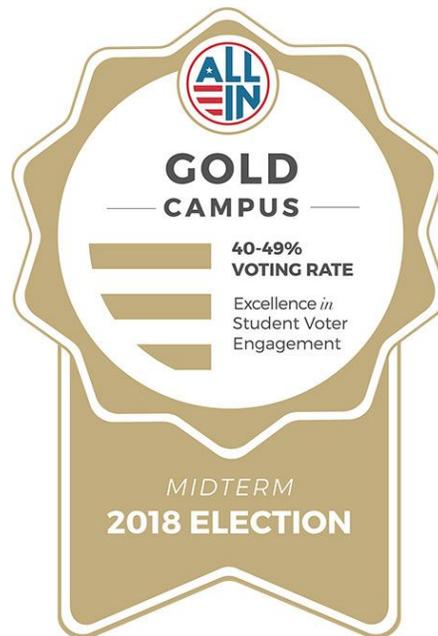




# Northeastern University



**ALL IN CAMPUS DEMOCRACY  
CHALLENGE**

**2022 ACTION PLAN**

January 2022



## I. Executive Summary

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Northeastern University is committed to expanding our democratic engagement efforts leading up to the 2022 midterms, not only on our Boston campus, but also on our growing network of campuses across the country and the world. The purpose of this plan is to outline the goals and strategies the Northeastern Votes Coalition will implement, beginning in 2022, to encourage voter education, registration, and participation, as well as overall civic knowledge and skill building of our students.

This action plan was created by the Northeastern Votes Coalition, which brings together Northeastern faculty, staff, and students to educate the Northeastern community about the importance of democratic engagement through actions such as voting, advocacy, and activism. The Northeastern Votes Coalition will also be the driving force on our campuses for those efforts, working alongside our School of Public Policy, Student Government Association (SGA) and other student organizations.



## II. Leadership

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### Northeastern Faculty and Staff

**Hilary Sullivan**

*Director of Community Service and Civic Engagement, Office of the Chancellor; Northeastern Votes Coalition Co-Chair*

**Ted Landsmark**

*Distinguished Professor and Director, Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy; Northeastern Votes Coalition Co-Chair*

**Linda Kowalcky**

*Professor of the Practice in Public Policy and Urban Affairs; Associate Director, School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs; Outreach Working Group Co-Chair*

**Alanna Fusco**

*Marketing and Communications Manager, City and Community Engagement; Marketing and Communications Working Group Co-Chair*

**Chelsea Lauder**

*Program Manager, Community-Engaged Teaching and Research, Office of the Chancellor; Educational Events Working Group Co-Chair*

**Lisa Morde**

*Assistant Director of Civic Engagement, Community Service and Civic Engagement, Office of the Chancellor*

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### Student Groups

**Student Government Association (SGA)**

**Northeastern Alliance of Civically Engaged Students (NU|ACES)**

**IGNITE at Northeastern**

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### Community Organizations

**Boston Intercollegiate Government (BIG)**

**MassVote**

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### Local elections office coordination

**City of Boston: Election Department**



## II. Leadership (con't)

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### Northeastern Offices and Departments

- Office of the Chancellor
- Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy
- School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs
- Center For Spirituality, Dialogue, and Service
- Off Campus Housing and Support Services
- Northeastern Charlotte Campus
- Northeastern Seattle Campus
- Center for Student Involvement
- Northeastern Athletics
- John D. O'Bryant African-American Institute
- Latinx Student Cultural Center
- Asian American Center
- Center for Intercultural Engagement
- Office of Global Services
- Government Relations
- Student Financial Services
- Office of Admissions
- College of Engineering
- College of Social Sciences and Humanities
- School of Law
- College of Art, Media, and Design



## II. Leadership (con't)

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**Working Groups:** There are three working groups within Northeastern Votes, Marketing and Communications, Educational Events, and Outreach. Below are descriptions of each working group:

- **Marketing and Communications:** Communicate within Northeastern community about coalition's mission, goals, events, and outcomes
- **Educational Events:** Identify and share relevant existing events and organize additional events as needed
- **Outreach:** Conduct ongoing outreach to ensure voter and education engagement reaches broadly and equitably across network campuses

The working groups have representation from faculty, staff, and students, and meet more often than the entire coalition (August, October, January, and March). Additionally, working group chairs also meet to keep other groups updated on their work.

