



University of Hartford 2024 Nonpartisan Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Kat Owens and Maliqa Mosley-Williams

Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by University of Hartford in Connecticut for the 2024 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2024 election. The goals for University of Hartford for the 2024 election are:

- To support the campus community in learning about candidates and processes in the 2024 election.
- To encourage students to plan for voting
- To increase student voter registration rate in 2024, to equal or exceed that of 2020 (83.7%)
- To increase student voting rate of registered students in 2024, to equal or exceed that of 2020 (81.7%)
- To increase the voting rate of University of Hartford students in 2024, to equal or exceed that of 2020 (68.4%)
- To have our president sign the [ALL IN Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation](#) in October 2024
- To incorporate voter registration information into campus orientation for new students.

Leadership:

Our leadership team includes the following, campus groups, and organizations:

Maliqa Mosley-Williams

Assistant Director, Civic Engagement and Fraternity and Sorority Life, Office of Student Engagement and Inclusion, Division of Student Success, University of Hartford

Christine Grant

Assistant Vice President, Office of Inclusive Excellence and Belonging

Llonia Rojan Jackson

Director, Cultural Diversity and Belonging, Office of Student Engagement and Inclusion, Division of Student Success

Torshia Maxwell
Executive Director, Student Engagement and Inclusion, Division of Student Success

Kat Owens
Professor and Chair, Department of Politics, Economics, and International Studies, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Hartford

Motivote
This nonpartisan partner organization has created an app that promotes voter registration and planning for students.

Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation at Brandeis University
This nonpartisan academic network promotes civic engagement, particularly at the state level. ENACT sponsors the Motivote fellows, who work to promote voter preparation on campus.

The Governor M. Jodi Rell Center for Public Service at the University of Hartford
This nonpartisan Center at the University promotes ethics in government, the importance of civil discourse in politics, and citizen involvement in public service.

Student Government Association
President, Farah Suede

Commitment:

Our commitment to democratic principles and civic engagement is woven through our campus culture in the following ways:

The University of Hartford [Mission Statement](#) emphasizes the betterment of society and a pluralistic world:

Dedicated to learning, personal growth, knowledge creation, and the betterment of society, the University engages students in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to thrive in and contribute to a pluralistic, complex world.

Our [Vision Statement](#) notes our commitment to shared community values:

We combine a traditionally strong commitment to shared community values of support and encouragement with academic challenge in a wide variety of programs and disciplines in order to prepare our students for success in the 21st century.

The University's [Values Statement](#) includes our commitment to a shared diverse community in which all members are celebrated:

At the University of Hartford we are committed to community. We are an academic community that values integrity, curiosity, creativity, excellence, responsibility, and accomplishment. Enriched by our diversity and our engagement with one another, we take pride in our shared traditions and experiences. We are dedicated to building a culture that respects all of its members and celebrates their contributions as we work together to strengthen our community.

Finally, our [Civility Statement](#) highlights our commitment to speaking freely, sharing diverse ideas, and disagreeing respectfully.

As a University, we foster a climate of civility; as members of our community, we engage with one another, maintaining the highest standard of ethical, inclusive, and empathetic behaviors. We assume responsibility for our words, choices, and actions and their impact on others as we expect other members of the community will do the same. Our community is a place where people can have a free and open exchange of diverse ideas and disagree respectfully.

Our commitment to nonpartisan democratic engagement is most often realized through programming that originates within the Division of Student Success, The Office of Student Engagement and Inclusion, The Office of Inclusive Excellence and Belonging, from the Governor M. Jodi Rell Center for Public Service, The Department of Politics, Economics, and International Studies, and The Student Government Association. Each of these entities supports programming around nonpartisan democratic engagement. A great deal of this programming involves bringing in speakers, workshop leaders, or sponsoring panels to inform the community about civic engagement issues.

In election seasons, programming also includes debate watching parties, voter drives, voter information programming (for example the Motivote app), and supporting transportation to polling sites on election day.

Previously, our institution has developed and submitted an action plan to ALL IN for 2020, which can be found on our ALL IN campus page: <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/university-of-hartford/> None of the current team members were involved in this previous ALL IN action plan. We believe this previous iteration was developed by student athletes who have since graduated.

University of Hartford does not have a current signatory to the ALL IN Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.

Landscape:

Voting in Connecticut

Connecticut is a relatively open state in terms of supporting free and fair elections with few barriers. In example, people in Connecticut have experienced Automatic Voter Registration since 2016 and the ability to vote early in elections as of 2024. Absentee ballots are also allowed in Connecticut under certain circumstances, and same-day registration is also allowed, up to and including election day.

