

Campus: Rutgers University; New Brunswick draft

Point of Contact:

Lori L. Smith
Associate Director
Department of Student Centers and Involvement
Division of Student Affairs

Collaborating Faculty /Staff Members:

Elizabeth C. Matto, Ph.D.
Assistant Research Professor
Director, Youth Political Participation Program
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Brendan L. Keating
Program Coordinator, Youth Political Participation Program
Eagleton Institute of Politics

Jonathan Miller
Graduate Student Advisor
Department of Student Centers and Involvement
Division of Student Affairs

Collaborating Student Leaders:

Connie Capone
Undergraduate Intern
RU Voting™

Annabelle Cholula
Undergraduate Intern
Department of Student Centers and Involvement

Evan Covello
Vice President
Rutgers University Student Assembly

Avi Desai
Legislative Affairs Chairperson
Rutgers University Student Assembly

Gaelen Molina
Undergraduate Intern
RU Voting™

Damilola Onifade
Undergraduate Intern
RU Voting™

Shay Reid

Undergraduate Intern
RU Voting™

Stephanie Sadighi
Peer Advisor
Department of Student Centers and Involvement

Ela Yalcin,
Undergraduate Intern
RU Voting™

ALL IN CAMPUS DEMOCRACY CHALLENGE

Action Plan

Currently Rutgers University participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) through Tufts University. This project collected data on Rutgers University Undergraduate student participation in 2012 and 2014, for both voter registration, and for voter turnout in the federal elections. The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge requires participating schools to benchmark improvement and participation, the NSLV reports will assist in that process. The NSLVE data for the 2016 election has not been shared with Rutgers University at the time of this report.

The NSLVE process provided guidance to approaching the topic of civic engagement and engaging a variety of areas of the New Brunswick university community in creating a campus culture of student voter participation.

Working Goals*:

- Building relationships between various campus partners (departments, organizations, staff, faculty, and students) in an effort to identify common concerns with achieving a student body that is civically engaged in the voting and political processes.
- Envisioning a more civically/politically engaged institution with campus partners.
- Identifying areas of strengths and institutional assets (programs, people, capacities, and interests) that facilitate student civic/political learning at Rutgers.
- Identifying impediments/barriers to achieving a civically engaged student body through conversations and brainstorming with campus partners.
- Identifying solutions with campus partners and implementing as possible.
- Identifying on-going mechanisms to support this type of learning and engagement outside of presidential election years.

*Adapted from Tufts NSLVE Campus Report Discussion Guide

Planning Calendar

May

- Convene as a planning group to discuss the NJSE data and identify common barriers/concerns to student participation in the 2016 election.

- Brainstorm on existing programs / institutional assets that could be used or enhanced to encourage and improve student participation.
- Brainstorm ways to create a campus climate of student voting and a more politically engaged institution.
- Work with Rutgers University Student Assembly (undergraduate student government) president to add themes related to political engagement into orientation addresses.
- Schedule voter registration tables for every orientation session throughout summer.
- Identify barriers to voter registration.
- Contract with *TurboVote*.
- Review official voter information web site and update with current information. Site: Ruvoting.rutgers.edu

June

- Identify classes that support civic engagement in their mission.
- Provide on-going voter registration at Summer Orientation Resource fairs (approximately three a week) for June programs.
- Clarify plan to include three prongs:

Registration

- How to register → Steps to register
- How to get absentee info
- How to make the address change
- Where are you registered (include link to the NJ site)?
- What are the dates to know?
 - When to register in time for 2016 election?
 - When to request a mail-in ballot?
 - When to send your mail-in ballot?
 - When the elections are?

Education

- Why you should be voting?
- What are the dates to know?
- What are the candidates' platforms/positions on issues?
- Where to get candidate information
- Awareness of information the university already provides on this
- How can you do your own research?

Mobilization- Polls

(Advertising through social media and email listservs of where students can go to vote. More updates on how to submit vote by mail ballots.

- How do you get to the polls?
- Where are you voting? (How do you get this information)

July

- Collaborate with Department of Student Affairs Marketing to design images related to student election participation.
- Provide on-going voter registration at Summer Orientation Resource fairs (approximately three a week) for July Programs.

