

Northern Illinois University Huskies Vote!

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following action plan was developed by a standing committee and four subcommittees composed of faculty, staff, students, administrators, and community partners. This document serves as Northern Illinois University's (NIU) civic engagement plan for the 2022-2023 academic year. The goal of the plan is to further embed a commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement in NIU's culture and, more specifically, to increase political participation by NIU students.

In our 2020 action plan, we had a few specific and data driven goals. The first was to increase the registration percentage to 80% of our students. And secondly of those who are registered we wanted to increase the voting rate to 55% of those students. We exceeded both of these goals. While we can't assume that efforts implemented solely by NIU's Democracy Challenge committee and partners were the main reason for our success, as leading up to the 2020 Presidential Election voter engagement was up across the country for a myriad of reasons. We believe that voter registration and education opportunities we provided had a tangible impact on these results.

Over the course of 2022 the goal for NIU's democratic engagement action plan is to focus on three primary areas: voter registration, voter education, and voter turnout. Based on the feedback we received on our previous action plan, we are also increasing our focus on tracking and evaluation efforts to help us be more intentional with planning of our events for the future years. The goals for each area are outlined in the specific goals section below.

The plan is consistent with the university's vision, mission, and values statement as well as those of several departments and units. The plan will be implemented primarily on NIU's main campus in DeKalb, IL, which is where the overwhelming majority of students attend classes. However, students who take classes at NIU's regional centers in Naperville, and Rockford and online students will also be made aware of the plan and will have the opportunity to participate in it.

The action plan has already begun, as our committee continues to meet biweekly, and has already started moving forward on plans for the June primary, including early voting and a voter guide. This plan will continue through the general election in November. In addition, we hope to do post-election events that help students see the importance of civic engagement beyond the election cycle. After fall 2022, the committee will assess the success of the 2022 plan and begin developing a new plan to cover 2023-2024.

Participation in the All IN Democracy Challenge is a presidential initiative facilitated by the Office of the President. The plan and the university's NSLVE reports are available to the public on the [Huskies Vote!](#) website and will be presented to a variety of university and external groups.

LEADERSHIP

The leadership of the civic engagement action plan include individuals and groups from both the campus and local communities. In addition to the leadership listed below, the group will also look to national resources for support and guidance as the leadership team and the campus implement the 2022-23 action plan.

The following people contributed to the development of this plan:

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Steering Committee

Devlin Collins, President, Student Government Association, Nonprofit and NGO Studies

Undergraduate

Dallas Douglas, Speaker of the Student Senate, Anthropology Undergraduate

Grant Goral, ALL IN Student Voting Honor Roll, Political Science and History Undergraduate

Michaela Holtz, Office of the President Staff Fellow (chair)

Jacob Jovanovich, Senator, Accountancy Undergraduate

Meg Junk, Chief of Staff for Vice President of Student Affairs, Student Affairs

Sandy Lopez, Director, Office for Undocumented Student Support, Academic Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Julie Ann O'Connell, Assistant Director, Center for Nonprofit and NGO Studies

Ariel Owens, Assistant Director, Gender, and Sexuality Resource Center

Andy Pemberton, Internal Communications Manager; Web and Internal Communications

Gaylen Rivers, Assistant Director of Programming, Center for Black Studies

Susan Russell, League of Women Voters DeKalb County

Laura Vazquez, Professor, Department of Communication

Communication Subcommittee

Andy Pemberton, Internal Communications Manager; Web and Internal Communications (chair)

Alison Maurer, Social Media Strategist, Institutional Communications

Robin Boyko, Director of University Marketing and Brand; Marketing and Creative Services

Wester Wuori, Associate Director of Strategic Communications; Institutional Communications

Rachel Xidis, Associate Director, Web and Internal Communications

Voter Education Subcommittee

Michaela Holtz, Office of the President Staff Fellow (co-chair)

Laura Vazquez, Professor, Department of Communication (co-chair)

Gaylen Rivers, Assistant Director of Programming, Center for Black Studies

Grant Goral, ALL IN Student Voting Honor Roll, Political Science and History Undergraduate

Devlin Collins, President, Student Government Association, Nonprofit and NGO Studies Undergraduate

Jacob Jovanovich, Senator, Accountancy Undergraduate

Voter Registration and Turnout Subcommittee

Meg Junk, Chief of Staff for Vice President of Student Affairs, Student Affairs (co-chair)

Sandy Lopez, Director, Office for Undocumented Student Support, Academic Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (co-chair)

