

**Raritan Valley Community
College**



**ALL IN CHALLENGE: 2022
Action Plan**

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ALL IN ACTION PLAN

Executive Summary

The ALL IN Challenge Action Plan was developed by the Director of Service Learning and Community Outreach, the Director of Student Life, and Assistant Director of Student Life in conjunction with Student Government Association members. Initially, a campus-wide team was convened that also included Student Clubs, Academic Affairs, Library and other campus members. The plan formalizes Raritan Valley Community College's (RVCC) commitment to:

- Helping students develop civic literacy as well as self-awareness as citizens;
- Promoting intentional service activities for college students to become democratically engaged in political processes;
- Enhancing dialogues about issues affecting students, the community, and the world; and
- Providing opportunities for students to effect positive change in their communities through knowledge, advocacy, and action.

Working to increase awareness of the political process, especially voter registration and voting, is the primary goal of this action plan. Education of our student voters is of paramount importance; the ability to make informed decisions when voting is critical to the functioning of our democracy.

RVCC has a rich history in student democratic engagement practices. RVCC joined the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) in 2012, 2014, 2016, etc. This plan, effective September 30th, 2022 through May 10th, 2023, provides time for the students, faculty and staff to implement the goals as the nation participates in the midterm elections. The Director of Student Life and Director of Service Learning will collaborate with student clubs, faculty and staff to create and implement events and activities outlined in the plan.

Leadership

RVCC's 2022 RVotesMatter campaign will be run by the Student Government Association (SGA), as was done in years prior, which is advised by Russell Barefoot and other members of the faculty. The SGA will then create committees responsible for the recruitment of student activists on the campus in order to help push the goal for increased voter turnout in local elections and the pursuit of civic duty. By the end of the SGA's one-year term, a new body of students will be formally elected and will continue the activities and goals as outlined within this action plan. These new students will be trained by prior SGA members in the procedure in how the SGA tackles the RVotesMatter Campaign, along with giving opportunities for these new students to experiment and implement new strategies within the campaign itself. In this way, the new team of students a part of the SGA will be able to effectively fulfill the goals as outlined within this plan, but also have their own level of creativity in the way they choose to design their plan in their respective term(s).

The SGA will work with a variety of different academic, special interest and civic minded clubs and organizations in order to help further the goals of the RVotesMatter Campaign, and will utilize these clubs and organizations to help sponsor events, work at promo tables, etc. Organized below are organizations and student led clubs that work with the RVotesMatter Campaign, on an external and internal level.

- I. Internal Organizations: Clubs and Organizations already on Campus and led by Faculty and Students
 - Student Government Association (SGA)
 - RVotesMatter Campaign Committee (Hosted by the SGA)
 - Raritan Valley Community College Student Life Office (RVCC Student Life)
 - The Record (RVCC Student Newspaper)
 - Young Democratic Socialists of America (RVCC YDSA)
 - Young Americans for Freedom (RVCC YAF)
- II. External Organizations: Organizations that, while not stationed on campus, help the RVotesMatter Campaign operate on campus.
 - National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE)
 - League of Women Voters (LWV)
 - All in Campus Democracy Challenge

What these two lists show here is the breakdown in the leadership of the RVotesMatter campaign and how it works with the various external and internal organizations that interact to make the goal of improved voter rates possible. For starters, RVotesMatter events and promo tables are

often times manned by students a part of the SGA and are planned by the RVotesMatter Campaign Committee, which then are publicized by the RVConnect app and fast cards created by the Student Life office. Furthermore, if a student club or organization wishes to host their own event independent of the RVotesMatter Campaign that is civically minded, they can do so at their own discretion. What this allows for is a constant stream of civic information and opportunities for activism on campus and the continued participation of students without the holdbacks of having to acquire approval from parties within the RVotesMatter campaign.

At the time of writing this action plan, the following people make up the RVotesMatter Campaign, categorized by their role within the organization, is as followed:

Faculty/Staff:

Lori Moog, Director of Service Learning and Community Outreach

Russell Barefoot, Director of Student Life

Alaysha Walker, Assistant Director of Student Life

Suzanne Kosempel, Reference Librarian

Students involved within the RVotesMatter Campaign:

Nicholas Gallo, Executive Vice President of the Student Government – Co-Chair

Steven Reffler, Vice President of Finance of the Student Government – Co-Chair

Melanie Quesada – Director of Outreach

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Commitment

In understanding the institutional commitment Raritan Valley Community College has to furthering the civic interests of the students that attend classes on campus, one only has to look at the mission statement posted on the college website. It reads,

“Raritan Valley Community College is an educational community that works to develop critical thinking, foster intellectual curiosity, promote leadership, encourage social responsibility, support personal growth, and sustain engaged citizenship within a diverse population of students and community members.”