August

- Collaborate with Residence Life to develop programming and messaging for Residence Life facilities and groups.
- Provide on-going voter registration at Summer Orientation Resource fairs (approximately three a week) for August Programs.
- Create **I am Voting RU?** T-shirt campaign to raise visibility of student voter participation and increase perception that all students are planning on voting.
- Brainstorm Election Info Card or Infographics.
- Provide talking points to Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs related to engaging student leaders as participants in creating a civically engaged student culture at Rutgers; for Student Leader Welcome on August 31st.

September

- Collaborate with University Transportation Services to develop shuttle schedule to out of the way election polling locations for students.
- Reserve van to advertise Voter Shuttles concept at Involvement Fair.
- Research and purchase bunting/decorations for Voting Van.
- Provide voter registration process training to RU Voting™ interns and additional sessions open to interested student leaders.
- Coordinate strong presence at Fall Student Involvement fair – decorate van to advertise shuttle to Election Polling locations, roll out social media for **I am Voting RU?**, and register voters as a collaboration of Rutgers University Student Assembly (undergraduate student government) and Eagleton/ RU Voting™.
- Distribute **I am Voting RU?** T-shirts and voter registration information at Student Organization Officer training; student staff trainings; student government meetings and town hall events.
- Coordinate reservations for Debate Watch Events and Mock Debates.
- Distribute email blasts to New Student Orientation (NSO) students and all registered students regarding key vote related dates and deadlines.

October

- Collaborate with University Departments and Student Organizations to provide debate watch programs.
- Secure sample ballots to share with student leaders.
- Hold mock debate with campus student organizations.
- Distribute **I am Voting RU?** T-shirts at the four Debate Watches.
- Create and roll out Snapchat filters to contribute to awareness of voter registration.

November

- Distribute Election Polling Location Shuttle Bus(s) information to campus departments and student organizations.
- Distribute **I am Voting RU?** T-shirts at Polling Shuttle Bus(s) pick up points.
- Distribute email blasts to student affairs staff members about voting polling and informational support information.
- Distribute email blasts to NSO students and all registered students regarding polling locations.

- Roll out Youth Participation Project's "I am voting because..." social media campaign.
- Roll out flyers and social media on "Do you know where your polling place is?"
- Provide information online about reading a ballot and understanding the policy plans of a variety of candidates/how to get quality information on election candidates.
- Create and roll out Snapchat filters to contribute to awareness of Election Day.
- Coordinate final Election Watch Events.
- Create and roll out voting widget for Sakai and other University IT sites.

December

- Reconvene planning group and discuss continuing past this election cycle.

Campus Partners Initiatives:

A variety of campus partners collaborated to provide a variety of programs related to the election process and civic engagement. Some examples include:

TurboVote

Student Involvement and Rutgers University Student Assembly contracted with *TurboVote*, an application that partners with colleges and universities to increase engagement in registration and elections. It keeps track of registration and vote-by-mail policies for all 50 states. Students input their information online for voter registration. *TurboVote* will then send them the completed registration form with stamped and addressed envelopes that students need to send out to complete their registration. The program will also send text and email reminders about registration deadlines and upcoming elections in their area. *TurboVote* also gives students the option of voting by mail, and will help them through the necessary steps to do so. All of the data collected is encrypted and secured.

- Total visits to the site: 166
- 114 of those users kicked off the process of registering to vote with the help of *TurboVote*.
 - 111 of those users took steps to register by mail using a paper form
 - 3 of those users followed the link to a state online voter registration portal
- 39 of those users were already registered to vote upon arriving at *TurboVote* and used the service for absentee ballot assistance and/or election reminders only.
- 12 users are listed as "unknown" /they dropped off somewhere in the signup process. The system would still serve them with location-specific reminders.
- Site: Rutgers.turbovote.org

Shuttles to off-campus vote/polling locations

The Rutgers University Student Assembly (undergraduate student government), Eagleton/ RU Voting™, and Department of Transportation Services partnered in providing shuttles buses to off-campus vote/polling locations. Due to limitation of available shuttles, priority was given to polling locations the most difficult for students to access. Locations for pickup and drop-off to voting locations include:

