



The Chandler Center

Southern New Hampshire University 2024 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: The Chandler Center

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Executive Summary

With rapid expansion and growth, Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is widely recognized as one of the nation's most innovative organizations and fastest growing universities. With over 250,000 students and 250 diverse programs available online and on campus, the SNHU community has grown tremendously since its founding in 1932. Originally, SNHU was named the New Hampshire Accounting and Secretarial School serving around 45 students. In the early 1960s, SNHU earned its accreditation and degree-granting authority under its new name: New Hampshire College of Accounting and Commerce. The name was later shortened to New Hampshire College, after the school became a nonprofit institution. After experiencing continual enrollment increased between 1961 and 1969, New Hampshire College resettled in its current location, a 300-acre campus on Manchester's Merrimack River. By 2001, New Hampshire College became Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU). Today, SNHU has a global student and alumni population with diverse needs and experiences.

To meet these needs, SNHU dedicated an office to civic engagement efforts for students. The Chandler Center is the office at Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) responsible for developing and implementing the democratic engagement action plan and civic engagement activities for on-campus and online students. This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan will direct the actions The Chandler Center takes for the next two years regarding increasing voter turnout and active citizenship initiatives. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2024 presidential election and local elections throughout 2025. This action plan outlines The Chandler Center's commitment to providing updated information on voter registration and participation processes to on-campus and online students, staff/faculty, and alumni; providing rides to and from both campus polling locations on 11/5/24 and any national elections in 2025; identifying and using new communication outlets within the SNHU community to encourage 100% student voter participation; empowering staff/faculty to engage in civic engagement messaging in their classrooms to promote a unified message that SNHU votes; and providing the student-led civic engagement coalition with support as needed to continue student led civic engagement efforts every year including leadership development opportunities. This action plan was developed and will be implemented by The Chandler Center at Southern New Hampshire University.

Leadership

Our leadership team includes the following:

- Elizabeth Richards – Assistant Vice President, The Chandler Center
- Kaitlyn Acciardo - Program Coordinator, The Chandler Center
- Taylor Maine - Civic Engagement Committee Student Leader
- Joy Schmelzer - Director, Office of Residence Life

- Jay Tifone- Director, Office of Student Involvement
- Dawn Brown - Senior Director Library User Experience
- Erin McGonagle- Director Advancement Communications
- Lauren Maynard- Senior Director, Communications
- Ben Cole- Dean, School of Arts, Sciences, and Education
- Lynn Zlotkowski- Senior Director, Student Retention and Success
- Lou Anne Kelly - Supervisor of the Checklist, Town of Hooksett
- Thomas Hilton - Election Administrator, City of Manchester

Our campus works with these following nonprofit partners:

- Campus Compact
- Breakthrough Manchester
- New Hampshire Public Radio
- ACLU NH

**The leadership team membership will be reviewed on an annual basis at the beginning of the fall semester. Transitions for all members will be filled based on student interest and changes in staff/community organizations. All civic engagement documentation will be stored to bridge transitions among members and ensure civic engagement efforts can continue regardless of turnover in membership due to well established leadership structures and plans.

Commitment

SNHU's mission is to “transform the lives of our learners.” We achieve our commitment to this mission by using innovative technology, offering diverse programs and opportunities for students, and developing a community culture of generosity and social impact. SNHU's core values are essential to the everyday work of the SNHU community, and the culture created on-campus and online. They're our PULSE and ensure our day-to-day work aligns with our commitment to students.

Put People First- In civic engagement this means understanding the needs of the SNHU community, providing voter education related to SNHU's diverse population, and creating opportunities to help students feel more connected to the voting process.

Unleash Your Learning- SNHU offers classes, co-curricular opportunities, and events for students to learn about social issue education, active citizenship, and experiences with diverse viewpoints.

Live and Breathe Equity- SNHU strives to create an environment where we all have the opportunity to connect, belong, and grow. Ensuring students have equal access to information about civic involvement and striving to eliminate barriers to voting information help us reach this goal.

Set the Right Pace- We create a culture of consistent voter education to ensure students do not feel overwhelmed on Election Day. Hosting outside speakers, updating students and staff on changes in election laws, and offering opportunities for civic discourse around social issues.

Embrace Collaboration- Successful voter turnout, engagement, and education rely on strong partnerships with different offices within SNHU, students, and community partners.

The campus demonstrates its commitment to voter education, civic engagement, and active citizenship through The Chandler Center. The mission of The Chandler Center is to lead “students toward active citizenship through the cultivation of community-based leadership opportunities, meaningful community partnerships, and social issue education”. With the vision of “a community where every individual is empowered to be curious about and committed to social action.” The Chandler Center is essential to creating a culture of active citizenship and civic engagement on-campus, online, and for our alumni/staff networks.