Along with all the other points Raritan Valley Community College attempts to help develop within their students on campus, one of the most important aspects listed here is the encouragement of social responsibility and sustaining engaged citizenship within a diverse population of students. Raritan Valley Community College hosts a wide variety of students from different backgrounds, thus ensuring that the campus vocalizes the opinions of a diverse audience and allowing for the institution to have a holistic approach in creating an environment that is equitable for all students, regardless of background.

Furthermore, the commitment to diversity statement Raritan Valley Community College upholds ensures that the administration is steadfast in maintaining an environment that is not only conducive to civic and political thought, but also an environment that is accepting of an individual regardless of their race, religion, age, sex, etc. The full statement, found on the Raritan Valley Community College main school website, reads as follows,

“Raritan Valley Community College values all aspects of diversity including but not limited to race, sexual orientation, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability, socioeconomic status, and political and philosophical perspectives. We rely on diversity to enrich the intellectual environment for students and employees. We support educational access and opportunity by recruiting and retaining a diverse college community. We foster diversity by developing and maintaining curricular and social programs that infuse the contributions of all people, and by preparing students to excel in a global society. Our commitment to diversity is reflected in the College’s Mission Statement and Strategic Goals, all of which support excellence in teaching, learning and professional development in a welcoming and respectful climate.”

What both of these statements show is an institutional commitment for students, faculty and administration to uphold a standard that makes free political thought and the pursuit of civic activities possible for the student population of Raritan Valley Community College, without the exclusion of people based on the way that they live.

Another key point regarding the civic activity of students from the Raritan Valley Community College campus is the inclusion of the Student Engagement Transcript. While students on campus are not mandatory for students to graduate, the Student Life office of Raritan Valley Community College allows the active tracking and documentation of participation and assistance at Student/Administrative events on campus, which provides another key way for transfer students looking to go to a four year university a chance to show commitment to civic involvement on campus to perspective universities. With this in mind, the Student Engagement Transcript incentives students to actively perform within their community for the betterment of the campus as a whole, as it gives due credit to the activities undertaken by the individual, regardless of their popular appeal.

Finally, within Raritan Valley Community College, all educators and faculty abide by this commitment to creating an equitable and fair learning environment for all perspective students. Educators, often times, work individually with students on a one-on-one basis in order to ensure the students ability to successfully perform within an academic environment. This includes catering to specific cultural, economic and social barriers that could inhibit a student's ability to succeed. In this way, the educators and faculty of Raritan Valley Community College demonstrate, on a micro and macro level, a commitment to ensuring the success of all individuals on campus.

Landscape

Campus Climate: Through the continued work by the administration and student organizations on campus, Raritan Valley Community College has been able to foster an environment conducive to student civic activism and democratic engagement. Furthermore, special interests clubs and cultural organizations, hosted by students and advised by faculty, have been able to host events that deal with political and social justice topics, which has allowed for a unique opportunity for a dialogue to be opened in regards to current contemporary civic ideas.

On campus, the following activities are conducted on a year to year basis that demonstrate Raritan Valley Community College's landscape being conducive to democratic expression, along with key variables that influence the landscape of Raritan Valley Community College, such as...

I. Local Election Events:

- Within RVCC's 2021 year, the campus was able to host, from the RVotesMatter Campaign and independent club event hosting, local candidates from a variety of different political and social backgrounds who answered questions regarding their campaigns and small "meet and greet" events that promoted students to get involved in local elections to see changes reflected in their community that coincide with their club or organization.

II. Service Learning Opportunities

- Raritan Valley Community College offers a wide array of service learning opportunities to students that can allow for an individual student to get course credit and volunteer hours placed on a specialized transcript in order to display work done within local communities. While not inherently political in nature, this also presents students opportunities to learn about ways in which they could get involved within the community, along with being rewarded from civic work being done by said individual through the service learning office at Raritan Valley Community College.

III. International Students

- Raritan Valley Community College hosts a wide variety of students that may be in the process of obtaining U.S. Citizenship or who might be undocumented immigrants of families currently working to become U.S. Citizens. In this way, Raritan Valley Community College has an environment that is diverse in ethnicities, along with diverse in civic backgrounds, while still maintaining the dedication to provide this group with the necessary opportunities to still be as

actively involved as someone that may already have U.S. Citizenship, or otherwise.