Ariel Owens, Assistant Director, Gender, and Sexuality Resource Center

Grant Goral, ALL IN Student Voting Honor Roll, Political Science and History Undergraduate

Jacob Jovanovich, Senator, Accountancy Undergraduate

Susan Russell, League of Women Voters DeKalb County

Gaylen Rivers, Assistant Director of Programming, Center for Black Studies

Evaluation and Assessment Subcommittee

Julie Ann O'Connell, Assistant Director, Center for Nonprofit and NGO Studies (chair)

Sarwar Minar, Political Science Graduate Student

Additional Campus and Community Partners

Academic Advising Center

Career Services

Center for Black Studies

Center for Nonprofit and NGO Studies

CHANCE

DeKalb County League of Women Voters

Disability Resource Center

Division of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Division of Enrollment Management, Marketing, and Communications

Division of Information Technology

Division of Intercollegiate Athletics

Division of Student Affairs

Financial Aid and Scholarship Office

Gender and Sexuality Resource Center

Office of the President

Office of the Provost

Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning

Orientation and First Year Programs

Student-Athlete Academic Support Services

Student Government Association

Undocumented Student Support

University Honors

University Libraries

The membership of the steering committee and subcommittees will lead the implementation of this plan through the 2022 general election. At that point, a new steering committee and subcommittees will be convened to develop the 2023-2024 plan. As an initiative of the Office of the President, the staff member currently in the role of President's Staff Fellow is designated to chair the steering committee with supervision from the President's Chief of Staff. The President's Staff Fellow will work with leaders of shared governance to populate the

steering committee and subcommittees. Past members of the steering committee and subcommittees may continue to participate in the development of future plans if they wish.

COMMITMENT

Northern Illinois University (NIU)¹ is committed to promoting civic engagement and learning and democratic and political participation. NIU's mission statement references developing active, engaged, informed citizens who "become global leaders who work to build a better society." The university's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is reflected in its values and is consistent with the promotion of civic engagement and learning.² Several departments and units also mention civic learning and democratic participation in their vision, mission, or values statements. For example, the Department of Political Science's mission statement includes the following: "We are committed to providing NIU's diverse undergraduate student body with the knowledge and skills necessary for responsible citizenship and successful careers. Liberal arts education, engaged learning and global education are important dimensions of this educational mission."³ The mission statement of the Center for Nonprofit and NGO Studies states "The center is committed to the growth and development of civil society through research, community engagement and training the next generation of community leaders."⁴

NIU's curriculum also illustrates a commitment to civic learning and engagement. The university offers a degree in Nonprofit and NGO studies. Numerous academic departments, academic centers, and cultural resource centers offer courses related to civic engagement and learning and democratic and political participation, including the Departments of Communication, Counseling and Higher Education, Curriculum and Instruction, English, History, Mechanical Engineering, Philosophy, Political Science, Public Administration, Sociology, and World Languages and the Centers for Black Studies, Environmental Studies, Latino and Latin American Studies, Nonprofit and NGO Studies, Southeast Asian Studies, and the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality. Additionally, the Asian American, Latino, and Gender and Sexuality Resource Centers all offer courses that focus on these subjects. Many of the courses in the various centers (and even some of the courses in the academic departments) have an interdisciplinary focus.

¹ NIU is a comprehensive research university with over 16,000 undergraduate, graduate, and law students. Roughly 50% of all students are white (non-Hispanic), 19% Hispanic, 17% African American, and 5.8% Asian. More than 80% of undergraduates receive aid. Roughly 50% are first generation (see [At a Glance | Northern Illinois University \(niu.edu\)](https://www.niu.edu/at-a-glance/vision-mission-values.pdf)).

² Northern Illinois University's "Vision, Mission, and Values" statement. Available at <https://www.niu.edu/at-a-glance/vision-mission-values.pdf>.

³ Northern Illinois University Department of Political Science's mission statement. Available at <https://polisci.niu.edu/polisci/about/mission.shtml>.

⁴ Northern Illinois University Center for Nonprofit and NGO Studies mission statement. Available at <https://www.niu.edu/nonprofit/about/mission-statement.shtml>.