SNHU has been a signatory to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation since 2022. SNHU leadership demonstrates this commitment through continual communication with the SNHU community about the importance of active citizenship through Global Days of Service, volunteer paid time off for staff to give back to their communities, and service-learning opportunities for students.

Southern New Hampshire University also weaves citizenship education into all undergraduate education through The Commons, our general education program. The Commons represents Southern New Hampshire University's mission of promoting justice, equity, diversity, and citizenship—understood as the common good—in the core undergraduate academic experience. The Commons invites students to embrace, as their life’s work, the journey of learning for the purpose of building a more just and equitable society. All students must take foundational coursework examining their role as a member in a global community.

Landscape

Southern New Hampshire University is a private 4-year institution and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2020. SNHU has 138,000 students. The on-campus population is approximately 3,000 students. Approximately 50% of these students come from New Hampshire, while the rest come mostly from other New England states. A small minority of students come to campus from outside New England. The other 250,000 students enrolled at SNHU are online learners who come from all over the world. The SNHU campus is on the line of Manchester and Hooksett, which means on-campus students have different polling locations depending on their residence hall location. Similarly, a large portion of SNHU students are online, meaning they are voting in states that are not New Hampshire. Our 2024-2025 programming is structured accordingly so that students, regardless of the state they are voting in, have the voting information and education needed to feel empowered to engage in the political process.

While The Chandler Center’s physical location on campus means our focus will remain on our campus population, in 2024 we plan to significantly increase outreach to our online student population. In 2022 we launched a student club for online students focused on civic engagement, which will serve as a launching point for communications to our online student community. Additionally, we plan to use state-specific voter education to reach students across the country.

Southern New Hampshire University has authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) to understand data regarding student voting participation and assess civic engagement initiatives accordingly. In 2022 the Voting Rate at SNHU was 27.4% which is a 11.6% decrease from 2018. Our institution had a 2020 student voting rate of 56.1%. Our institution had a 2020 voter registration rate of 74.7% and a 2022 voter registration rate of 71.8%. In 2020, the voting rate of registered student voters was 75.1% and 38.1% in 2022. Our institution has been recognized by ALL IN with the following seals: 2018 Silver and 2020 Bronze.

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

Red arrows on figures are representative of national averages related to the figures.