- Biel Road Bus Stop TO Parsons School (11 minutes)
- Biel Road Bus Stop TO Lord Sterling Community School (8 minutes)

I am Voting RU? T-shirts

The Department of Student Centers and Involvement purchased and distributed 2,500 “I am Voting RU?” T-shirts to be used as incentives in a social media campaign related to voter registration and creating a climate in which students vote. Kickoff for this was at the Student Involvement Fair on September 5th. Additional shirts were distributed at Student Organization Officer Trainings, Constitution Day, National Voter Registration Day, Debate Watches, Voter Registration Tabling events, at Polling Shuttle pick up Locations, and to student leaders.

Summer Orientation

RU Voting™ provided voter registration information tables at over 19 orientation sessions for new, international, and transfer students to the university. The Rutgers University Student Assembly (undergraduate student government) included voting/civic engagement themes in their welcome address and at their water bottle distribution area at registration for each orientation session. These initiatives reached about 6,019 students new to the university. These can be broken down to 4,867 first years and 1,152 transfer students.

Student Leader Welcome

The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs provided key messages on voting and creating a climate for civic engagement to over 1,000 student leaders at the Student Leader Welcome on August 31st.

“How to Register” Infographic

Darien Civic Engagement Project created a handy infographic walking students through the steps for registering to vote in NJ.

From Conflict to Civility Workshop

Student Leadership and Experiential Learning planned a *Backpack to Briefcase Series* workshop on “From Conflict to Civility “ November 2, 7:30pm at the LSC Gathering Lounge.

Voting Reminder Calls/Texts

RU Voting™ interns called over 350 students during get-out-the-vote efforts to inform them of their on-campus polling locations. TurboVote sent reminders to another 166 students. Several student organizations also provided phone/text reminders to an unreported number of students.

Mock Presidential Debate

The Rutgers University Debate Union performed on October 11th at Douglass Student Center as actual presidential candidates and answered student questions about the election. This event coordinated by Rutgers University Student Assembly and the Rutgers University Debate Union, and co-sponsored by Rutgers Republicans, Rutgers University Democrats, RU Progressive, Rutgers for Trump, Rutgers for Hillary, Young Greens at Rutgers University, and Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University.

Email Blasts

The Division of Student Affairs provided blast emails to all Student Affairs staff members reminding them of student election polling locations and other election related information/resources. Eagleton also used MailChimp.com to send email blasts to the following student lists:

- New Student Orientation
- On-campus Organizations
- Voter Registration Database

“I am voting because...” Social Media Campaign

Youth Political Participation Program (YPPP) coordinated a social media campaign for students to post pictures of themselves with a statement about why they are voting to demonstrate the personal effects of participation.

Snapchat Filters

RU Voting™, Student Involvement, and Rutgers University Student Assembly collaborated to create and promote Snapchat filters related to voting processes.

The filter use was:

- Busch: 902 views, 32 uses
- College Avenue: 1,684 views, 120 uses
- Livingston: 1,049 views, 74 uses
- Cook: 337 views, 20 uses
- Douglass: 256 views, 21 uses

Instagram

RU Voting™ also created and utilized Instagram to better reach students with a variety of civic engagement messages.

“Do you know where your polling place is?” Info Campaign

RU Voting™, Residence Life, and NJ Board of Elections collaborated to provide a clear web page document explaining local polling sites for students on the New Brunswick campus. As residential students live in three actual townships, polling location information was confusing. In addition to the web site, interns distributed flyers to residential areas, provided email blasts to students and staff, and launched a social media campaign with links on how to look up locations.

Electoral College Debate (Pizza & Politics)

Rutgers University Debate Union met on September 20, 6:30pm – 7:30pm at the Alexander Library Teleconference Room; students debated whether the Electoral College should be abolished, followed by a discussion with a panel of experts.

Give Me the Facts! A Guide for Finding Credible Election News

Youth Political Participation Program (YPPP) provided online resources for students to better process validity of news information including 5 things to keep in mind while looking at the news.

<http://yppp.rutgers.edu/give-me-the-facts/>

Wake Up Rutgers!