Civic engagement and democratic participation are also reflected in several department's learning outcomes, including political science,⁵ public administration,⁶ and Nonprofit and NGO Studies.⁷

In addition to the strong civic engagement and learning focus of the curriculum, numerous co-curricular opportunities also exist, including programs offered through the Division for Academic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, the university's honors program and the Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning, Student Involvement as well as various service-learning programs within the academic colleges. For example, the year-long Huskie Service Scholars (HSS) scholarship program offers freshmen and first-semester transfer students' the opportunity to develop a supportive peer network and engage in weekly service activities on-campus and in the community. Students work in teams and are co-hosted by a campus partner based on the social issue their team is addressing. Students in the honors program are able to participate in the Honors Civic Engagement Project which curates a series of experiences with the aim of developing knowledgeable, thoughtful, caring and active citizens. Other programs and offerings include the Huskie Food Pantry, NIU Cares, and connections to local volunteer opportunities. The university works through all of these experiences to not only provide a service, but also to educate students about local agencies and social issues.

Finally, the university's commitment to promoting civic engagement and learning and democratic and political participation is shown by the establishment of presidential engagement professorships, its participation in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE), and President Lisa Freeman's signing of pledges such as the Democracy Challenge's Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Participation and Wesleyan University's three principles for developing civically engaged citizens and contributing to civic life.⁸

The university highlights its commitment to civic engagement and learning and democratic and political participation regularly in both internal and external communications. Stories on the initiatives mentioned above or faculty who are teaching or conducting research on these topics are posted on [NIU Today](#), the university's internal source for university news, or pitched to national and local media. Faculty in these areas are also quoted frequently in national and local media. Moreover, local governments and community organizations are aware of NIU's commitment to civic engagement and democratic participation and many benefit from it. The university is asking the city of DeKalb and the county of DeKalb to formally recognize this action plan.

NIU has been recognized for its commitment to civic engagement. In 2020, the university received a Carnegie Communication Engagement Classification for the second time. This designation indicates "institutional commitment to community engagement by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching."⁹ Over the past six years, five NIU

⁵ <https://www.niu.edu/effectiveness/files/outcomes/clas/political-science-ba-bs.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.niu.edu/effectiveness/files/outcomes/clas/public-administration-mpa.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.niu.edu/effectiveness/files/outcomes/clas/nonprofit-and-nngo-studies-ba-bs.pdf>

⁸ See <https://www.wesleyan.edu/e2020/index.html>.

⁹

<https://www.aplu.org/news-and-media/blog/2020-carnegie-community-engagement-classification-recipients-announced>

students have received the Campus Compact's Newman Civic Fellow Award, a national award that honors inspiring college students who have demonstrated an investment in finding solutions for challenges facing communities throughout the country.¹⁰

LANDSCAPE

Over the last four years the civic engagement at NIU has seen growth in providing voter education resources every year, multiple voter registration tables each semester, but mainly the consistent commitment of NIU's leadership for these efforts. Navigating COVID-19 this past academic year, we learned that we will need to approach our voter engagement from multiple perspectives while developing voter education, engagement opportunities, and support for our students. One of the biggest takeaways from our efforts in 2020 was that we wanted to move into the next election cycle with more student voices and ideas at the table.

NIU has a long history in supporting undocumented students and is recognized as a leader in this effort statewide. Since the submission of our last action plan, the university established a new office [Undocumented Student Support](#) that focuses on providing support to students, but also resources for campus and community to better understand how to be an ally and assist DACA students. The office partnered with NIU's ALL IN Democracy Challenge to provide opportunities for students to volunteer on election day and lead events that encouraged student voter engagement on campus over the past two years.

GOALS

Over the course of 2022 the goals for NIU's democratic engagement action plan is to focus on three primary areas: voter registration, voter education, and voter turnout. To develop these goals, the steering committee examined NIU's NSLVE data, which is available at <https://www.niu.edu/huskies-vote/index.shtml>. The goals for each area are listed below.

Voter Registration:

- Retain the percentage of students who registered in 2020 at 75%.
- Have 50% of the first-year student cohort become registered voters.
- Offer at least 20 NIU organized voter registration opportunities to all students by the end of October 2022.

Voter Turnout:

- Retain the percentage of students who voted in the general election in 2020 at 50%.
- Surpass the mean voter turnout rate for all institutions participating in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). NIU did not meet this goal in 2020.

Voter Education:

- Offer at least three formal voter education programs
- Develop NIU's Democracy Challenge Student Ambassadors that will engage student leaders in the creation of non-partisan conversations on voter registration, education, and turnout.
- Develop and widely promote videos with voter engagement information for all students

¹⁰ [Newman Civic Fellowship - Campus Compact](#)

Additionally, the university has the following long-term goals:

- Apply to be a [Voter Friendly Campus](#)
- Institute voter engagement material into NIU's new student orientation and first-year experience course starting Fall 2023.
- By fall 2024, a book related to civic learning/civic education/democratic participation will be selected for the [Common Reading Experience](#).
- By the 2024 general election, 90% of students will be registered to vote.
- 60% of students across all cohorts will vote in the 2024 general election.
- In 2026, NIU will receive the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification again.

