Conservation	187	135	72	201	115	57	260	207	80	↑ 7
Parks, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Stu..	144	90	63	122	47	39	47	30	64	↑ 1
Computer and Information Sciences	1,203	660	55	1,974	737	37	2,373	1,603	68	↑ 13

FIELDS	2016			2018			2020			2016-2020 Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Voting_Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Voting_Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Voting_Rate	
Philosophy and Religious Studies	16	-	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-
Physical Sciences	350	204	58	295	126	43	231	158	68	↑ 10
Psychology	542	326	60	544	237	44	454	327	72	↑ 12
Public Administration and Social Service Profe..	229	165	72	153	89	58	90	73	81	↑ 9
Social Sciences	1,135	708	62	1,086	545	50	981	698	71	↑ 9
Visual and Performing Arts	421	247	59	377	168	45	339	244	72	↑ 13

We eagerly await our 2022 data to evaluate any changes and consider how they may impact our planning.

## V. Goals & Strategy

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Our 2024 Action Plan is centered on building infrastructure this spring semester and summer, in order to be poised for action this fall. We have made great strides in institutionalizing our work for long-term sustainability by creating and revising job descriptions, specifically for staff and students in Community Service and Civic Engagement. With a strong leadership team of three, we will now divide and accomplish our work in three main categories: faculty (Hilary), staff (Lisa), and students (Sydney.)

### SHORT-TERM GOALS (through fall 2024)

Goal	Strategy
<p><b>General</b> Continued increases in voter registration, access and turnout based on 2022 and 2024 NSLVE data.</p> <p>Increase Coalition visibility and access of resources through internal communication &amp; <a href="#">website</a></p> <p>Establish and publish clear pathways for students, staff, and faculty to engage with the NU Votes Coalition at various commitment levels.</p> <p>Engage people directly in the democratic process through election poll work.</p>	<p>Northeastern University pays for an institutional subscription to TurboVote. Current data demonstrates the highest traffic to this platform comes from a link on the “Engage” platform, which is used by student organizations. We will work with the Vice Chancellor of Education Innovation to drive traffic to TurboVote through other platforms such as Canvas, which all students use for academic coursework. Additionally, we will more clearly articulate TurboVote’s usefulness in voter registration, access (support with mail-in ballots), and mobilization (text reminders for local, regional, and national elections).</p> <p>We met our previous goal of launching a website. Now, we will work to improve the website usability, including providing voting resources and clearly defining engagement opportunities in the NU Votes Coalition.</p> <p>We will continue to prioritize working directly with local election officials to promote opportunities to be poll workers and central tabulation support based on city of Boston needs</p>

<p><b>Faculty</b> Increase faculty engagement and support across disciplines.</p>	<p>Establish a faculty role on leadership team by offering compensation and a course release</p> <p>Launch and disseminate a usable faculty toolkit in Summer 2024 by adapting models from national organizations to fit the Northeastern culture.</p> <p>Work with the Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning through Research (CATLR) to co-host a faculty workshop on voter engagement in Summer or Fall 2024.</p>
<p><b>Staff</b> Institutionalized representation from cultural centers on the NU Votes Coalition.</p>	<p>While we currently have active representatives from across our cultural and identity centers, the university has seen significant turnover in these areas, causing us to continually recruit and train these reps. Through relationship building and documentation, we will work with each center to institutionalize our structure and representation from across the global campus network.</p>
<p><b>Students</b> Establish a group of well-trained, active, and diverse Student Ambassadors</p>	<p>Create synchronous and asynchronous trainings for Student Ambassadors.</p> <p>Recruit Student Ambassadors broadly at campus engagement events, all-student orientations, and direct outreach to cultural centers.</p> <p>Create presentations on voter engagement based on national resources and adapted to the Northeastern culture. Train Student Ambassadors to present. Reach out to faculty and student organizations to offer in-person and virtual presentations.</p>

LONG-TERM GOALS (Next two election cycles or decade)

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Strategy</b>
Explore funding to institutionalize faculty leadership and deepen staff engagement on the NU Votes Coalition.	We'd love to identify funding for a full-time staff member dedicated to democratic engagement, either through institutional support or leveraging donor or grant funding. We also just received funding for a faculty course buyout in Fall 2022 to support our work, and if successful, hope to identify funding to continue this role on a semester or year-long basis.
Continue advocating for Northeastern University to submit race and ethnicity data to be used for NSLVE.	We will continue to advocate alongside the UDS team to the diversity office and campus leadership to endorse the submission of race and ethnicity data to the National Student Clearinghouse
Establish collaborations with the Northeastern University Burnes Center for Social Change, and its partner project, The Governance Lab (The GovLab).	We have begun conversations with the recently formed Burnes Center & Gov Lab on campus but have room to grow this relationship and build a solid partnership to co-host events and advocate for democratic engagement institutionalization. While less Northeastern focused, they have a strong research base and are well connected across the country.

## VIII. Reporting & Evaluation

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### **Reporting**

At Northeastern, we are proud of our efforts to institutionalize democratic engagement and publicly share our information in multiple ways. Our University Decision Support (UDS) team and the Provosts office, have both shared our bi-annual NSLVE reports. Additionally, we completed our goal from our 2022 action plan of having an active webpage dedicated to the Northeastern Voter Engagement Coalition, which will soon be linked under the Office of the Chancellor's main website.

Internally, all action plans and Coalition information is housed on a public Microsoft Teams page that any student, staff, or faculty member is able to join.

### **Evaluation**

The Northeastern Voter Engagement Coalition has several strong partners to analyze and evaluate voter engagement data. Internally, we partner with UDS to certify, renew, and review our bi-annual NSLVE data. We are also working alongside them to advocate for the inclusion of race and ethnicity data in the National Student Clearinghouse submissions, which will in turn allow that information to be included in our NSLVE data. Additionally, we have a newly formed Research, Assessment, & Data Analytics (RAD) team within the Chancellor's office to support our data collection and analysis. This year, the RAD team will specifically help us collect baseline data on our goal of recruiting a diverse cohort of student ambassadors. We hope both partnerships will help us bring a data-driven equity lens to our work.

Externally we partner with TurboVote to gather information on students reached through our customized site in their voter registration and reminder systems. The ability to create customized URLs to identify how students are exposed to the TurboVote site will help us better identify effective avenues for communication. Currently, the use of the TurboVote plug in with the Engage platform used by student clubs is our most effective method of connection.

Finally, the NU Votes leadership team meets monthly to review goals and progress made. We will continue to track these in internal documents and share progress at our quarterly coalition meetings with all members.