**Leadership Succession:** Through Northeastern Votes, we are bringing together faculty, staff, and students from across our Boston campus and network campuses to engage in voter engagement efforts through their offices/departments and by leading various working groups. Because our goal is to institutionalize these efforts, our plan is that when committee leadership changes occur, our work can carry on because of the structure we have established. In addition, we are keeping all of our documentation in one location to help facilitate leadership changes.



## III. Commitment

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In Northeastern’s most recent academic strategic plan, there is a focus on strengthening existing community relationships and building new relationships where our campuses are located globally. We emphasize that “our immersion in the world begins with these campuses and the communities that surround them.” Northeastern strives to “create deeper and more synergistic connections with those who live and work in our campus neighborhoods” as we recognize “that all of our campuses exist in neighborhoods and are surrounded by diverse communities will drive us to better integrate the workings of the university with the lives of the people who are most proximate to us.” Through building connections with these communities and their residents, we also learn about the systems and stakeholders that impact these communities, particularly the elected officials and the overall political process. With this focus on building relationships with our surrounding communities, we must also focus our students on the impact voting and broader political engagement has on these communities and our home communities.

Through this lens, the University is in support of the efforts to mobilize voter engagement. The University has an ongoing TurboVote contract to register Northeastern community members to vote. As the Northeastern Votes Coalition continues to grow and more high-level staff and faculty join, we are excited to move this work forward throughout the university, particularly through the recognition of Election Day as a university holiday and through the documentation of work in a central location on Northeastern’s website.

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## IV. Landscape

In the last midterm election, student voting at Northeastern grew by nearly 24 percentage points from 18.8% participation in the 2014 midterm elections to 42.6% in 2018. In 2020, student voting at Northeastern was at 68.7%, a nearly 12 percentage point increase from the 2016 presidential election.\* We hope to continue this trend in the 2022 election, especially with the establishment of the Northeastern Votes Coalition. Northeastern Votes brings together faculty, staff, and students across our main campus in Boston and network campuses in Charlotte and Seattle. With this diverse group of Northeastern community members, we are able to make changes in institutional processes and classes, such as orientation and first-year seminars.

Northeastern re-committed to utilizing the paid version of the TurboVote system through 2023. The TurboVote platform helped us during 2020, especially in a primarily remote setting, to register students to vote at our events, such as tabling on campus and presentations at student organization meetings. We will continue using this system at the Boston campus, and hope to promote at our network campuses across the US.

In the next year, we hope to focus on further engaging faculty in this voter and civic engagement work. We hope to work directly with faculty, as well as the Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning Through Research (CATLR) to lead a series of workshops on how to include civic and democratic engagement topics and discussions in classes across the disciplines.

\*Northeastern is still waiting on official 2020 data, but this is an estimate from NSLVE.



Northeastern

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

**\*Official 2020 data pending from NSLVE.**



## V. Goals

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### SHORT-TERM GOALS

- Recruit 10 new faculty, staff, or student representatives from Northeastern's domestic satellite campuses (Charlotte, Seattle, Silicon Valley, Mills College/Oakland)
- Increase eligible student voter turnout rate 5 percentage points in the 2022 midterm elections (moving from 42.6% in 2018 to at least 47.6% in 2022)
- Create a webpage that hosts important voting information, deadlines, and resources for the Northeastern community
- Continue to have a voter and civic engagement virtual module/in-person session as part of incoming students' orientation
- Working with our career programs (Co-op, Career Design, etc.) to encourage voting among students and employees
- Increase engagement through events (registration drives, panels, educational events)

### LONG-TERM GOALS

- Have Election Day/Civic Holiday recognized as a campus holiday to give the Northeastern community the opportunity to vote and attend civic education events
- Increase voter registration to 90% of eligible students by 2024
- Engage Northeastern alumni and lifelong learners in our civic outreach
- Work with the Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning Through Research (CATLR) to engage faculty across the disciplines to help introduce civic topics in their classes and connect to the material



## VII. Strategy

### CAMPUS INITIATIVES

In 2020, the Northeastern Votes Coalition was established to bring together faculty, staff, and students across the main campus and satellite campuses across the country. We hope to serve as a point of contact for student organizations, offices, and departments across the university for resources and collaborations.

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In 2018, Northeastern was recognized at their annual award ceremony with a Gold Rating for our 42.6% midterm voter turnout rates.

