



2024 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

The University of Maine

Overview of the University of Maine

The University of Maine is one of New England's premier universities. Founded in 1865, UMaine is a land, sea and space grant institution and the flagship campus of the University of Maine System. UMaine hosts students from all 50 states, and 67 countries and offers 90 undergraduate majors, 85 master's degree programs and 35 doctoral programs.

Introduction to The Center for Student Involvement

The Center for Student Involvement is a member of the Division of Student Life. Focusing on the co-curricular student experience, the offices within the Center for Student Involvement are: Campus Activities, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Leadership Development, and Student Organizations. Within the programming offered through Leadership Development, voter education and registration are executed through the multidisciplinary group UMaine UVote.



Mission of UMaine UVote

UMaine UVote oversees the planning and execution of on-campus voter education, registration, and engagement efforts. This effort is largely successful due to our diverse campus and community partners. While primarily led by liaisons in the Center for Student Involvement and the Political Science department, staff, faculty, students, and town officials all play an essential role on our campus. Programming is focused surrounding election cycles, but the educational components of voter registration and education take place year-round at the University of Maine.

Executive Summary

This action plan was developed by Rob Glover, Associate Professor of Political Science and Honors and Brendan Trachsel, Coordinator for Student Involvement to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at University of Maine. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over 2024-2025 Academic Year, on and around our campus in Orono, Maine. Goals include registering 90% of eligible first-year students for the 2024 general election through initiatives with Research Learning Experiences, academic colleges, and more. Longer-term goals for success and stability will be pursued this year and into the future.

The primary point of contact for this coalition and action plan for 2024-2025 is:

Colleen Frazier

Assistant Director for Student Organizations and Leadership Development

The University of Maine

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Leadership

Rob Glover (Assoc. Professor of Political Science and Honors) and Colleen Frazier (Assistant Director for Student Organizations and Leadership Development) will be facilitating and overseeing our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. They will be supported by:

- Division of Student Life; The Honors College; College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; College of Natural Sciences, Forestry, and Agriculture; College of Education and Human Development; The Office of the President; Student Athletics; UMaine Student Government; The Orono Town Clerk's Office; the Maine Secretary of State's Office; Ask Every Student; Maine Students Vote; Maine League of Women Voters; Campus Election Engagement Project; Scholars Strategy Network, Maine.

This coalition is diverse and inclusive of:

- Representation from different parts of campus, including student leadership
- Representation from different perspectives and areas of expertise
- Trusted leaders and organizations who support communities that are historically underrepresented in democracy
- Leaders who can help with outreach and power building by bringing more people across campus into our work

Leadership cont.

Our group plans to virtually meet biweekly via Zoom on Friday afternoons.

If our leadership leaves campus or is no longer involved in this work, we have a succession plan in place. Faculty and college involvement ensures longevity. Student affairs includes multiple individuals who could take on leadership responsibilities should there be staff turnover, with transition guides in place for replacement staff members.

We are also partnering with the following organizations from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition to support our efforts on campus:

- Ask Every Student; Maine Students Vote; Maine League of Women Voters; Campus Election Engagement Project; Scholars Strategy Network, Maine.

Commitment

The State of Maine supports and provides a robust model for democracy and political participation. A few key structures that support political activism in Maine are same-day voter registration, a citizen legislature, and the ability for citizens to engage politically with Citizen's Initiatives and People's Veto.

Additionally, the University of Maine has an institutional mission of community engagement and service, which is pervasive through teaching, research, and co-curricular programs. By demonstrating these values, our campus earned the Community Engagement classification by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 2008 and renewed in 2015.

Furthermore, through our efforts to engage students around voter education, we received a gold seal from the All-In Campus Democracy Challenge for having a student voting rate between 70-80% in 2020. Our commitment to engaging our students on campus can further be demonstrated through the continued university-town partnership of the Orono poll location on campus.

Landscape: Home State

The majority of UMaine students are from in-state and are generally familiar with voting procedures in Maine. Many out-of-state students choose to vote in Maine, however some states (such as Massachusetts) have policies that remove state-sponsored healthcare for those who vote in other states.

