

INSTITUTE FOR
DEMOCRACY &
HIGHER EDUCATION

**ELECTION IMPERATIVES:
Ten Recommendations to Increase College
Student Voting and Improve Political Learning
and Engagement in Democracy**

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Jonathan M. Tisch
College of Civic Life



INSTITUTE FOR
DEMOCRACY &
HIGHER EDUCATION

We study and work to improve ...

- College student voting
- Campus conditions for political learning
- Political equity
- Political discourse
- Classroom teaching for democracy

NSLVE NATIONAL STUDY OF LEARNING, VOTING, AND ENGAGEMENT

YOUR STUDENTS' VOTING DATA | MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Voting and Registration Rates

- Our voting study of nearly 1200 colleges and universities nationally
- 10 million college students per election year
- Voting rate in 2014 – 18%
- Voting rate for 18-24 year-olds – 13%

2014 Voting Rate

16.4%

2014 VOTING RATE FOR ALL INSTITUTIONS

19.1%

Metric	2014 Rate
Registration Rate	56.2%
Voting Rate of Registered Students	24.3%
Voting Rate	16.4%

Our campus climate research: Why are some institutions more (or less) politically and electorally engaged?

Positive outlier

Negative outlier

POLITICS 365

- Social cohesion, strong student faculty relations, shared responsibility
- Diversity and equity as intentional practice
- Pervasive and skillful political discussions
- Student voice and agency, institutional decision-making, activism
- Electoral engagement, elections as a teachable moment

#1 *Reflect on past elections and reimagine 2018.*

Convene senior administrators.

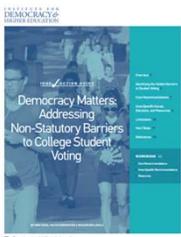
Use your NSLVE campus report to understand identify pockets of engagement and disengagement.

Reflect on past elections.

Set the tone.



#2 *Remove barriers to student voting.*



Use the power of the presidency to identify and remove technical barriers to voting caused by local conditions (polling locations, status of required ID, ease of registration).

Call for help if needed: Fair Elections, ACLU, League of Women Voters, or the Brennan Center.

Support on-line registration.

Remove non-statutory barriers to voting.

#3 *Develop informed voters.*

Offer courses, teach-ins, forums, and modules to teach the history and current status of voting rights in this country. Follow Supreme Court rulings relevant to voting.

Use elections to teach students to fact check and distinguish facts from fake "facts."

Teach students *how to vote*.

Help students learn where their vote might make the biggest difference, if they have the option of where to vote.



#4 *Establish a permanent and inclusive coalition to improve the climate for learning and participation.*



Be intentional about the diversity of the group. Use best practices in coalition building. *Examine the research.* 

Establish a broader charge than just voting. Connect learning, inclusion, agency, and participation.

Maintain the coalition beyond the election season 

#5 *Invest in the right kind of training.*

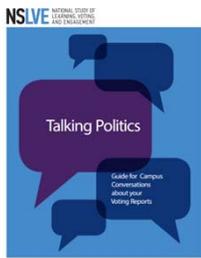
Train coalition members, students, and staff working on election activities on behalf of the institution to engage in politically charged dialogues.

Strategically group volunteers to advance diversity and inclusion. 

Rethink how people are approached. Ask, don't tell. Use best practices in active listening. 



#6 *Talk politics across campus.*



Talk about your institution's NSLVE data, policy issues, and social conflicts.

Use elections to increase and improve discussion skills.

Reinforce norms of shared responsibility; discuss the tensions around free speech and inclusion.

Cultivate a cadre of trained facilitators and structures for campus-wide discussions.

#7 & 8 *Involve faculty across disciplines in elections.*

Increase and improve classroom issue discussions across disciplines.

Encourage in-class discussions about issues across the curriculum.

Support faculty development in the arts of discussion-based teaching and managing classroom conflict.

Use disciplinary clubs as venues for discussion.

Ask faculty to nudge. 🍌



#9 & 10 *Support student activism and leadership.*

Empower students to create a buzz around the election.

Be encouraging, nimble, and responsive to student activism. Turn activism into campus leadership. 🍌

Train election activists in the arts of collaborative leadership and planning.

Make elections fun; create a buzz. 🍌



GOT ANY...



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Institute for Democracy & Higher Education
Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life
Tufts University
(617) 627-4802
idhe@tufts.edu