IV. College Forum & General Assembly

- Raritan Valley Community College also gives the unique ability to attend assemblies oriented towards students and faculty/administration in order to see social and civic justice properly maintained on campus.

Furthermore, between the years of 2018 to 2020 , Raritan Valley Community College has experienced an large growth in voter registration and activism on campus, as show below in the study conducted by NSLVE in the NSLVE Campus Report, despite a decline in total student enrollment...

Voting and Registration Rates

	2018	2020	Change
Total Student Enrollment	7,510	6,904	-606
Total Eligible Voters	5,834	5,189	-645
Number of Students who Registered	3,765	3,869	+104
Number of students who voted	2,245	3,213	+968
Registration Rate	65%	75%	+10%
Voting rate of registered students	60%	83%	+23%
Voting Rate	30%	62%	+32%
Difference from all institutions	+4%	+6%	

Source - NSLVE Campus Report for Raritan Valley Community College

What this information shows here is a clear increase in voter turnout from students on campus after catering, with greater attention, to student civic activism and giving greater opportunities for students to get active in a democratic capacity. In between the two years between 2018 and 2020, and despite the pandemic, Raritan Valley Community College was able to accomplish an impressive feat in respects to being above the average of total institutional student registered

voters, as displayed in the table below by in the Carnegie Classification in respects to the Presidential Election...

How Your Numbers Compare

2018 Average in all Institutions	2018 Voting Rate at RVCC	Difference from All institutions	2020 average in ALL institutions	2020 Voting Rate Average at RVCC	Difference from All Institutions
35%	39%	+4%	56%	62%	+6%

Source - NSLVE Campus Report for Raritan Valley Community College

What these two tables of statistics provided from the NSLVE, and the previously mentioned elements found on the Raritan Valley Community College campus, show is a clear landscape that the college is dedicated and conducive to continued civic thought and expression by students on campus and a dedication by local community leaders to help these students receive legislation that they feel is in the best interests of the college and community around them.

Goals

With the success of the last action plan increasing the voter rate of to a staggering 62%, as noted in the landscape. The RVotesMatter Campaign in cooperation with all parties involved with the RVotesMatter Campaign, would like to see an increase of the voting rate category, at a minimum, by 10% and increase the number of students registered to vote by 5% on campus by the amount compared to the previous midterm elections. These goals will accomplish two objectives, as listed below.

- I. **Keep RVCC Ahead of the Curve:** During midterm elections turnout is normally lower than in general elections. Raritan Valley Community College has maintained a voting rate of 60% amongst registered students and 30% amongst all students in the 2018 midterms. The RVotesMatter Campaign would like to narrow this gap by increasing the voting rate for students by 10% for the midterm elections.
- II. **Room for innovation:** In maintaining the same strategy as our previous ALL IN action plan, the RVotesMatter Campaign can expect similar results, while also giving room to try new, experimental strategies that could benefit voter turnout rates.

Another note about the goal of the RVotesMatter Campaign has reached is the importance of the upcoming 2022 midterm election. When talking about civic activism, it is crucial to understand what drives an individual to get out and physically represent what they want to see for the society around them. With the current political situation being as polarizing as it is, the RVotesMatter Campaign expects a substantial increase in student activism on campus that could see an increase in total student voting registration rates and voting attendance, regardless of the candidates the individual students choose to vote for. By taking advantage of the current wave as a result of the upcoming national election, the RVotesMatter Campaign can see an increase that would fulfill the two objectives listed above.

Furthermore, students apart of the RVotesMatter Campaign or those that work closely with the campaign are actively encouraged to reach out to any members of the teaching staff or faculty that they feel would be able to aid in the goals of the Campaign as a whole. This is to help instill a value in students reaching out and networking with administrators, along with creating a campus and institutional opportunity for members of the campus that are not students an ability to have a positive impact on the students they are teaching, or individuals that they are closely working with on a day to day basis. In essence, this would create a cascading effect where both

students and administrators are working side by side to achieve the singular goal of bettering the treatment of students on campus, along with achieving the goals outlined above.

In short, by having our goals situated at a reasonable level, the organizations a part of the RVotesMatter campaign can expect, by continuing to use time tested strategies, an predicted increase over the time period between 2018-2020 while also having a margin for experimentation with different strategies that could be as effective as ones already employed by the RVotesMatter Campaign. These goals are also in line with the S.M.A.R.T.I.E. technique of determining solutions, as they are specific, measurable through the strategies conducted by the Action Plan, attainable as demonstrated by our previous NSLVE report, relevant to the needs of students and time based, given the nature of the ALL IN Action Plans.

