

Rice Votes Action Plan 2024-2025

Overview

Rice Votes, in partnership with the Kelley Center for Government Information and other campus and community partners, registered over 600 people from July 2024 to the October registration deadline. Adding registration numbers from the Kelley Center, the total people registered this fall is 881. This success is rooted in early, strategic planning, working with University partners to intentionally include under-represented students, and implementing best practices from research and practitioners. Voter registration VDVR volunteers from Rice and community partners were the backbone to being able to offer consistent and wide-spread registration opportunities. Now focusing on voter education opportunities utilizing the similar registration practices, Rice Votes looks forward to supporting early voting and election day voting turnout.

Rice Votes Leadership and Partners

Voter registration and education efforts for Rice University are primarily organized by Rice Votes and the Kelley Center for Government Information. Rice Votes is a group of students, staff, faculty, and community partners providing voter registration and voter education opportunities for Rice University. Dr. Veronica Reyna, Assoc. Director of the Center for Civic Leadership, administratively oversees Rice Votes. Rice Votes as a collective works with several internal and external partners to carry out its mission of improving voter registration and turnout at Rice university. Internal partners include:

- Students and student groups
 - Civic Engagement Representatives in each Residential College
 - Two student Democracy Fellows
 - Student groups like Civic Duty Rice
- The Rice Kelley Center for Government Information in Fondren Library
- The Center for Civic Leadership
- The Rice Memorial Student Center

- The Office of Public Affairs
- Faculty
- The Office of the President
- Rice communications: The Thresher, Rice Magazine, Rice News

External partners include local government offices and local voter registration organizations. Specifically:

- The Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector and Voter Registration Office
- The Harris County Elections Office
- Harris County VDVR volunteers
- The League of Women Voters
- NextGen America

Voter registration and education efforts at Rice are also provided by The Kelley Center for Government Information in Rice's Fondren Library. Anna Xiong is the Government Information Coordinator for the Kelley Center and organizes voter registration and voter education outreach in Fondren Library. She also coordinates VDVR training to increase student, staff, and faculty participation in voter registration. Rice Votes regularly works with and coordinates efforts with the Kelley Center to provide a comprehensive outreach plan for Rice University.

Commitment and Mission

Rice Votes mission is committed to organizing and promoting political participation through voter registration, civic education, and mobilization. Working with various campus and community partners, Rice Votes makes voting accessible and long term goals include:

1. Make participation in local, state, and federal elections a social norm.

2. Substantially increase the number of college students who are democratically engaged on an ongoing basis, during and between elections, and not just at the polls.
3. Make educating for democratic engagement on college campuses an accepted and expected part of the culture and curriculum so that students graduate with the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and values needed to be informed and active citizens.

Finally, Rice Votes is strategically driven by implementing best practices rooted in academic research from political science and other social sciences, as well as by basing goals on university, NSLVE, and its own process data.

Campus Community and NSLVE Comparison

Rice University is a private, Research I university in Houston, Tx. According to Fall 2023 data, Rice has 8,471 students (undergraduate and graduate combined). Race and ethnicity percentages include: Asian American 30%; Black and African American 8%; Hispanic and Latine 16%; White 26%; Other 7%; and International 12%. Over half of undergraduate students receive need-based aid (53%). The majority of Rice undergraduates live on campus: 99% of first-year students; 62% of all undergraduate students; and 500 graduate students.

Given the student population demographics, Rice's [NSLVE data from 2022](#) and 2020, shows that presidential year elections follow national trends of increased registration and turnout rates. Goals for this year will be compared to 2020 registration and turnout rates. In 2020, almost 90% of eligible students were registered and with an 86.6% turnout rate of registered students. Given the high registration rates, new students will be the most strategic opportunity for new registrations. The NSLVE data also shows that 66% of Rice's voting students voted in early voting. Data on race and ethnicity are estimated and without clear percentages, so strategies for 2024 will follow national trends of which groups vote the most and which ones are under-represented at

the polls (BIPoC, first gen, low income students). Finally, previous Rice Votes goals include more outreach to student athletes and STEM majors, and these on-going connections will continue this year. Finally, given almost all new students live on campus, working and communicating with the 11 residential colleges will be key. Civic Engagement Representatives for each college will be the conduit for reaching not only first year students, but all students living on campus.

Goals and Strategies

Goals for 2024-2025 include continuing progress on the 2023-2024 goals for more inclusive outreach and increasing mobilization among Black and Latine students, among student athletes, first-gen and limited income students, and among STEM majors. These student populations were identified from previous NSLVE data and national trends as having lower registration and turnout numbers. The goal is for more students registered and turning out than in 2020 and 2022 efforts overall, especially in these identified student populations.