*Examples of what we're already doing:*

- Hold voter registration and educational events across campus
- Promote the use of TurboVote
- Publish a monthly newsletter with updates, upcoming events (hosted by Northeastern Votes and other groups), and important election reminders
- Use social media to encourage voter registration and civic participation
- Hold regular events and trainings based on student interest and need
- Advertise existing civic events happening on campus and in community

### PLANS MOVING FORWARD

Led by our Outreach Working Group, we will continue to connect with student organizations, offices, and departments to introduce the initiative and begin or expand collaboration. For example, Northeastern Votes will connect with cultural centers such as the Asian American Center, Latinx Cultural Center to join their existing programs such as Tea Time and Hora Del Cafe with a theme around voting and civic engagement. Coalition leadership will also continue to connect with faculty and staff from our network campuses to identify their needs regarding voter engagement and move forward with a specific plan for engagement.

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In 2022, our voter turnout goal is 47.6%, an increase of roughly 5 percentage points from the 2018 midterms. We plan to accomplish this with strategies we have previously used as well as the following new ideas:

- Coordinate and track election engagement efforts across campus, amplifying those efforts on our new website
- Plan research sessions for states/regions where students can meet other student voters and discuss their research together
- Join with affinity groups across Boston Intercollegiate Government (BIG) for larger events/outreach
- Host panel of inspiring international leaders who can speak about democracy/citizen change



## VII. Strategy

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### CAMPUS INITIATIVES

Since the establishment of Northeastern Votes, we have hosted several voter registration drives across campus and events such as “Being Ballot Ready” to help Boston campus students be prepared for the 2021 Boston election and “Beyond the Ballot” in collaboration with the Alliance of Civically Engaged Students (NU|ACES) to focus on community organizing as an opportunity to engage after voting. Our educational events have not had strong turnout so far, but we hope to see a change as the 2022 election approaches.

For the 2022 election and beyond, it will be important to connect with our incoming classes, particularly our N.U.in students who are traditionally abroad their first semester, to establish establish a voter/civic engagement culture at the beginning of their Northeastern journeys.

### LOCAL INITIATIVES

The Northeastern Votes Coalition has worked with the City of Boston’s Elections Department to set-up a polling location on campus during the COVID-19 pandemic and recruit poll workers for recent elections.

### PLANS MOVING FORWARD

Through our collaborations with other groups, the creation of our website, and the addition to the Northeastern events calendar, we hope to reach more Northeastern community members and encourage participation at these events. We are also planning to order merchandise such as pens, totes, hand sanitizer, and masks to continue establishing our presence on our campuses and encourage more participation.

Our participation at summer orientation through our online module/presentations, Welcome Week tabling, and through early engagement with Residence Halls and introductory classes are crucial to establishing the voter/civic engagement culture and promote their participation throughout their time at Northeastern.

### PLANS MOVING FORWARD

We hope to continue this partnership with the Elections Department to recruit students to be poll workers, another opportunity to be engaged with the electoral process.



## VIII. Timeline

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### Spring 2022

**Statement: Preparing for the Primaries**

- ❖ Outreach to Northeastern student organizations and office/departments, and BIG for collaborations on educational events and registration drives
  - ❖ Creation of the Northeastern Votes website to host important election information and resources
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### Summer 2022

**Statement: Continue push for voter registration**

- ❖ Plan and implement voter registration at orientation sessions for incoming students and families
  - ❖ Hold information session for NU.in students and families of participating in the 2022 election while abroad
  - ❖ Outreach to encourage eligible students to become poll workers for the November general election
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### Fall 2022

**Statement: Final push for increasing voter registration rates and push for voter participation in November**

- ❖ Implement voter registration drives at move-in and presentations in introduction courses for freshmen
- ❖ Social media campaign to inform out-of-state students and other university members of deadlines for absentee ballots and host research sessions for students



## IX. Reporting

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Northeastern's action plan, data, and reports are publically available and available on campus.

## X. Evaluation

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### Quantitative measures may include:

- Use TurboVote admin site to review engagement of NU community
- Analyze NSLVE data released after every midterm and presidential election cycle
- Implement student surveys to analyze the growth of culture of democratic engagement
- Implement evaluations from our coalition members throughout the year

### Qualitative measures may include:

- Implement evaluations from our coalition members throughout the year
- Interview students to gauge their interest in and knowledge of the voting process
- Collaborate with faculty members on other qualitative studies

Questions related to this action plan should be addressed to:

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