Figure 1: Overall Student Voting Rate

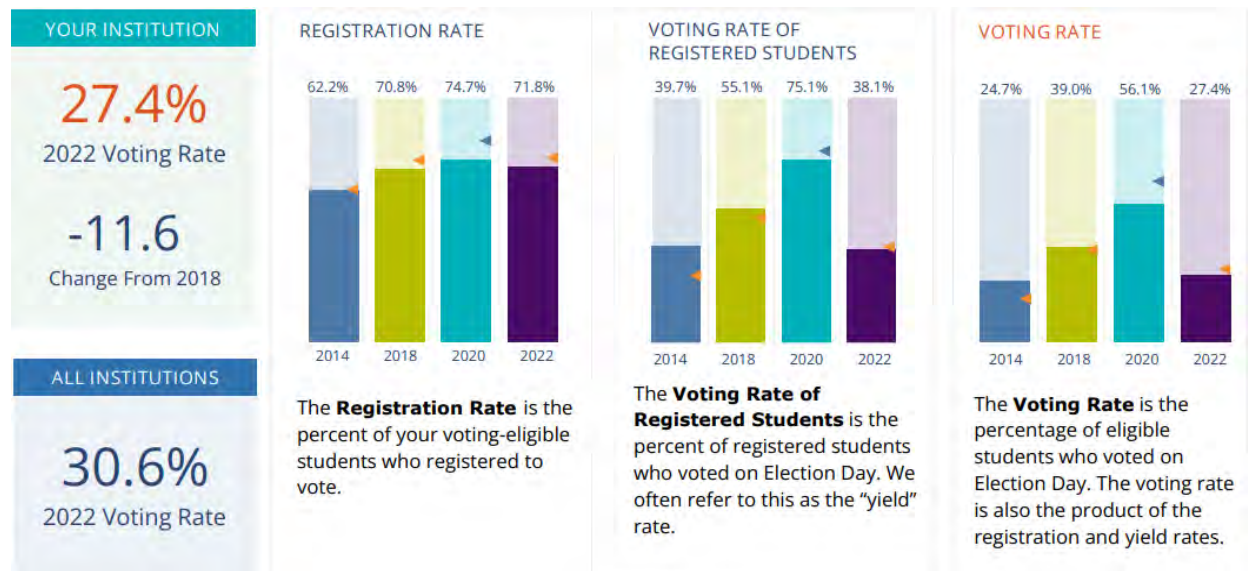


Figure 2: Comparison of the method SNHU students are using to vote

By Voting Method

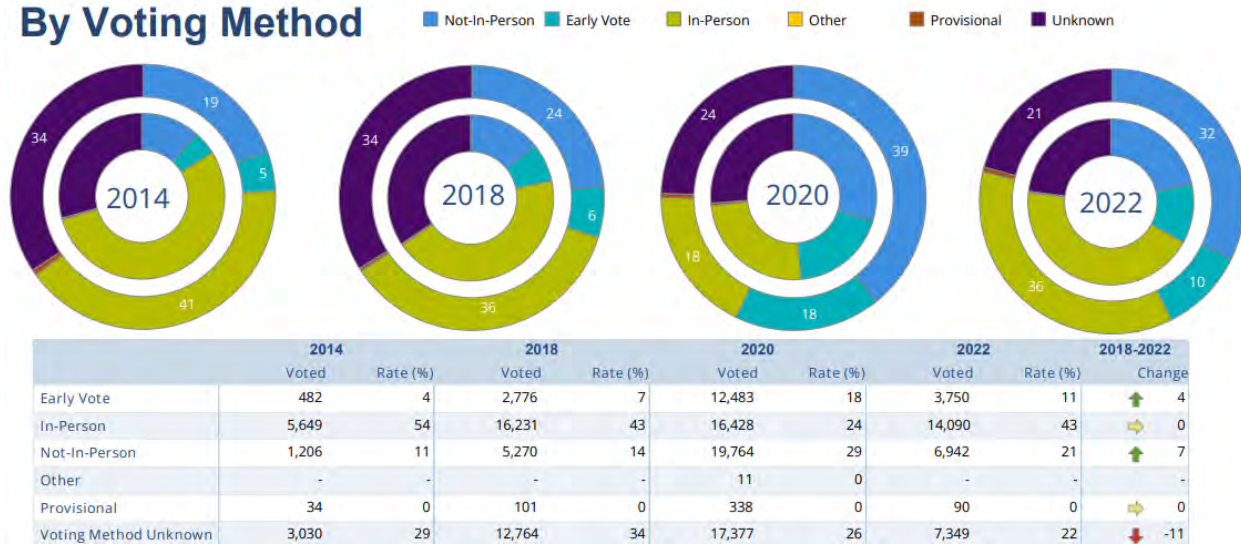


Figure 3: Comparison of Student Voting by Race and Ethnicity

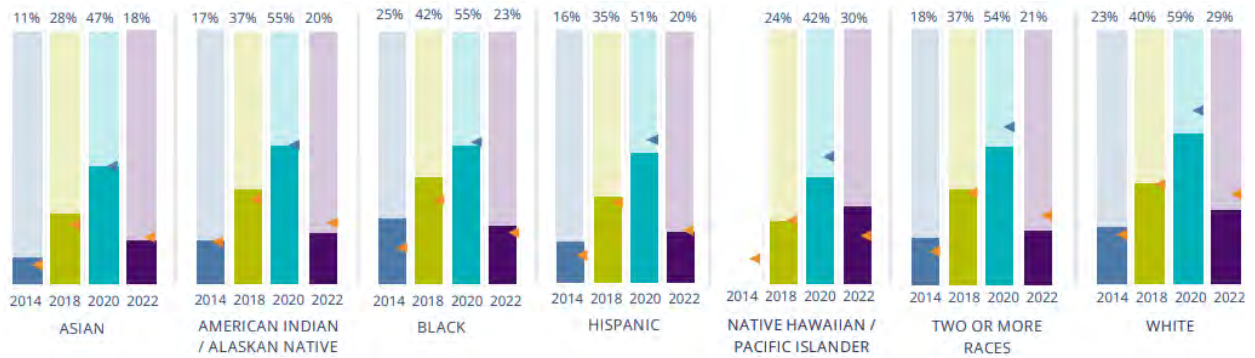


Figure 4: Comparison of Student Voting by Education Level, Class Level, and Enrollment Status