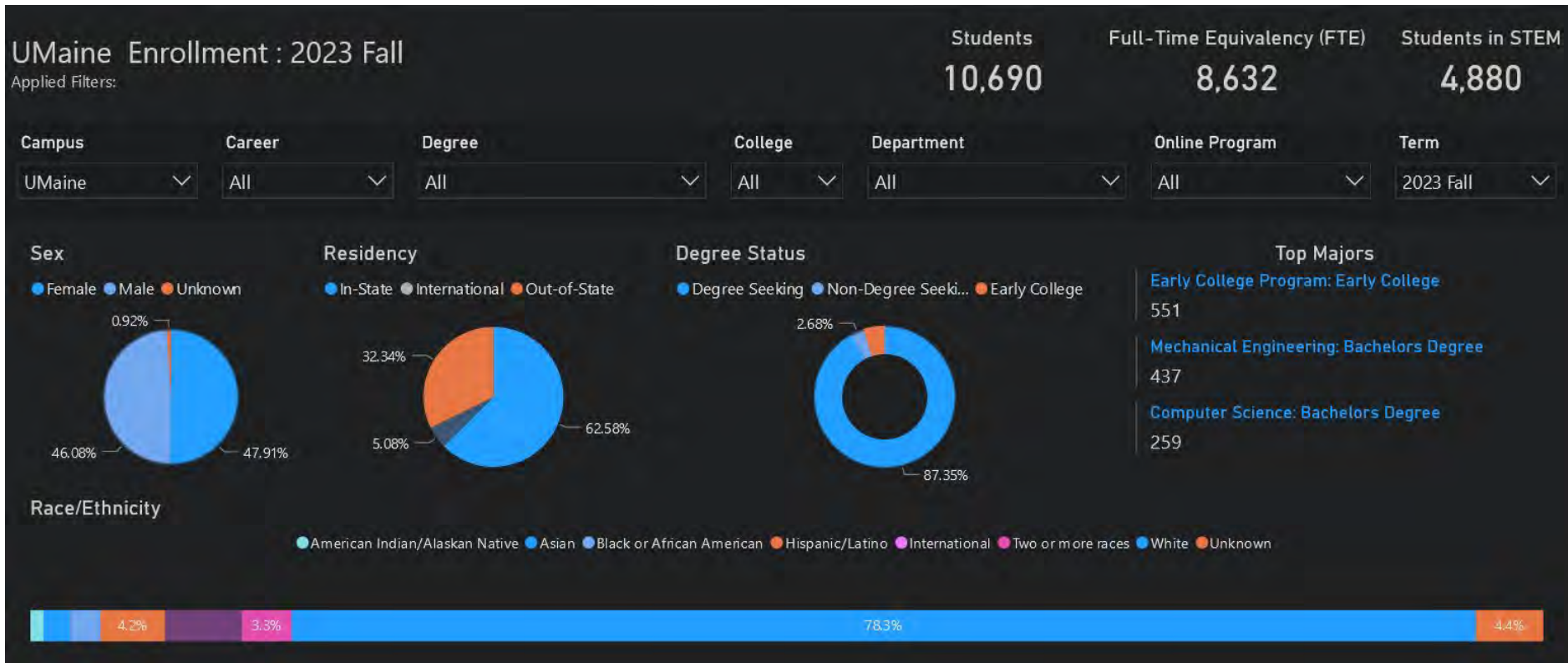
Additionally, some students choose to continue to vote in their home state for a variety of reasons, most notably the perception of the value of their individual vote and specific issues on their ballot.

US State	Headcount
Maine	6,688
Massachusetts	1,337
Connecticut	431
New Hampshire	284
New Jersey	247
New York	232
Pennsylvania	162
Rhode Island	130
California	100
Vermont	90
Maryland	79
Total	10,718

Top State Representation

Landscape: Demographics

For this report we've limited demographic information to students from the U.S. The most recent available data on our dashboard is from Fall 2023.



Landscape: Student Organizations

Our active political/civic engagement student organizations include:

- College Democrats
- College Republicans
- Nonpartisan Political Club
- Turning Point USA at UMaine
- Young Americans for Liberty

While not student organizations, two committees/groups that are involved in civic engagement are:

- Maine Peace Action Committee
- Black Bear Mutual Aid Fund

Landscape: FIRE Rankings

The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) releases annual rankings for speech on college campuses. While the methodology is not ideal, it gives a look into campus climate. FIRE ranks UMaine overall at 141/208 and states our speech climate is Slightly Below Average. Highlights from the 2024 rankings for UMaine are:

- 50% of students say shouting down a speaker to prevent them from speaking on campus is at least rarely acceptable.
- 52% of students say they have self-censored on campus at least once or twice a month.
- 55% of students say they are worried about damaging their reputation because someone misunderstands something they have said or done.
- For every one conservative student, there are roughly 2.0 liberal students.

Landscape: External Barriers

Voter Registration:

- A barrier we regularly face related to voter registration is the inability in Maine to edit voter registration information electronically. Student addresses change every year, regardless if the address is on campus or off. This means even though a student registered to vote the previous year, we need to capture their information again for the town to recognize them as a registered voter. Additionally, registration is at the town/city level instead of the county level like other states. This can create confusion and frustration on election day for students unaware of the policy. However, recent efforts to educate campus on the policy and having staff members working at the registration table have helped. We have been working closely with the Town Clerk and the Maine Secretary of State's Office to help address this barrier. In addition, imminent state-level changes aiming to modernize voter registration will soon be implemented that will help to streamline further efforts at voter registration.

Municipal Elections

- In a March 5th, 2024 local election in Orono, ME, voters approved a Town Charter change to align the local election dates with the general election. Previously, the town elections often fell on Spring Break or during midterms. With this new change we can shift our focus on local election visibility on general election day instead of getting people to the polls an additional time every year.

Goals

We have set the following goals that we would like to achieve over the next academic year:

- Register 90% of eligible first-year students prior to Election Day 2024.
- Visit 45 classes and educate approximately 1600 students, focusing on colleges with lower turnout as determined by NSLVE data.
- Partner with Research Learning Experiences (RLEs) before the Fall semester for voter registration efforts.
 - The Maine Business School, a college with low registration and voting rates, now requires RLE for all incoming students.
- Partner with Athletics to fulfill the NCAA civic engagement mandate.
- Register 100 students through tabling, Constitution Day, and National Voter Registration Day efforts.
- Provide electronic voter education materials to faculty for use in their classroom syllabi.
- Provide opportunities for student organizations, especially affinity groups, to register all their eligible members to vote.
- Collaborate with the Office for Diversity and Inclusion to identify methods to engage underrepresented student populations in the beginning of the Fall semester.

We have also set three goals that we would like to achieve over the next five years:

- Build consistent funding to support this work and pay our student voting ambassadors, ideally through Federal Work Study.
- Build explicit language about civic engagement and political awareness into our campus strategic plan when revised/rewritten.
- Continue research on poll workers and collaborate with state and community-level stakeholders (as well as disseminating the information we gain to others engaged in voter engagement efforts across the country).

Landscape: NSLVE Data Assessment

As of submission, the 2022 NSLVE data has not been made available. We will instead utilize 2020 data.

Voting, Registration and Yield Rates

YOUR INSTITUTION

72.9%

2020 Voting Rate

+10.8

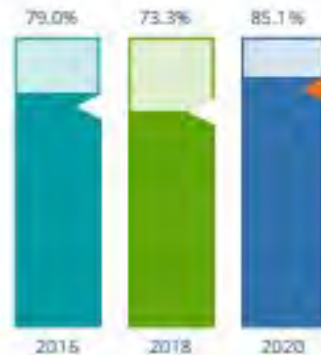
Change From 2016

ALL INSTITUTIONS

66%

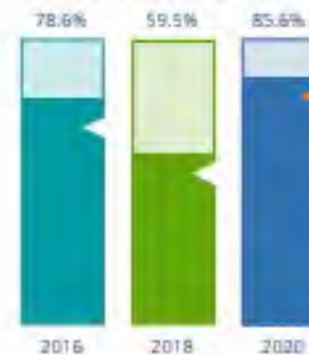
2020 Voting Rate

REGISTRATION RATE



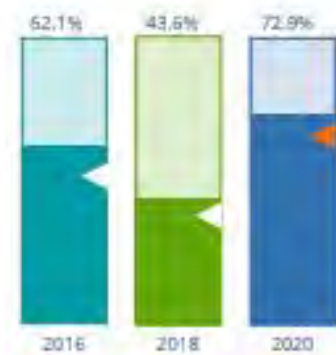
The **Registration Rate** is the percent of your voting-eligible students who registered to vote.