On September 19th, members of the RU Voting™ Team appeared on *Wake Up Rutgers* campus television show detailing some of the get-out-the-vote programs available this fall!

Helpful Tips for Reading Public Opinion Polls

In an effort to assist students further in being informed on the candidates, Youth Political Participation Program (YPPP), published online resources and developed a social media campaign to assist students in reading and comprehending the data shared in a public opinion poll. <http://yppp.rutgers.edu/helpful-tips-for-reading-public-opinion-polls/>

Constitution Day Speaker: Tracey Meares - "Policing and Its Reform In The 21st Century: Creating A New Narrative Of Public Security"

Lecture was held on September 28, 7pm – 8pm, at Douglass Student Center. The 2016 Constitution Day Lecture was presented by YPPP and the Darien Fund for the US Constitution, Citizenship, and Civic Engagement. The featured speaker was Tracey Meares, the Walton Hale Hamilton Professor and Director of the Justice Collaboratory at Yale Law School. In 2014, Professor Meares was nominated to President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

Young Elected Leaders Project

This project shared a social media campaign about 5 of the candidates running for Congress from NJ who are under 35 years of age.

Debate Watches

- "Popcorn and Politics" - Presidential Debate Watch on Monday, September 26, 2016 at Eagleton Institute of Politics.
- Vice President Debate Watch on Tuesday, October 4, 8pm – 10pm at Barr Residence Hall
- Presidential Debate watch party at The Yard! on October 9, 7pm – 10pm at College Avenue Apartments / The Yard.
- Presidential Debate Watch on October 19, 2016.

Election Night Viewing Party (CASC)

The Department of Student Leadership and Experiential Learning hosted an *Election Night Viewing Party* during Leadership Week, November 8th at 7pm – 1:30am at the College Avenue Student Center (CASC). The event included a walk-through a tunnel of past presidents with information and old video clips playing, the choice to sit on the side of the room showing CNN or the side of the room covering the election from Fox News, and a variety of performances, games, and activities for students such as the opportunity to interact with and respond to some of the issues surrounding the election and the candidates' platforms. Some popular activities included: Play Political Trivia, Who Said It, Electoral Map BINGO and pin the tail on the donkey/trunk on the elephant. Approximately 375-400 students participated in the event throughout the night.

Election Night Viewing Party (SCREAM Theater)

SCREAM Theater, advised by Department of Violence Prevention and Victims' Assistance held an election results viewing party on November 8th in Murray Hall from 9:15pm -12:30am. Thirty group members attended this livestream event and held a group discussion as the results were announced.

Election Night Watch Party (Hillel)

Rutgers Hillel held an election results viewing party on November 8th in Hillel Building from 7:00pm - 3:00am. Forty group members attended this livestream event with games and held a group discussion as the results were announced.

Knowing who is on the ballot

Eagleton Institute of Politics created an online resource to knowing who is on the ballot in NJ.
<http://eagleton.rutgers.edu/programs/njvoterinfo/index.php>

Voter Registration Training

RU Voting™ student interns provided training for student leaders on correct processes to register students in person throughout September and October. Some examples of these trainings include:

- Voter Registration Training for Darien Civic Engagement Project on Thursday, September 8, 10:55am – 12:15pm at Eagleton Institute of Politics.
- Voter Registration Training on September 12, 8pm – 10pm at Scott Hall.
- Voter Registration Training on September 13, 10am – 12pm at Red Lion Café.
- Voter Registration Training on September 21, 2pm-4pm at College Avenue Student Center.
- Held training for members of Arab Cultural Club, Latino Student Council, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, and West Indian Student Organizations.