Below will include a breakdown the information provided about our goal and how it is applicable to the S.M.A.R.T.I.E. system.

S. Specific: The goals listed as a 10% voting rate increase and 5% voting registration increase provide the RVotesMatter Campaign a clear standard to uphold within the action plan.

M. Measurable: The RVotesMatter Campaign will employ several different strategies that help determine the rate as to which students on campus are registering to vote and the effectiveness of the campaign as a whole. See the “Strategy” page for more detail.

A. Achievable: Given the increase Raritan Valley Community College saw on its 201-2018 NSLVE voter registration report, it would be easy to expect that the RVotesMatter Campaign would be able to achieve a 10% increase on campus by maintaining a similar strategy as the ones employed by prior campaign members.

R. Realistic: With the already present 20%+ increase the RVotesMatter Campaign already experienced within their 2014-2018 NSLVE report, the current RVotesMatter Campaign opted to take advantage of the current wave within national politics but also maintain strategies used by prior RVotesMatter Campaign members in order to ensure the campus stays civically active.

T. Timebound: This action plan is time bound and covers a one year period, which gives the RVotesMatter Campaign a period that makes achieving this goal attainable but also one that could be built on by following generations of RVotesMatter Campaign members.

I. Inclusive: All clubs, organizations and individuals within Raritan Valley Community College, including faculty, administration and third party programs, are able to join into civic and political opportunities brought by the RVotesMatter Campaign, and themselves afforded the opportunity to host events that could benefit the students as a whole.

E. Equitable: the RVotesMatter Campaign does not target a specific political affiliation, demographic or group, but rather gives students of all backgrounds, orientations and affiliations the opportunity to have a positive impact on their schooling environment in a civic context.

Strategy

In accordance to our goal and Raritan Valley Community College's commitment to create an environment conducive to civic activism, the RVotesMatter Campaign, in conjunction with the Student Government Association, the Student life Office and the RVotes Committee, will implement the following strategies:

Strategy #1: Increase branding for events that promote civic activism and participation in local elections

- I. Use slogan: RV Votes Matter with branding materials such as posters, fast cards, etc.
- II. Set-up promo tables around campus for voter registration.
- III. Post information about the SGA activities and important dates in Lion's Den.
- IV. Create fast cards to brand the project.
- V. Make an announcement about project at All College Day to encourage greater participation.
- VI. Announce SGA voter engagement and registration campaign at the second Forum meetings.
- VII. Work with the Raritan Valley Community College Marketing Department to keep project on social media and in the press. Take pictures at events and during activities to post on social media.
- VIII. Utilize the RVConnect Application in spreading awareness of events going on campus to the student body.

Strategy #2: Continue to further educate Raritan Valley Community College students on local candidates and the importance of civic activism

- I. Direct students to visit the RVCC's library's website dedicated to voter registration with information and resources on how to become an Educated Voter
- II. Pass out Constitutions and voter registration forms during Constitution Day. Continue having SGA wear Ben Franklin costume.
- III. Set-up tables at student picnic and involvement fair with voter registration information. Invite The League of Women Voters to set-up a table at the events.
- IV. Create electronic and paper displays with voter issues and place around the campus so that students can write what concerns them. These issues can be further discussed at the Leadership Series being planned.
- V. Encourage faculty to inform their students about the importance of voting and to participate in SGA activities. One strategy is to get invited to the Academic Department meetings where the Department Chairs meet.

Strategy #3: Create identifiable measures to determine total turnout at elections from RVCC Students

- I. Offer a Leadership Series to include a faculty panel to talk about voter education, issues and registration and invite their students to attend for extra credit.
- II. Pledge to vote cards, having students write out how they are planning to reach a polling station, where they plan on going to vote and what time they plan on voting.
- III. Create a hashtag on the RVConnect app that encourages students to post of their commitment to vote and any other civic activity related activity that could measure turnout.
- IV. Placement of Absentee Ballots on campus that will be sent in during student-hosted events to encourage individuals to vote while not having to go to physical ballots.

