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How Colleges and Universities Should Understand and Use Student Voting Data

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The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) is a signature initiative of the Institute for Democracy and Higher Education (IDHE) at Tufts University's Tisch College. It is both a service to the higher education community and a significant research initiative. As a service, IDHE sends participating institutions confidential, individual NSLVE (pronounced "n-solve") reports containing their students' registration and voting rates. The reports provide *institutional-level* rates, as well as *student-level* rates broken down by student characteristics such as age, class level, field of study, and race and gender, if available. To date, IDHE has issued reports for the 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018 federal elections. Consisting of nearly 10 million de-identified student records per election year combined with publicly available voter files, the database also offers a significant resource for research.

This brief is meant to help institutional leaders and staff, faculty members, students, and others understand and put in perspective NSLVE student voting rates. A second, related, brief shares the top-line results from the 2018 midterm election.