Given the hiring of Dr. Reyna at the beginning of fall semester last academic year, the main long term goal for 2024-2025 is to lay the foundation for consistent, inclusive student mobilization with strategic and regular voter registration and education. One challenge to adapt to for 2024-2025 is a more limited budget for Rice Votes; a previous grant that funded Rice's Civic Engagement Representatives (CERs) in each residential college, so the bulk of Rice Votes budget this year is earmarked for CER stipends. Opportunities for parties, swag, and other mobilization best practices will be postponed or co-coordinated with other Rice stakeholders.

Planning for 2024-2025 started in June 2024 creating a semester outreach plan, initiating communication and planning with stakeholders about summer and fall events and workshops, establishing connections with and planning events with the new partners in the Harris County Tax Assessors Office and the Harris County Elections Office. The summer is also the necessary time to connect with and to plan events and workshops with pre-matriculation, O-week, Owl Access, student athletes staff, and

Latine Heritage Month program leads given how early events occur before and during the fall semester. Most of this summer planning was in coordination with the Kelley Center's Anna Xiong given that faculty and students are infrequently on campus.

Given the gaps identified in the NSLVE data, the following voter registration and voter education outreach goals were created to be intentional about creating connections with program leads and mobilizing the above student populations. Subgoals include connecting with program leads and holding a voter registration and education workshop or tabling event. The following programs and groups were identified as strategic connections to make to be able to target new students and under-represented students highlighted in the data:

- **Responsibility, Inclusion and Student Empowerment (RISE)**, a pre-matriculation program for new students who are first-generation students and those from underrepresented minority groups who are interested in social issues.
- **Rice Emerging Scholars Program (RESP)**, a pre-matriculation, student success program focused on new Rice students in STEM from under-resourced high schools, particularly low-income and first-generation students.
- **Civic Immersion (CI)**, a pre-matriculation program for new students interested in learning more about social justice issues for Houston and in meeting community partners participating in these areas. Equity is one of the goals of this program, so accepted students are diverse and lower income students are financially supported to be able to attend.
- **Student Athletes**, work with Athletics and Rice Owls of Color United (ROC-U), the main BIPOC student athletes affinity group, for a voter registration and education tabling event
- **Various Student Groups**, reach out and offer VDVR tabling for student groups to have at events or general membership meetings
- **Latine Heritage Month (LHM)** events, work with LHM planning committee to provide voter registration and voter education at major events and student hang-out sessions

- **Owl Access Resource Fair** for first-generation and limited income students to learn about university resources, provide voter registration and education table
- **O-Week**, Orientation Week for new students a week before classes start; work with O-Week student coordinators to plan a voter registration and education at a lunch for each residential college (11 residential colleges total)

In order to reach these mobilization, tabling and education goals and subgoals, the overarching strategy for Rice Votes is based upon these four pillars:

- Voter education
- Turnout support
- Institutionalization of voter registration and education support
- Communication consistency

These strategies are based in best practices from political science and other social science research on turnout and mobilization, including Michelson et al (2024), Reyna (2023), Holbein et al (2020), Pozycki (2020), Fraga (2018), Liu (2017), Lupia (2016), Valenzuela et al (2016), Green et al (2015), and Stroh (2015).

Voter education will occur at every workshop, event, and tabling effort during voter registration and after the registration deadline. This includes information about: how to obtain absentee ballots for out of state students; what to expect about registering to vote and receiving the registration postcard; what IDs are required to vote and which IDs work if students do not have a Texas driver's license; how to use the voting machine; when early voting dates are and how to get to the early voting location; where the campus Election Day location is and times, as well as classes being canceled in order to vote. Faculty who are interested in including voting registration and education information in their courses are also supported with materials for Canvas via the Center for Civic Leadership's faculty resources repository.

Turnout support includes providing students resources for voting through the President's email encouraging registration and turnout; each residential college's Civic Engagement Representative; consistent and regular tabling in the Student Center and

Fondren Library by the Kelley Center for Government Information; and, emails and social media posts to students from Rice staff in Athletics, the Center for Civic Leadership, the Kelley Center, and Civic Duty Rice. Resources include: how to make a voting plan, which IDs to take to vote, the League of Women Voters Guide, a sample ballot for Rice students, how to use the voting machine vide from the county, a pdf created by Public Affairs that includes key campus and county voting website and early voting bus map, Rice Votes Webpage updates done by Public Affairs, and a video made by Civic Duty Rice showing students which bus to take to off-campus early voting, which stop to exit, and how to get to the early voting location. Each week, resources will be sent out to students via the Civic Engagement Reps for each residential college leading up to Election Day.

Institutionalization of processes and relationships with key stakeholders have been established and nurtured since last year. Continuing from previous years, the Kelley Center's partnership and similar outreach events compound outreach power. The Registrar's Office provides a voter registration banner for students registering the fall semester and Rice's TurboVote webpage. Working with Civic Duty Rice, Democracy Fellows, and Civic Engagement Representatives in the residential colleges are also established and part of this year's engagement plan. New partnerships this year include working with RISE, RESP, O-Week staff leads and student coordinators for all 11 residential colleges, and Public Affairs. Rice Votes was also able to request several hundred hard copies of the League of Women Voters voters guides in a timely fashion this year. A spreadsheet with events, contacts, number of parking vouchers provided for non-Rice VDVR volunteers, and number of students registered helps with tracking consistency and creates institutional memory for future planning. Planning the summer and fall events, tables, and workshops earlier allowed for volunteers to sign up earlier and to request a whole semester's worth of tables and rooms at one time (which also leads to better planning for the Rice Votes budget). This strategy of early planning and documentation will carry over easily to the spring and summer to begin planning with campus and community partners next semester and subsequent semesters creating the intended institutionalization of processes.

Communication consistency is achieved by having tabling events and workshops planned in advance and by being in the same place, at the same time, each week leading up to Election Day. Rice Votes presence with voting registration and education information is predictable, easily advertised, and expected by students, staff, and faculty. Moreover, each week leading up to Election Day after the registration deadline, Civic Engagement Reps in each of the 11 residential colleges will consistently communicate voter education and materials to students. The Rice student newspaper, *The Thresher*, is also a key opportunity for communication information to students. This regularity of communication keeps voting, resources, and key contacts visible to students and the Rice community.

Reporting and Evaluation

The following events have been planned for July-November 2024 voter registration and voter education workshops, events, and tabling. For completed registration events, the total number registered is included.

July

Date	Time/Shifts	Event	Location	Total Registered	Parking Vouchers
7/19/24	10:30-11:30	Civic Immersion VDVR	Herring 100	0	2
7/22/24	1:00-2:00	RESP Summer Bridge VDVR & VE	Will Rice Commons	3	3
7/26/24	1:30-2:30	RISE VDVR & VE	Martel College Library	0	0

August

Date	Time/Shifts	Event	Location	Total Registered	Parking Vouchers
8/16/24	4:15-5:15	Owl Access Resource Fair VDVR	RMC in Grand Hall	25	6
8/19/24	12-1:30 PM	O-week Lunches	McMurtry	13	2
8/19/24	12-1:30 PM	O-week Lunches	Brown	8	1
8/19/24	12:15-1:15	O-week Lunches	Baker	47	3
8/19/24	12-1:00 PM	O-week Lunches	Will Rice	31	0
8/20/24	6-7:30 PM	O-week Rice Rally led by athletes	Tudor Fieldhouse	25	3
8/20/24	12-1:00 PM	O-week Lunches	Jones		
8/20/24	1-1:30 PM	O-week Lunches	Jones	33	0
8/21/24	12-1:00 PM	O-week Lunches	Duncan	20	0
8/21/24	12-12:30 PM	O-week Lunches	Hanszen		1
8/21/24	12:30-1:00 PM	O-week Lunches	Hanszen	40	
8/23/24	12:00-12:30	O-week Lunches	Wiess		
8/23/24	12:30-1:00	O-week Lunches	Wiess		
8/23/24	12:15-12:45PM	O-week Lunches	Martel	22	
8/23/24	12:45-1:15PM	O-week Lunches	Martel		
8/23/24	12:30-1 PM	O-week Lunches	Sid Rich	39	1
8/23/24	1-1:30 PM	O-week Lunches	Sid Rich		
8/23/24	12:30-1 PM	O-week Lunches	Lovett	25	
8/23/24	1-1:30 PM	O-week Lunches	Lovett		
8/28/24		Campus canvassing by NextGen		16	1
8/29/24		Campus canvassing by NextGen		31	1