VOTING RATE OF REGISTERED STUDENTS



The **Voting Rate of Registered Students** is the percent of registered students who voted on Election Day. We often refer to this as the "yield" rate.

VOTING RATE



The **Voting Rate** is the percentage of eligible students who voted on Election Day. The voting rate is also the product of the registration and yield rates.

Landscape: Demographics

CAMPUS REPORT: University of Maine

Looking Closer

By Race/Ethnicity

This page provides the numbers we used to calculate race / ethnicity group voting rates. We include the counts of students and the change in rates between the two most recent comparable election years. If you notice unavailable/missing data in this page, it could mean any of the following for your institution: (i) does not report this data; (ii) did not provide this data in past years; (iii) does not separately submit data for one or more of the demographic groups, or (iv) the data is reported for 10 or fewer students.

	2016			2018			2020			2016-2020 Change (p.p)
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	
Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
American Indian/ Alaska Native	155	95	61	139	70	50	120	88	73	↑ 12
Black	248	89	36	240	49	20	274	110	40	↑ 4
Hispanic	343	153	45	427	133	31	520	318	61	↑ 17
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	347	89	26	314	65	21	351	119	34	↑ 8
2 or More Races	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
White	9,399	5,848	62	9,693	4,189	43	9,535	6,957	73	↑ 11
Race Unknown	764	426	56	558	287	51	494	339	69	↑ 13

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We witnessed an increase across all demographics according to our NSLVE data.

As a primarily white institution, it is at the forefront of our planning in ensuring voter education is accessible and equitable to all students. This includes outreach to specific student groups and partnership with student affairs professionals.

Strategy

Short-term:

- Campus wide emails notifying students of opportunities to register to vote and election day information (e.g. same day voter registration, poll location, etc.).
- Regular Tabling opportunities in the Memorial Union for voter education and registration.
- Visiting classes to educate students and help them register to vote.
- Utilize our on-campus Deputy Registrar to minimize delays with paper registration cards
- Creating robust classroom materials for faculty members (syllabi language, and resources for the classroom)
- Recruit students as poll workers to help administer the November 2024 election.
- Build in a robust registration and outreach effort into orientation, research learning experiences, and welcome back weekend in collaboration with the town clerk's office.

Long-term:

- Recruit & train students as poll workers to help administer the Fall 2025 referendum election.
- Further strengthen relationships with town clerks and the Maine Secretary of State's office.
- Expand partnerships with student organizations to create a stable base for civic engagement on campus and poll workers on election day.
- Secure ongoing funding from the University of Maine for our UMaine Student Voting Ambassadors program. We hope to build upper administration buy-in for the highly successful effort we have built on campus.

Reporting

This action plan and the results will be shared on the University of Maine website under the Center for Student Involvement and UMaine UVote pages. Additionally, the results of the action plan will be detailed in the Center for Student Involvement annual report.

This report as well as the NSLVE report will be made available to the public via the website mentioned above. The UMaine UVote webpage will be updated regularly to reflect changes in this plan and updates to voter education and engagement on campus.

Additionally, these reports will be shared with students learning about civic and community engagement through the UMaine UVote Ambassador program and other similar courses/organizations.

<https://umaine.edu/studentlife/uvote/>

Evaluation

We will measure success of this plan through the following:

- Engagement at in-person events related to voter education and registration.
- Tracking attendance and voter registration cards turned in.
- Analyzing NSLVE data for ways to improve engagement across demographics.
- Engagement and collaboration with administrators and allies within underperforming units on campus to assess intra-institutional barriers to student engagement in underperforming units.
- Classroom surveys and feedback regarding access to information around voting.
- Partnership with the Maine chapter of the Scholars Strategy Network, local municipal clerks, and the Maine Secretary of State's Office on a multi-year, grant-funded research project aimed at assessing election enhancement and integrity. (This effort also involves colleagues at Colby College, enhancing our efforts at cross-institutional, statewide collaboration on student voter engagement). For 2024-2025, we will be closely doing experimental field research on poll worker recruitment, while continuing to investigate the impacts of serving as a poll worker on perceptions of election integrity and faith in democratic institutions.