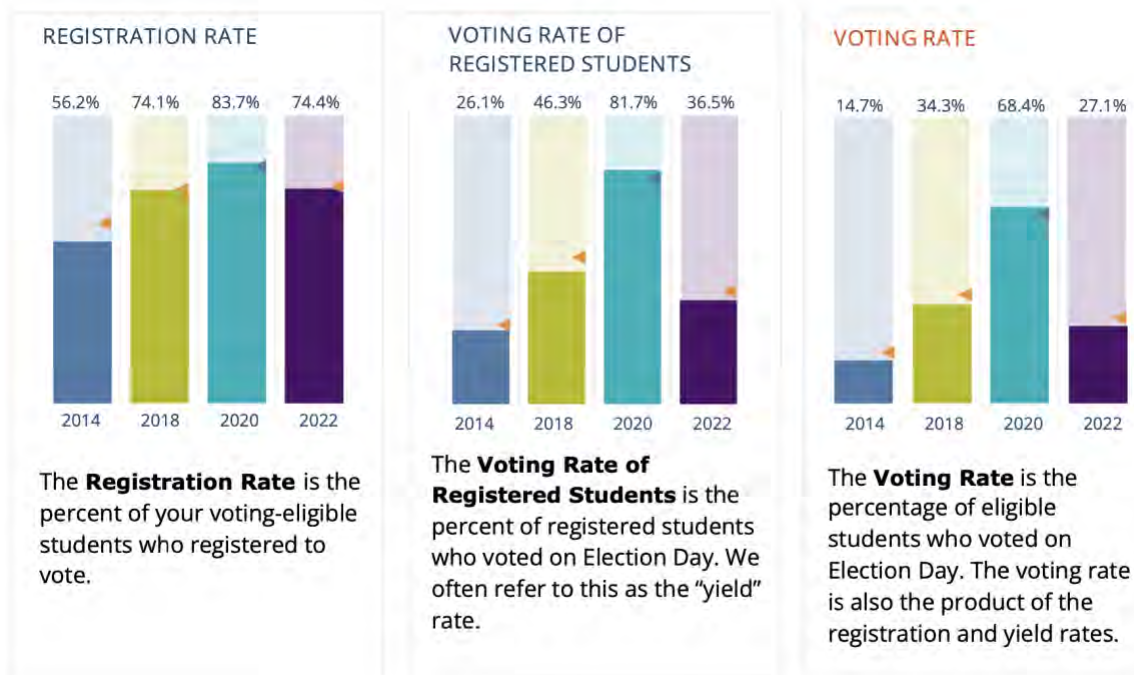
Campus Demographic and Voting Data

University of Hartford is a private 4-year institution and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2020. The University of Hartford is an independent, nonsectarian, coeducational institution with approximately 3800 full time undergraduate students and 5900 students in total. We have students from 48 states and 51 countries. Forty percent of students are minorities, with 17% of students categorizing themselves as "black or African American," 18% "Hispanic of any race," and 4% "Asian"

University of Hartford has authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) and will receive campus voting data for the 2022 election in fall 2023. We renewed our NSLVE authorization in 2023.

Our 2024 NSLVE report indicates that while 83.7% of voting eligible students registered in 2020, only 74.4% registered in 2022. In 2020, 81.7% of registered students voted and in 2022, 36.5% of registered students voted. **The net voting rate (the percentage of eligible students who voted) was 68.4% in 2020 and 27.1% in 2022.** That said, it is typical for fewer people to register to vote and to vote in non-Presidential election years. The national rate hovers around 66% of eligible voters voting in Presidential election years, with closer to 40% of eligible voters voting in midterm elections¹. In this way, our student body did a little better than average in the last Presidential election and a little worse than average in the last midterm election when considering net voting rate.

Figure 1: Data from the 2024 NSLVE report for the University of Hartford (credit: NSLVE report)



Goals:

Our institution’s nonpartisan democratic engagement goals are:

- Goal: To support the campus community in learning about candidates and processes in the 2024 election.
- Goal: To encourage students to plan for voting
- Goal: Increase student voter registration rate in 2024 to equal or exceed that of 2020 (83.7%)

¹ <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/07/12/voter-turnout-2018-2022/>

- Goal: Increase student voting rate of registered students in 2024, to equal or exceed that of 2020 (81.7%)
- Goal: To increase the voting rate of University of Hartford students in 2024, to equal or exceed that of 2020 (68.4%)
- Goal: Have our president sign the [ALL IN Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation](#) in October 2024
- Goal: Incorporate voter registration information into campus orientation for new students.

Strategy:

University of Hartford will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

- Goal: To support the campus community in learning about candidates and processes in the 2024 election.
 - Host speakers and presentations on topics such as engagement, activism, elections, and candidates.
 - Host bipartisan, welcoming, and engaging debate watching parties for both Presidential and Vice-Presidential nationally televised debates.
- Goal: To encourage students to plan for voting
 - Tabling for the Motivate app and encouraging students to use it to make a plan to vote
- Goal: Increase student voter registration rate in 2024 to equal or exceed that of 2020 (83.7%)
 - Tabling to support student voter registration
 - Increase resources available to students in regards to voting and its processes
 - Promote pop up voter registration hub within The Office of Student Engagement and Inclusion
- Goal: Increase student voting rate of registered students in 2024, to equal or exceed that of 2020 (81.7%)
 - Informing the community through panels, debate parties, and Motivate tabling
 - Support students getting to the polls on election day
- Goal: To increase the voting rate of University of Hartford students in 2024, to equal or exceed that of 2020 (68.4%)
 - Informing the community through panels, debate parties, and Motivate tabling
 - Support students getting to the polls on election day
- Goal: Have our president sign the [ALL IN Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation](#) by October 2024
 - Ask new President Ward to commit to supporting student engagement through the ALL IN Commitment
- Goal: incorporate voter registration information into campus orientation for new students.
 - Work with residential life and student success collaborative to incorporate voter registration information in campus orientation for new students in subsequent years.

Evaluation:

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

- University of Hartford will use the National, Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement to evaluate the increase of student voting by comparing our campus voter turnout and voter registration rates to past elections to measure progress on increasing both.
- The relevant campus partners will continue to support each other in programming for civic engagement, activism, democracy, civil discourse and the like, even in non-election years.
- We will partner with residential life and student success collaborative to ensure long term sustainable commitment to promoting civic engagement in student orientation in the future.
- Tracking Attendance at reoccurring events such as tabling initiatives, debate watch parties, and programs relating to voter information and elections.

Reporting:

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/university-of-hartford/>.

Our institution has given ALL IN permission to publish our past NSLVE reports, which can also be found on our campus page above.

We will share this report with the Division of Student Success, The Office of Student Engagement and Inclusion, the Office of Inclusive Excellence and Belonging, and the President's leadership team.