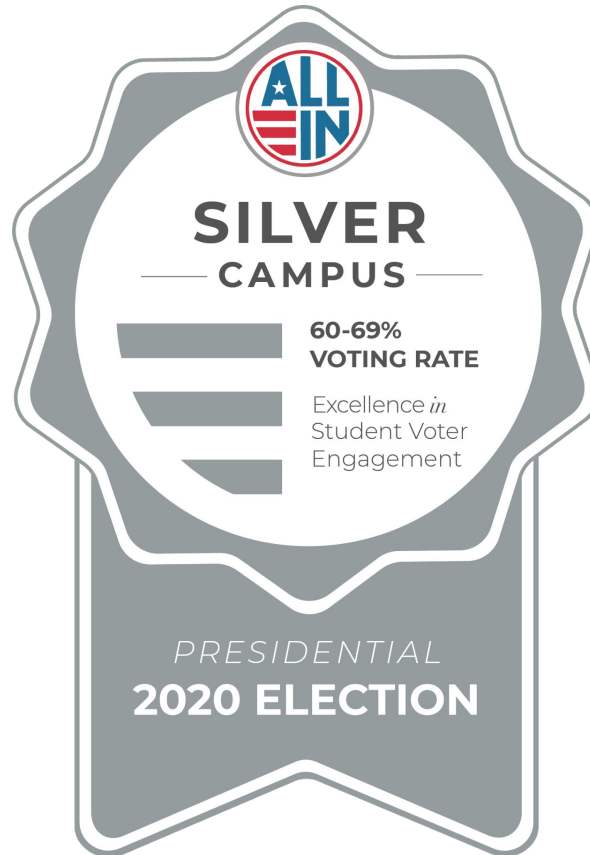




Northeastern University



**ALL IN CAMPUS DEMOCRACY
CHALLENGE**

2022 ACTION PLAN

May 2022



I. Executive Summary

Northeastern University is committed to expanding our democratic engagement efforts leading up to the 2022 midterms and beyond, not only on our Boston campus but also across our growing network of campuses within the US and across the world. The purpose of this plan is to outline the goals and strategies the Northeastern Votes Coalition will implement between 2022 and 2025 to encourage voter education, registration, and participation, as well as overall civic knowledge and skill building of all students, regardless of their ability to vote. We expect this plan to be used widely across campus and for different groups on campus to work toward various goals.

This action plan was created by and will be led by the Northeastern Votes Coalition, which brings together 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 be the driving force on our campuses for those efforts, working alongside our School of Public Policy, Community Service & Civic Engagement team, the Student Government Association (SGA) and other student organizations.



II. Leadership

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

Lisa Morde
Assistant Director of Civic Engagement, Community Service and Civic Engagement, Office of the Chancellor; 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

Student Groups

Student Government Association (SGA)

Northeastern Alliance of Civically Engaged Students (NU|ACES)

IGNITE at Northeastern

Community Organizations

Boston Intercollegiate Government (BIG)

MassVote

Local elections office coordination

City of Boston: Election Department



II. Leadership (con't)

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)

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 centralized location to help facilitate leadership changes.



III. Commitment

Northeastern’s most recent academic strategic plan states “Our goal is to maximize our positive impact in our communities and in the world.” The plan strives to achieve this goal through several approaches, including to “Ensure that all our students, faculty and staff have access to the skills, tools, know-how, and support they need to take a mission-driven project from idea to implementation.” The Northeastern Votes Coalition aspires to provide the skills, tools, know-how and support needed for impactful civic engagement, including 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 creation of a new student job to advance this work, recognition of Election Day as a university holiday, and through the documentation of work in a central location on Northeastern’s website.



IV. Landscape

In 2020, student voting at Northeastern rose to 68.7% of eligible voters, a nearly 12 percentage increase from the 2016 presidential election. In the 2018 midterm election, student voting grew by nearly 24 percentage points from 18.8% participation in the 2014 midterm elections to 42.6% in 2018. We prepare for the 2022 midterm elections energized and ready to meet our next goal of increasing our midterm voting rates by another 5 percentage points. Since our consistent work began in earnest in 2019, we have made many strides toward increased civic participation and are poised and ready to continue to do so.

In reviewing our NSLVE data, we can see increases in voting across all disciplines, notably in several STEM fields. We also see significant increases in the 18-21 category, the majority of our undergraduates and see lower participation by our 25-49 range. While this is a much smaller number of students, it is a reminder to deepen our focus on graduate students. We unfortunately do not have data by race, but will continue to focus on collaborating with our cultural and identity-based centers to increase participation by students from historically marginalized backgrounds.

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 civic knowledge, coalition updates, upcoming events, 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

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 Burnes Center for Social Change and 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 and to better integrate into experiential learning opportunities.



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



As outlined in the landscape section, we do not have access to NSLVE data related to race, but are advocating for this information to be included in the future. We do not see significant or surprising gaps between specific ages or majors, but will focus on deepening our outreach to our graduate students in Boston and beyond, and will continue to recruit students and faculty from across all our colleges to participate in our voter engagement coalition.



V. Goals

SHORT-TERM GOALS

- Recruit 10 new faculty, staff, or student representatives from Northeastern's domestic satellite campuses (Charlotte, Seattle, Silicon Valley, Mills College /Oakland) to engage meaningfully in the Voter Coalition
- 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
- Increase collaboration with our career programs (Co-op, Career Design, etc.) to encourage voting among students and employees
- 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
- Increase outreach to graduate students to increase voter turnout among those populations

LONG-TERM GOALS

- Have Election Day recognized as a campus holiday to give the Northeastern community the opportunity to vote and attend civic education events
- Increase voter registration to 75% of eligible students by 2024
- Engage Northeastern alumni and lifelong learners in our civic outreach
- Embed civic learning opportunities in more coursework and experiential learning opportunities
- Develop partnerships with the new Burnes Center for Social Change and Gov Lab to strengthen our commitment to civic and democratic engagement
- Connect with initiatives to increase co-ops in local and state government with voter engagement initiative



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.

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.

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

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

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
-

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
-

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

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

X. Evaluation

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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