Timeline:

Day, Date	Event Name	Location	Time	Event Type
Tuesday, 9/20/22	-National Voter Registration Day -Voter Registration Table hosted by the League of Women Voters -Constitution Day	Courtyard	12:30-2:30 pm	Promo Table
Saturday, 10/1/22	All In Challenge New Jersey Voter Summit 2022	Princeton University	10:00-2:00pm	Conference
Tuesday, 10/8/22	ASGA Summit	Washington D.C.	11:30 – 12:30pm	Conference
Thursday, 11/3/22	What's on the Ballot?	Cafeteria	1:00 - 2:20	Promo Table
Monday, 11/7/22	Vote Tomorrow What's on the Ballot?	Cafeteria	12:30 to 2:00	Promo Table
Tuesday, 11/8/20	VOTE TODAY	Cafeteria	1:00 – 2:20 pm (College Hour)	Promo Table

Tuesday, 11/8/20	What's on the Ballot?	Cafeteria	1:00 - 2:20 pm (College Hour)	Promo Table
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RVOTESMATTER CAMPAIGN EVENTS

Daily Voter Registration Tables located in the Library, Student Life and Welcome Stations.
Forms are in English and Spanish.

*At RVCC, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 - 2:20 pm are called "College Hour", a fixed time dedicated to students to participate at events and to take a break from Academic classes.

An important element to note of this timeline is that this is the timeline of events strictly for the Student Government and members of the RVotesMatter Committee. Other student organizations are able to host their own politically minded and civic activism events entirely independent of the events hosted by these two bodies.

Reporting

The RVotesMatter *ALL IN Challenge Democratic Engagement Action Plan* will be annually reviewed by the Student Government Association, Student Life office and the RVotesMatter Committee in order to assess the process as to which these organizations use this plan in determining events or activities designed to increase student civic activism and/or voter registration on campus. These three parties will then, in accordance to the action plan, determine the implementation of these events and activities on campus. Events and activities that did not receive an outcome that aid in our goal will be subsequently revised in our next action plan.

All NSLVE Voter data will be referenced and linked to on our individual pages on the RVCommons Portal, as to allow for students to, independently, create projects or activities outside of the three main parties associated with the RVotesMatter campaign.

Furthermore, another means of assessing and reporting the success of the Action Plan will be analyzing the Action Plan in conjunction to newly released NSLVE data that can reflect shifts in voter registration rates on campus. In this way, the RVotesMatter Campaign can see a clear change over time, while also giving us the opportunity to analyze the effectiveness of strategies being implemented in order to further increase the amounts of registered voters on campus.

Evaluation

In terms of evaluating the success of the RVotesMatter Campaign and the *ALL IN Challenge Democratic Engagement Action Plan*, the RVotesMatter Committee and Student Government Association will track the effectiveness through a variety of different methods, which includes:

- I. The number of fast cards passed around on campus;
- II. The attendance of politically charged events on campus, utilizing sign ins from the RVConnect App;
- III. The attendance and participation of students within the RVotes Committee, hosted by the student government;
- IV. The number of absentee ballots taken by students in order to cast votes anonymously and on their own time;
- V. The number of students that register to vote at the RVotes Voter Registration Drives that happen across campus;
- VI. The attendance of students at local freeholder meetings;
- VII. Other means that will be implemented on campus that become available as time goes on.

With these different means of evaluating the success of the RVotesMatter Campaign in conjunction to the goal as outlined within this action plan, the organizing bodies of the RVotesMatter Campaign will be able to effectively evaluate the success of the strategies of this year's campaign and will further expand on these strategies in the following years.

Recognition

Throughout the years, Raritan Valley Community College has been recorded in receiving accolades in the Service Learning department of the school, the commitment to increasing the civil participation of students on campus, and the projects completed by students that have benefitted the college and the community around them as a whole. Below is a short list of Accolades, and their corresponding years, that Raritan Valley Community College has been recently awarded. These awards will also include a corresponding category that is relevant to the success of students on campus within the context of Civic Activism.

Recent Awards Earned by Raritan Valley Community College:

- Eduardo J. Padrón Award for Institutional Transformation from Campus Compact (2020): Voter Registration and Civil Participation
- Teagle Foundation grant award (2014-2018): The Department of Service Learning
- New Jersey Governor’s Jefferson Award (2018): The Department of Service Learning
- Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement (2015): Civil Participation
- President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll “With Distinction” for General Community Service and Education (2014): Community Service
- President's Community Service Honor Roll with Distinction (2010): Community Service

Source: <https://www.raritanval.edu/community-resources/service-learning-program/awards-recognition>

What this list shows, in combination with the previous landscape and commitment areas, is Raritan Valley Community College’s continued and exemplary upholding of the core values of giving a high quality education, different avenues for community outreach with the service learning department, and a steadfast willingness to increase the level of participation of students in community service and civic activism on, and off, campus.