NSLVE REPORT

The NSLVE Report has been used as a guide to help the ALL IN Democracy Challenge steering committee set their plans and goals each year. The most recent report, along with past reports are publicly shared on [Huskies Vote](#) website. Voter registration and turnout data has shown an increase when comparing the midterm and presidential election years, which can directly relate to the opportunities provided to the campus community over the past three years. Our 2020 student voter turnout rate increased by almost 13% from 2016 and we set the goal of retaining this rate for the 2022 midterm election. We met or exceeded three of our four short term goals for 2020. We set a goal of 80% of our students being registered to vote and met that goal with 80.7% registered students. We plan to retain this registration rate for the 2022 midterm election. We set a voter turnout goal of 55% for 2020 and exceeded that goal with 63.8%. We set a goal of 50% of our students voting early or absentee and exceeded our goal with 57.0%. The only goal that we did not meet in 2020 was surpassing the mean voter turnout rate for all institutions participating in the NSLVE. We will continue to aspire to surpass the national average. NIU current data from NSLVE regarding race/ethnicity or gender is not complete and therefore a gap of knowledge in our NSLVE report. We hope to fix this concern moving forward. We view the NSLVE report to be essential as we make calculated decisions to increase voter turnout for underrepresented groups of students.

STRATEGY

In order to meet the goals outlined above, the following strategies will be or already have been implemented. Although this is the final plan that will be submitted in advance of the All In Campus Democracy Challenge May 2022 deadline, the plan will continually be updated and adapted to help NIU meet its goals. All strategies are listed based on the focus area that they support.

Voter Registration:

1/ Updated Communication Materials - We identified several strategies to improve our communication about Huskies Vote initiatives:

- [Huskies Vote](#) - Our website was updated based on students' feedback to provide clear, user-friendly information for students to register to vote and answers frequently asked questions. It also includes information on registration, links to Illinois Board of Elections and DeKalb County Clerk websites, links to candidate websites and a calendar of voter

information/registration events. We also developed a communication and marketing plan to promote the use of the Huskies Vote website.

- Digital and Printed Materials
 - Use of campus digital signage on all NIU campuses.
 - Downloadable Powerpoint Slide available to faculty, student groups, and staff to embed into classes, programming, and workshops. (See Appendix A)
 - Promote the use of #HuskiesVote on social media.
 - Distribute simple voting engagement flyers with QR codes linking to the main website and to share information at dining and residence halls, Holmes Student Center tables, Student Government Association info channels.
 - Outdoors yard signs with QR codes placed around campus.
 - Large standing Huskies Vote banners placed in strategic buildings on campus (library, student center, residence halls, etc.)
 - Annual letter from SGA President and Speaker of the Senate to students encouraging voter registration in Fall 2022.
 - Annual letter from the Vice President for Student Affairs in their weekly message to students encouraging voter registration will be done again in Fall 2022.
 - Annual letter from the Provost encouraging faculty to mention voter registration deadlines and importance of voting in their classes will be done again in Fall 2022.

2/ Voter Registration Opportunities:

- To increase the number of first-year students registered voters, voter registration information will be distributed and voter registration will be available during 2022 Week Of Welcome.
- Provide voter registration information at the annual Involvement Fair
- Participation in the "[I Pledge to Vote](#)" campaign.
- Participation in the National Voter Registration Day (September 2022).
- Identify annual and special events to distribute voter registration information and have online voter registration (events in bold has already happened):
 - **Conference on Undergraduate Research & Engagement** (April 26, 2022)
 - **NIU Cares** (April 29, 2022)
 - **Coming Out of the Shadows** (April, 2022)
 - **Lavender Graduation Ceremony** (May 15, 2022)
 - New Student Orientation (Summer 2022)
 - Resource Center Open Houses (Fall 2022)
 - Student Involvement Fair (Fall 2022)
 - President's Welcome Picnic (Fall 2022)
 - Campus Meets Community Events (Fall 2022)
 - Open House and Admitted Student Days (throughout 2022 and spring 2023)
 - Unity Walk (Fall 2022)
 - Business Passport Program events (all year)
 - Academic cultural centers signature events (all year)