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September

Date	Time/Shifts	Event	Location	Total Registered	Parking Vouchers
9/3/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area	16	
9/4/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area	8	1
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
9/5/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
9/8/24	2:55:30 PM	Tudor House J&J Event	Tudor House	13	
	3:55:30 PM	Tailgate Owley	Stadium		
9/10/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area	3	2
9/11/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area	8	
9/12/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area	26	1
9/16/24	4:30-5:30pm	VDVR Table Shift --Latine Heritage Month Kick-off Event	Grand Hall		
	5:30-6:30pm	VDVR Table Shift --Latine Heritage Month Kick-off Event	Grand Hall	6	1
9/17/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift --Nat'l VR Day	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift --Nat'l VR Day	RMC/Grand Hall Area	16	3
9/18/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area	2	
9/19/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area	canceled:	
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area	No table	
9/21/24	2-3pm	Taste of Africa student event	RMC/Central Quad		
	3-4pm	Taste of Africa student event	RMC/Central Quad		

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	4-5pm	Taste of Africa student event	RMC/Central Quad		
	5-6pm	Taste of Africa student event	RMC/Central Quad	8	
9/24/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area	2	
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
9/24/24	12-1pm	VDVR Roc-U Table	Outside Tudor House		
	1-2pm	VDVR Roc-U Table	Outside Tudor House	14	
	7-8pm	Voter Education Event: basic voting 101 (why, when, how, who)	Tudor House, Trotter TBD	1	
9/25/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area	14	
9/26/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area	4	
9/26/24	3-4pm	VDVR Table Shift--Latine Heritage Month Hang out	MCC 109 Conference Rm.		
	4-5pm	VDVR Table Shift--Latine Heritage Month Hang out	MCC 109 Conference Rm.	0	

October

Date	Time/Shifts	Event	Location	Total Registered	Parking Vouchers
10/1/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift		9	1
10/2/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift		11	
10/2/24	7-8pm	VDVR Table Shift	Football stadium	8	2
10/3/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift		12	1
	3-4pm	VDVR Table Shift --Latine Heritage Month	MCC 109 Conference Rm.		

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	4-5pm	VDVR Table Shift --Latine Heritage Month	MCC 109 Conference Rm.	0	
10/7/24	11am-12pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VDVR Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area	47	
10/15/24	11am-12pm	VE Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VE Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
10/16/24	11am-12pm	VE Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VE Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
10/17/24	12-1pm	Athlete Lunch-n-Lunch Voting 101	Tudor House		
10/22/24	11am-12pm	VE Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VE Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
10/23/24	11am-12pm	VE Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VE Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
10/29/24	11am-12pm	VE Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VE Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
10/30/24	11am-12pm	VE Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VE Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		

November

Date	Time	Event	Location		
11/4/24	11am-12pm	VE Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		
	12-1pm	VE Table Shift	RMC/Grand Hall Area		

There were a total of 606 students registered during Rice Votes workshops, events, and tabling efforts from July to the October 7th deadline. Combined with Fondren Library’s Kelley Center for Government Information’s efforts of consistent tabling yielding 275 registration, ***a total of 881 people were registered this summer***

and fall. The goals, strategies, and early planning resulted in over 500 more students registered than last year. Overall success and details about student demographics, majors, and percentages for registration and turnout rates will be assessed with the 2024 NSLVE data.

The following goals and objectives for inclusive student voter registration and education outreach were met:

- Civic Immersion workshops and voter registration (of three planned, one was canceled due to Hurricane Beryl); worked with the Tax Assessor's Office and the Elections Office brought a sample voting machine for students to see and to practice on
- RISE workshop and voter registration; worked with the Tax Assessor's Office and the Elections Office brought a sample voting machine for students to see and to practice on
- RESP workshop and voter registration; worked with the Tax Assessor's Office and the Elections Office brought a sample voting machine for students to see and to practice on
- Owl Access Resource Fair voter registration and education table; worked with the Tax Assessor's Office
- O-Week lunches for all 11 Residential Colleges; presented opportunity to student coordinators and program staff and worked with them to organize VDVRs for each event
- Student Athlete events included a ROC-U sponsored voter registration and education table, O-Week Pep Rally led by athletes encouraging students to register and vote, a Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) workshop at their monthly meeting, and a Voting 101 voting education workshop working with the Elections Office and sample voting machines
- Latine Heritage Month events included tabling about the Kickoff Party, every weekly student hangout event until the registration deadline, and participating in a co-sponsored Latinos Voting and Elections panel with Houston Community College

- Supporting student groups like Civic Duty Rice and the African Students' student group with registration and education resources and VDVR tabling
- Consistent and frequent tabling in the Student Center from September through Election Day
- Working with the Public Affairs office to support a voter registration and voting resource for students that includes an early voting bus map and key websites, as well as their coordination with Rice's President to email the Rice community encouraging registration and voting with key resources. These resources will be key for voter education and turnout efforts.