Formal Voter Registration Events

- Cook/Douglas Community Day 2016 on September 13, 4pm – 7pm at Passion Puddle on Red Oak Lane.
- Constitution Day Voter Registration Drive on September 15, 10am – 2pm and 4pm-6pm at College Avenue Student Center & Douglass Student Center.
- National Voter Registration Day Drive on September 27, 10am – 2pm at College Avenue Student Center and Douglass Student Center.
- National Voter Registration Day Drive on September 27, 4pm – 7pm at Busch Student Center and Livingston Student Center.
- Pre-Tracey Meares Voter Registration Drive on September 28, 6pm – 7pm at Douglass Student Center.
- Scarlet Day of Service Voter Registration Drive on October 1, 9:30am – 12:00pm at Lot 30.
- Voter Registration Day Drive on October 5, 10:30am-1pm at Voorhees Chapel.
- Latino Student Council/RU Voting Registration Drive on October 11, 10am – 1pm at the Center for Latino Arts and Culture.
- Voter Registration Drive on October 12, 10am – 11am at The Honors College of Rutgers.
- Eagleton Revolutionary Voter Registration Drive on October 13, 2pm – 4pm at Eagleton Institute of Politics.
- Henderson Hall Voter Registration Drive -RA Hope McGraw partnered with RU Voting™ and baked cookies in the common area. The voter registration event was advertised throughout the building.
- Knowledge and Power Plenary Voter Registration at Douglass College. RU Voting™ partnered with Knowledge & Power/Barbara Voorhees Mentor Program.
- Scarlet Knight Registration Day at The RAC and Hale Center on October 17th.

All political student organizations held in-person voter registration drives. Both Presidential candidates have student organizations active on campus. One campus organization alone registered over 2,600 potential voters through in-person tabling, poster and social media campaigns, and through the studentvote.org website. From September 5th through October 18th, the interns at RU Voting™ registered over 1,100 students.

The greatest impediment to registering voters was the actual NJ Voter Registration form. The form was not easy for students to fill out properly with little guidance. Despite offering training on how to administer the form, many student group efforts resulted in incomplete forms. Sites such as

TurboVote were not tailored enough to the NJ process to help students clearly register to vote using on-campus addresses. Rutgers has residence halls in over 3 townships, a tailored site which allowed students to choose their hall from a drop down menu might be more appropriate.

Interesting Registration Statistics based on RU Voting™ Formal Voter Registration Efforts**
RU Voting™ had a relatively even distribution of on-campus registrations:

- Busch: 132
- College Ave: 143
- Livingston: 94
- Cook/Douglass: 155

In terms of off-campus registrations, Middlesex County had by far the highest concentration of students registered at a total of 817. Out of that 817, 524 lived in University owned housing. RU Voting™ registered 168 students who lived off-campus in New Brunswick and 19 in Piscataway. When RU Voting™ created a bar chart of the other counties in the state (excluding Middlesex), they realized that most of the students that registered “at home” lived in counties within 30 minutes drive or accessible by public transportation. One striking anomaly was Bergen county, which did not fall into the county groupings, “within 30 minute drive” or accessible by “public transportation”.

** Information adapted from RU Voting™ 2016 Recap report draft.

Student Media and the Election

Student media sources such as the *The Daily Targum* were another mechanism for engaging students about the 2016 Election. Some stories were intentionally planned by Targum staff writers, while others were editorials written by students engaged in a social action/political student organizations, or backing a particular candidate.

The Daily Targum Posts on Voting/Presidential Campaign 2016

- PIQUERO: Trump has uncanny ability to rebound; 09/08/16 7:19pm
 - <http://www.dailytargum.com/article/2016/09/trump-has-uncanny-ability-to-rebound>
- UZUMCU: Trump is mouth-piece to racist ideologies; 09/19/16 7:20pm
 - <http://www.dailytargum.com/article/2016/09/trump-is-mouth-piece-to-racist-ideologies>
- What do Rutgers students have to say about Trump's tax returns?; 10/17/16 11:28pm
 - <http://www.dailytargum.com/article/2016/10/what-do-rutgers-students-have-to-say-about-trumps-tax-returns>
- PIQUERO: We are witnessing Donald Trump’s political downfall; 10/20/16 8:53pm
 - <http://www.dailytargum.com/article/2016/10/we-are-witnessing-donald-trumps-political-downfall>
- Rutgers: Anti-immigrant graffiti on campus falls under freedom of speech; 10/26/16 7:00pm
 - <http://www.dailytargum.com/article/2016/10/rutgers-anti-immigrant-graffiti-on-campus-falls-under-freedom-of-speech>
- With 2016 election nearing, Rutgers students pick sides; 10/24/16 12:03am
 - <http://www.dailytargum.com/article/2016/10/with-2016-election-nearing-rutgers-students-pick-sides>
- EDITORIAL: What are you going to do Nov. 8?; 10/26/16 5:56pm
 - <http://www.dailytargum.com/article/2016/10/what-are-you-going-to-do-nov-8>

- Rutgers for Trump counters pro-immigration march down College Avenue; 11/02/16 1:55am
 - <http://www.dailytargum.com/article/2016/11/rutgers-for-trump-counters-pro-immigration-march-down-college-avenue>
- COMMENTARY: Citizens need better political education; 11/01/16 7:06pm
 - <http://www.dailytargum.com/article/2016/11/citizens-need-better-political-education>
- COMMENTARY: Which came first, Trump or election?; 11/02/16 6:40pm
 - <http://www.dailytargum.com/article/2016/11/which-came-first-trump-or-election>
- VIDEO on Rutgers Protest; <https://www.facebook.com/thedailytargum/?fref=ts> ; November 3, 2016
- LILIKAS: Politics can be considered catch-22 of social media; 11/03/16 8:35pm
 - <http://www.dailytargum.com/article/2016/11/politics-can-be-considered-catch-22-of-social-media>
- Barchi: "Vote. I don't care what the choice looks like."; 11/03/16 11:06pm
 - <http://www.dailytargum.com/article/2016/11/barchi-vote-i-dont-care-what-the-choice-looks-like>
- Rutgers students canvass for Hillary Clinton in Philadelphia; November 6, 2016
 - <http://www.dailytargum.com/article/2016/11/rutgers-for-hillary-travels-to-philadelphia-to-recruit-votes-for-candidate>
- EDITORIAL: Don't use scare tactics to earn your votes; November 6, 2016
 - <http://www.dailytargum.com/article/2016/11/dont-use-scare-tactics-to-earn-your-votes>
- 25 percent of millennials prefer meteor strike over Trump, Clinton, study finds: November 6, 2016
 - <http://www.dailytargum.com/article/2016/11/25-of-millennials-prefer-meteor-strike-over-trumpclinton-study-finds>

Academic Experiences offered to support Civic Engagement

Rutgers University offered a wide array of academic coursework related to civic engagement. A sample of these experiences include:

Darien Civic Engagement Project (DCEP) / Topics in Political Science: Citizenship and Civic Engagement

In conjunction with their coursework, DCEP students met together weekly, helped organize and participated in voter registration drives on campus through RU Voting™, and participated in a public presentation at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at the end of the semester.

Eagleton Institute of Politics: Youth Political Participation Program

RU Voting™ project was dedicated to registering, educating, and mobilizing students to participate in the political process. RU Voting™ efforts were supplemented by research, conducted by Professor Elizabeth Matto and a team of undergraduate researchers, regarding the civic and political engagement of Rutgers students specifically, and young adults nationwide.

Diversity and the Politics of Higher Education

Students in this Byrne seminar explored the issues involved with "Diversity and the Politics of Higher Education." In particular, they addressed diversity (racial, ethnic, gender, class, language, religious, sexual identity, and dis/ability) and how these issues of diversity shape the politics of higher education and "who gets what, when and how" (Laswell, 1936). At the close of the class, students had the

opportunity to speak with leading Rutgers professors and administrators who are first-generation college attendees about their own collegiate experiences.

News, Entertainment and Politics (formerly News, Film and Politics)

Students examined the connections between Hollywood and documentary style film formats and American politics from a news perspective.

You and the 2016 Election - What to Watch, How to Watch, and How to Participate

In this First Year/Byrne seminar, students discussed the politics of this very long election season and tried to understand the dynamics on the ground. Students met with guest speakers and looked at issues such as: Who is donating money to the candidates?, How is money raised and spent in presidential elections?, Do candidate debates matter?, What is the role and impact of today's media in our national elections?, Are some groups of voters more important than others?, etc.

Advanced Topics in Women and Politics: Gender, Race, and the American Party System

Students examined party scholarship related to race/ethnicity and gender. Students considered whether attention to gender and race/ethnicity can contribute to party theory and debated the usefulness of party scholarship for understanding gender/race/ethnic politics.