SNHU Votes Action Plan 2024-2025

	2014			2018			2020			2022			2018-2022 Rate Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	
EDUCATION LEVEL													
Undergraduate	29,471	6,153	20	74,101	26,726	36	92,295	49,242	53	114,183	30,563	26	↓ -9
Graduate	12,352	3,795	30	19,545	9,396	48	20,785	13,348	64	944	373	39	↓ -8
Class Unknown	1,530	364	23	2,058	645	31	5,961	2,245	37	3,361	420	12	↓ -18
CLASS YEAR													
Freshman	9,084	1,430	15	19,352	5,510	28	23,068	10,714	46	29,549	5,281	17	↓ -10
Sophomore	5,558	1,119	20	16,101	5,438	33	19,726	10,084	51	24,309	5,957	24	↓ -9
Upperclassman	11,891	3,001	25	39,013	15,945	40	50,831	29,179	57	60,191	19,233	31	↓ -8
ENROLLMENT STATUS													
Full-time	18,676	3,897	20	35,977	12,719	35	48,924	26,579	54	51,714	13,191	25	↓ -9
Part-time	24,677	6,504	26	59,726	24,427	40	70,115	39,822	56	66,774	19,040	28	↓ -12

Figure 6: Comparison of Student Voting by Field of Study

FIELDS	2014			2018			2020			2022			2018-2022 Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	-	-	-	26	-	-	61	37	60	109	25	22	-
Business, Management, and Marketing	17,510	4,326	24	33,984	13,347	39	41,555	23,672	56	39,051	11,223	28	↓ -10
Communication and Journalism	1,153	304	26	2,506	1,099	43	2,696	1,501	55	2,017	614	30	↓ -13

SNHU Votes Action Plan 2024-2025

FIELDS	2014			2018			2020			2022			2018-2022 Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	
Computer and Information Sciences	3,886	751	19	8,796	2,948	33	12,854	6,487	50	19,074	4,527	23	↓ -9
Education	1,347	406	30	1,449	729	50	2,254	1,606	71	733	386	52	↑ 2
Engineering and Engineering Technologies	-	-	-	95	22	23	119	74	62	630	142	22	→ 0
English Language and Literature	3,471	931	26	4,376	1,945	44	4,446	2,737	61	3,443	1,042	30	↓ -14
Health Professions	2,952	805	27	12,338	5,301	42	12,964	7,746	59	8,510	2,504	29	↓ -13
History	1,015	327	32	1,719	878	51	1,863	1,201	64	1,579	623	39	↓ -11
Law Enforcement, Firefighting, and Protective Services	2,011	456	22	5,251	1,690	32	6,404	3,141	49	6,229	1,372	22	↓ -10
Parks, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies	741	154	20	991	302	30	977	546	55	808	203	25	↓ -5

FIELDS	2014			2018			2020			2022			2018-2022 Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	
Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Humanities	1,871	458	24	5,723	2,384	41	7,501	4,623	61	5,703	2,227	39	↓ -2
Mathematics and Statistics	432	93	21	672	235	34	648	339	52	749	206	27	↓ -7
Social Sciences	677	180	26	1,488	661	44	1,671	983	58	1,916	653	34	↓ -10
Visual and Performing Arts	735	176	23	2,463	891	36	3,460	1,874	54	5,065	1,363	26	↓ -9
Unknown	630	179	28	209	114	54	602	410	68	109	24	22	↓ -32

Goals

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

- Increase student registration rates by 5% from 71.8% in 2022 to 76.8% in 2024.
- Increase voting rate of registered students to 75% in 2024 from 75.1% in 2020 and 38.1% in 2022.
- Increase SNHU voting rate by 30% from 27.4% in 2022 to 60% in 2024.
- Identify unreached SNHU community populations and create communications plans to distribute voter education resources.
- Provide SNHU campus faculty and staff with voter registration and Election Day information to support student voter participation.

Strategy

The Chandler Center will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation between 2024 and 2025.

Voter Registration:

- Host a voter registration drive for SNHU students collaborating with the town officials of Hooksett and Manchester.

First-Year Students:

- Include information about what first-year students will need to vote in-person or via absentee ballot in the packing checklist that Residence Life sends out prior to arriving on campus.
- Collaborate with First Year Seminar to provide voting information in course announcement and speak at the presentation required for all first-year students on-campus.

Online Students:

- Work with the SNHU communications team to provide online students with voter registration information for all the states to encourage 100% student voter participation.
- Collaborate with the Shapiro Library to post educational materials on the online resource library including:
 - Absentee Voting Information and Requirements
 - New Hampshire Voting Requirements
 - Voting while Unhoused Information

Constitution Day:

- Host an event on-campus for students to learn about civic engagement on the SNHU campus and pass out voter education materials.
- Constitution Day tabling at the Student Center on campus to pass out voting swag with commit to vote QR codes and voter education materials to encourage 100% student voter participation.
- Collaborate with the Shapiro Library to create a display as part of their monthly book displays that include books and educational materials related to the Constitution and the history of voting.
- Post Constitution Day content on The Chandler Center Instagram (@snhuchandlercenter) stories and tag @snhuoncampus and @snhu

Voter Education:

- Include the materials students will need to bring to campus in September or how to request an absentee ballot prior to arriving on campus in Residence Life communications during the summer to prepare ALL students for the Election.

