



11 Campuses Participate with ALL IN Challenge in NESCAC Votes Initiative

The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge is pleased to announce the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC) Votes initiative, a collaboration with Amherst College (Mass.), Bates College (Maine), Bowdoin College (Maine), Colby College (Maine), Connecticut College, Hamilton College (N.Y.), Middlebury College (Vt.), Trinity College (Conn.), Tufts University (Mass.), Wesleyan University (Mass.), and Williams College (Mass.). The NESCAC Votes initiative seeks to fulfill a responsibility of higher education to graduate informed and civically engaged citizens and to advocate for a more inclusive democracy through increasing voter registration and turnout rates across all of our campuses and, in turn, the nation.

NESCAC Votes aims to tackle the issue of low college student voter turnout by advancing nonpartisan civic learning and voter participation on each of the 11 campuses. Stakeholders from each of the campuses will participate in a series of conference calls and a summit designed to support collaboration, catalyze the adoption of promising practices, and develop common resources and means to advance student civic learning, political engagement, and informed voter participation.

The initiative grew out of collaborations between staff at Middlebury College, Bowdoin College and the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in summer 2018. It relies on groundbreaking research and analysis on college-student voting conducted by Tufts University's Institute for Democracy & Higher Education. In March 2019, the NESCAC Votes Initiative was formally announced when President Clayton Rose of Bowdoin College and President Laurie Patton of Middlebury College jointly issued an invitation to the other NESCAC presidents to participate. The inaugural effort aims to increase the voter turnout

rate by at least 11 percentage points across the 11NESCAC campuses in the 2020 general election, from an average of 53% to 64%.

The initiative is modeled, in part, on two non-partisan college voter engagement efforts; [Southern Conference \(SoCon\) Votes](#) and the [Big Ten Voting Challenge](#) that seek to increase civic and voter participation amongst college students.

Jennifer Domagal-Goldman, executive director of the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, says initiatives like NESCAC Votes “focus collective energy on adopting data-driven practices and institutionalizing campus efforts to help students develop the skills needed to be active and informed participants in our democracy.”

NESCAC Votes will support voting efforts to encourage more than 31,000 college students on 11 campuses to participate in our political process. Participating campuses will appoint a campus coordinator to help establish and lead a campus-wide nonpartisan democratic engagement coalition of dedicated students, faculty, staff, and community partners.

Additionally each of the 11 campuses commits to participating in the [National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement](#), conducted by NESCAC’s own Tufts University, which provides more than 1,100 participating colleges and universities an opportunity to learn their student registration and voting rates, the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, and a NESCAC Votes Summit in October 2019 at Middlebury College’s Breadloaf campus.

Middlebury College President Laurie Patton described the importance of NESCAC Votes: “Preparing students for engagement in the issues of our day is central to the educational mission of our institutions. NESCAC Votes is a meaningful partnership that allows us to build on our collective institutional strengths and collaborate to deepen civic learning and engagement within our individual campuses.”

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

Since 2016 the [ALL In Campus Democracy Challenge](#), a program of [Civic Nation](#), has been supporting and recognizing campuses committed to advancing nonpartisan democratic engagement by increasing opportunities for student civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation.