

UW-Parkside: National report notes 2020 student voting numbers up on campus

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SOMERS, Wis. – A national study on voting and engagement recently reported that University of Wisconsin-Parkside student voting numbers increased during last year's presidential election, jumping from 56 percent in 2016 to 58 percent in 2020.

The report comes from the [Institute for Democracy & Higher Education](#) (IDHE), creators of the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). The institute is located at Tufts University's [Tisch College of Civic Life](#).

Of the students on campus, the report noted that 68 percent registered to vote, and 85 percent of these students voted. This resulted in a voting rate of nearly 20 percentage points above the national average. The full campus report can be viewed on [The Election Experience website](#).

"I am especially encouraged to note that the participation rates of African American and Hispanic students at UW- Parkside increased by 7 percent and 6 percent respectively," said Peggy James, dean of the College of Social Sciences and Professional Studies. "With this increase, we have begun to close the equity gap in voting that exists between non-white and white populations."

Since 2012, UW-Parkside has declared fall semesters during the Presidential elections to be an Election Experience. The experience offers students the opportunity to hear speakers, attend workshops, register to vote, and take part in other activities to promote civic engagement.

Beginning in 2020, the campus now partners with the Andrew Goodman Foundation to increase active citizenship, with student civic ambassadors to engage students even during non-presidential election years. During the COVID pandemic, [the campus](#) has also held virtual presentations, outside registration events, and even a pumpkin giveaway for registered voters.

Nationwide, the report showed record-breaking increases in student voter turnout. On campuses across the country, students built on the momentum reported during the mid-terms in 2018 and voted at high rates in the 2020 election. Voter turnout jumping 14 points, from 52 percent in 2016 to 66 percent last fall. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, that jump outpaces the national average, which increased six points from 61% to 67%.

“That students, often younger and first-time voters, turned out at rates commensurate with the general public is nothing short of stunning,” said IDHE Director Nancy Thomas. “We attribute this high level of participation to many factors, including student activism on issues such as racial injustice, global climate change and voter suppression, as well as increased efforts by educators to reach students and connect them to the issues and to voting resources.”

The IDHE’s National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement is the nation’s largest study of college and university student voting. The dataset reflects all 50 states and the District of Columbia and includes 49 of the nation’s 50 flagship schools.