- STEM Fest (Fall 2022)
- POWER Retreat (Spring 2023)
- CODE trainings (all year)
- Mission Mondays.
 - Mission is our popular live Husky mascot who visits various places on campus each Monday. During the fall 2022 semester, several Mission Mondays will be devoted to voter registration. Mission will have volunteers with him who will promote voter registration, and we will promote and document the event on Mission's popular Twitter and Instagram accounts.
- Confirm existing and increase the number of our Campus Voter Registration Partners.
 - To be a Campus Voter Registration Partner, the campus unit must have done the following: 1/ Voter registration information brochures need to be made accessible to students in a central location (e.g., lobby, main office). If units have digital signage, the information will be added to the slide rotation. 2/ Place a "I can help you register to vote" sign in a visible location. 3/ At least one staff member from the unit must be trained as a deputy registrar (most had multiple staff members trained). The following units are current Campus Voter Registration Partners: Academic Advising Center, Bursar, Campus Activities Board, Career Services, Center for Black Studies, CHANCE, Disability Resource Center, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Gender and Sexuality Resource Center, Office of the Ombudsperson, Office of Student Conduct, Office of Student Engagement and Experiential Learning, Recreation Services, Student-Athlete Academic Support Services, Student Government Association, University Honors, University Libraries

Voter Education - Strategies:

1/ Voter Education Programming:

- The Civic Action Hour - NIU's ALL IN Democracy Challenge Committee will host at least three voter education programs in collaboration with several cultural centers on campus during fall 2022. The workshops will be hosted in the hybrid form (virtually and in-person) to be more accessible. They will require registration and will be facilitated by one of the committee members. The possible topics include:
 1. Why Vote? - When encouraging voting registration and civic engagement a question that is often asked is "Why vote?". This event will allow students to grapple with that question and many others through discussion and with panelists present that can assist in getting them answered.
 2. The Power of the Latinx Vote - This event will discuss the Latinx vote locally and nationally, examining some of the significant issues for Latinx voters and the data on Latinx voting in Chicago and nationwide.
 3. Importance of Mid-year Elections - Students will be able to engage with NIU's federal and state relations representatives about what's at stake during mid-year elections and why it would matter to a college student.

- Honors Seminars - Voter education information will be shared with help through Honors Advocacy Initiative (HAI)
- Debates hosted through partnership with DeKalb County League of Women Voters

2/ Student Opportunities:

- NIU's Democracy Challenge Student Ambassadors program will be developed to recruit and recognize student leaders. The goal of the program is to develop a group of student leaders that can assist with implementation of NIU's ALL IN Democracy Challenge action plan and lead efforts to improve the plan in the future.
- [People's Organizing Weekend Empowerment Retreat](#) (POWER) - The purpose of POWER is to empower student activists, who have previous experience organizing and/or participating in activities centered on the tenets of social justice.
- Through collaboration with NIU's alumni, establish [IGNITE](#) women votes chapter at NIU.

3/ Faculty and Staff Resources:

- Revise and redistribute the survey used in the past to help the university capture all civic engagement initiatives and document student participation, but extend the distribution to specific staff on campus. Faculty and staff will be asked what kinds of activities they do in courses/programs that are a part of an effort to increase students' awareness and their social responsibility regarding civic engagement and to highlight modules, activities, lectures and videos that are used to achieve these goals.
- Downloadable Powerpoint slide provided to faculty to link students to Huskies Vote website.
- Updated resources for faculty will be available on the website to use for voter engagement conversation in the classroom (see Appendix B).
- Funding for undergraduate research through the Student Engagement Fund.
 - Undergraduate students and faculty will be able to apply for funding supporting undergraduate research that has a clear connection to civic life. Funding will be able to support compensation for students (up \$1,200 per semester) and expenses related to the project (up to \$2,500). Projects will be highlighted during the Conference on Undergraduate Research and Engagement in the spring semester.

Voter Turnout - Strategies:

- Huskies Vote! buttons will be handed out at all Democracy Challenge events and to student voters in campus polling precincts.
- Students will sign "I Pledge to Vote" posters in the Holmes Student Center, Founders Memorial Library and other places around campus.
- Voter information center in the Barsema Alumni and Visitors Center and the Holmes Student Center on election day

- Huskie Service Scholars volunteers will help students determine their appropriate voter location and answer questions

REPORTING

The final action plan and the NSLVE reports are shared at Huskies Vote website. The action plan will be shared with NIU's Senior Leadership Team. Brief presentations on the action plan will be presented to several key groups on campus and in the community (e.g. University Council, Student Senate, Presidential Commission on the Status of Women, Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), Student Experience Team, College communications professionals, Non-profit and NGO Studies Advisory Board, DeKalb County League of Women Voters). As we get closer to the elections in June and November of 2022 we will reach out to the local newspaper to highlight what is happening on campus and to encourage community members to also participate.

EVALUATION

Continuous evaluation of our action plan is important as we work towards increasing voter engagement on campus. As we track student engagement on our website, and through our communication and events, we will be able to see the fruit of the effort through the NSLVE data. We are committed to using both qualitative and quantitative data to help us gather information about our activities to inform our ongoing student engagement. To evaluate progress in encouraging our students to register and vote, our Huskies Vote team will:

- Use the NSLVE data from the previous year to help inform our activities. We will continue to debrief as a steering committee at each monthly meeting and after each semester to get input, especially from our student members, about new engagement ideas and ways to measure the efficacy of the effort. The data collected from our efforts (as outlined below) will help direct our activities.
- Implement a tracking process whereby students will swipe their school ID card at all Huskies Vote program events so we can assess numbers of students engaged, but will also be able to analyze that information by year in school, major, number of events attended, etc.
- Employ post-program student attendee survey to assess how well the program met the program goals, with a separate survey to assess the program interaction with community and campus partners.
- At all of our tabling and other events (including events on National Voter Registration Day) we will utilize a QR code that directs students straight to our Huskies Vote web page where they are able to take the Huskies Vote pledge, or click through to checking on registration status or through to actual registration. Those QR codes directing students to our site will give us some increased engagement data we do not have currently.
- Track views and clicks on our Huskies Vote website, on our social media platforms, and on email communications.

- Track participation in a Huskie 'Pledge to Vote' campaign; compare to attendance data collected during other events.
- Collect qualitative data on why students registered/why they will vote through exit surveys at registration events. We will also offer opportunities for students to express their reasons for voting through events in conjunction with campus partners (events to include chalking parties, videotaped testimonials, and other events to be determined). We want to hear our students' voices!
- Continue to participate in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) to track student registration and voting rates.
- These evaluation plans will help us to assess efficacy and make necessary adjustments to our plans throughout the year. This information will be shared with upper university administration, and through social media and other university communication outlets.

HUSKIES VOTE



Check your status and register to vote online by visiting:

go.niu.edu/Huskies-Vote



Appendix B: All IN Democracy Challenge - Faculty/Staff Information Sheet

NIU is engaged in the [All In Democracy Challenge](#) program that seeks to enhance student involvement in voter education, registration and mobilization. This is a nonpartisan effort and all discussion with students should be framed in terms of civic responsibility. Students should not be encouraged to vote for any particular candidate nor join any party.

Here are some suggestions for promoting civil discourse on these emotionally laden issues — most of which, unsurprisingly, echo good general classroom practice:

- Don't feel you need to be a political expert, knowing all the answers with perfect responses.
- Remember that your role is to get students talking and thinking, not to lead them toward a particular political viewpoint or electoral outcome.
- Consider having a couple of students facilitate the conversation with you.
- You may supply information, context and sources for further inquiry, but you are mainly providing an environment where all in the classroom are respected. Let the students take the lead as much as possible. Encourage them to listen, hear each other's perspectives and work to understand the experience that generates these perspectives. These resources might be helpful with incorporating these conversations in your classes: [CEEP Faculty Guide](#), [Living Room Conversations](#), [Allsides](#).
- When discussing where candidates stand on key issues of interest to students, be accurate and fair, whatever your personal views. Feel free to use the following [nonpartisan candidate and issues guides](#).

If students wish to register to vote, they can contact:

- Deputy Registrars at NIU listed on Huskies Vote website (<https://www.niu.edu/huskies-vote/index.shtml>)
- DeKalb County Registrar: 815-895-7147 or email elections@dekalbcounty.org

If they have a valid Illinois DL or State ID, they can visit the state's website and register to vote online <https://ova.elections.il.gov/>

TO VOTE IN ILLINOIS

- You must be a United States citizen.
- You must be 17 on or before the date of the Primary Election and turn 18 on or before the date of the General or Consolidated Election.
- You must live in your election precinct at least 30 days prior to Election Day.
- You must not be serving a sentence of confinement in any penal institution as a result of a conviction.
- You may not claim the right to vote anywhere else.