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- Present at club meetings and high-traffic campus events about how to vote in the Election (absentee or in-person), answer common questions about voting, and encourage students to commit to vote.
- Residence-hall specific voting information for distribution to resident students based on the residence halls polling location.
- Host an event for Residence Hall directors to create bulletin boards for each hallway with voting information and provide the hall directors with the supplies and voter education information.
- Use different SNHU communication platforms to inform students and staff about voting information, post-election information, and NSLVE data including:
 - SNHU Votes Brightspace page
 - @snhuchandlercenter and @snhuoncampus Instagram pages
 - The Source
 - The Penmen Weekly
 - Messages from the President
 - Alumni Networks
- Collaborate with the Shapiro Library to distribute voting education and have a voting display throughout September.
- Utilize our campus chat bot to distribute voter education materials and offer students a platform to ask questions and receive answers about voting.

Get Out the Vote (Week before the Election):

- Post voter education materials in high-traffic areas around campus to remind students of their polling places, free rides to the polls, and general voting information to increase voter participation.
- Host a friend-to-friend text bank event to empower students to talk to their friends about voting and increase voter engagement.
- Promote free rides to the polls via A-frames, social media posts, and flyers around campus.

Election Day:

- Election Day tabling at high traffic areas on campus (ex. outside of the dining hall, the student center) to increase voter participation and provide any last-minute voter education needed.
- SNHU communications encourages 100% voter participation.
- Provide rides to the polls for students at both polling locations that SNHU votes in.
 - Manchester (vote at Webster School, 2519 Elm Street) for students living in the following dorms:
 - Newcastle
 - Kingston (rooms 115-141; 204-252; 304-352; 404-452; 504-552)
 - Hooksett (vote at Cawley Middle School, 89 Whitehall Rd.) for students living in the following dorms:

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- Conway
- Monadnock
- Hampton
- Lincoln
- Tuckerman
- Washington
- Windsor
- Kingston (rooms 142-147; 253-264; 353-364; 453-464; 553-564)
- Post Election Day content on The Chandler Center Instagram (@snhuchandlercenter) stories and tag @snhuoncampus and @snhu

Post Election:

- Continue updating students on-campus and online about upcoming Elections in states across the U.S. using SNHU communication channels.
- Include post-election data in The Chandler Center's End of Year Report including:
 - Number of students committed to vote in 2024
 - NSLVE data
 - Number of election-based events hosted
 - Number of students that were brought to the polls using The Chandler Center's free rides to the polls.
- Promote a community of active citizenship through volunteerism and community engagement.
- Support the student-led civic engagement committee by providing leadership development for members by attending civic engagement conferences.
- Continue developing and supporting the student-led civic engagement committee's "Use Your Voice" presentation to high school students in Manchester through the relationship with Breakthrough Manchester.

Curriculum:

- Use the civic engagement goals of The Commons to identify courses with learning outcomes related to active citizenship and provide specific outreach to faculty teaching those courses related to voter engagement.
- Provide all faculty with the option to invite a Chandler Center staff member into classes prior to Election Day to encourage full voter participation and have students pledge to vote in class.
- Collaborate with the School of Arts, Sciences, and Education to plan campus-wide voter engagement initiatives. Work with the Dean of this school to identify courses required for participation.
- Support faculty in implementing research focused curriculum around informed voting.

Reporting

A SNHU Votes report will be added to The Chandler Center's End of Year report and shared with campus leadership and the community through SNHU communication outlets. This will include civic engagement initiatives/activities completed, data from rides to the polls, and NSLVE data. Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/southern-new-hampshire-university/>.

The Chandler Center's annual Community Engagement Awards is a time to bring together students, faculty, staff, and community to celebrate the year in service and engagement. This year we plan to add a section of the ceremony that acknowledges the commitment of our student leaders and recognizes the campus-wide strategies to strive for full voter participation.

Evaluation

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

- We will primarily use NSLVE data to evaluate voter turnout rates and voter turnout among majors to analyze the effectiveness of classroom voting education efforts.
- We'll track the number of students who take our shuttles to the polls or attend our civic engagement events and compare that to the number of students that commit to vote to understand how many students have engaged with SNHU civic engagement efforts and the number of students who commit to vote in NH or other states.
- Gather qualitative student data through conversations about civic engagement successes and areas for improvement in future election cycles.
- Utilize the campus chat bot to understand student barriers to student voter participation.