A voting resource was also made for the Study Abroad Office for students abroad in the fall semester and is institutionalized in their Canvas curriculum. Print and online media opportunities included [The Thresher](#), [Rice News](#), and the [Rice Magazine](#). What remains are the upcoming voter education tables and sharing voting support resources with Civic Engagement Representatives in each of the 11 residential colleges to share with students via email and social media. The three weeks after the registration deadline and leading up to Election Day (Oct. 14th-Nov. 5th) will include the following themes: Make a Voting Plan and Check Registration; Early Voting Transportation video, Voting IDs, and Voting Machine video for two weeks; and, Election Day location, Voting IDs, and Voting Machine video. Finally, a thank you reception is being planned to honor the VDVR volunteers' and campus and community partners' hard work and time.

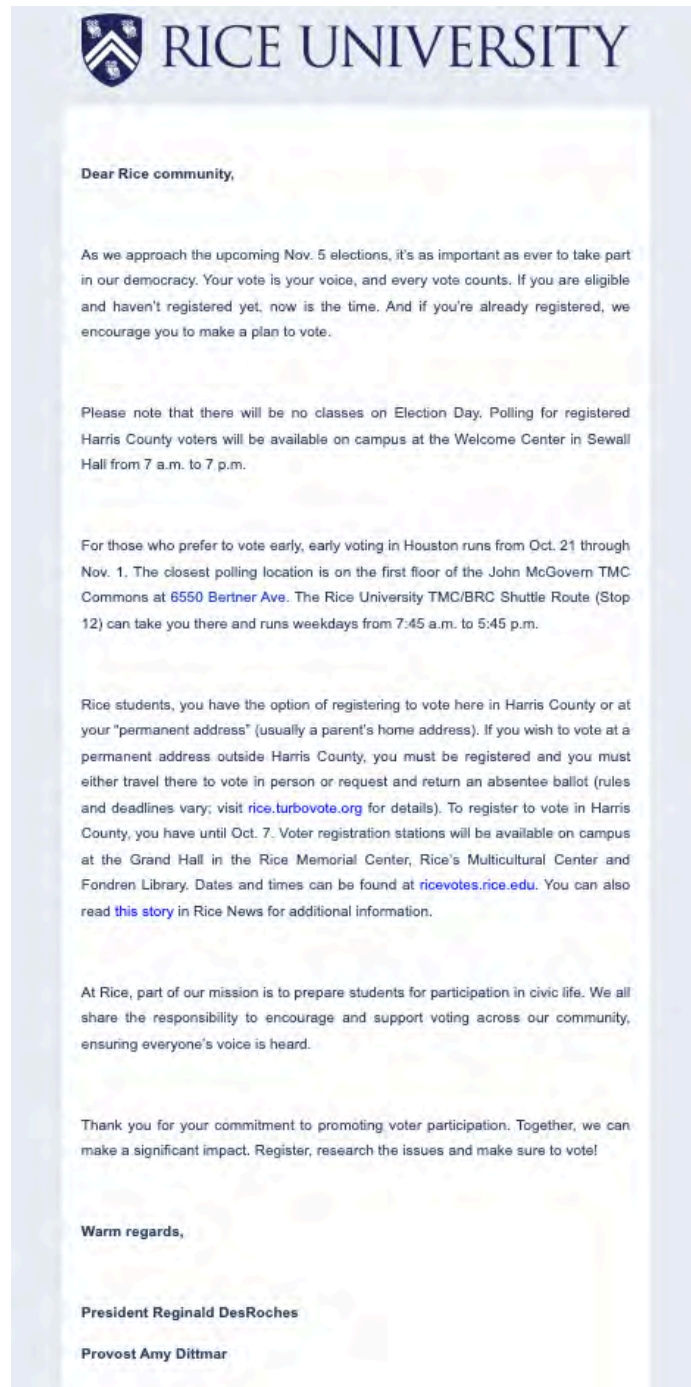
In conclusion, Rice Votes success this year is fundamentally the result of working with campus and community partners. Partners supported messaging, materials, time at tables and events, and scaling registration and education efforts with similar student outreach opportunities. Early planning for the fall semester allowed for ease of implementation, tracking results from registration efforts, and implementing best practices with goals and strategies in mind.

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Appendix

Appendix A President's Email



Appendix B

Voting Education Resources Mentioned

Rice Votes Webpage: <https://ricevotes.rice.edu/>

Rice TurboVote: <https://rice.turbovote.org/>

Voting Plan: <https://www.harrisvotes.com/Voter/First-Time-Voters> and
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LQwTMI-s2f-Hs6UW4E3-1eehnGbdzxAk/view?usp=sharing>

League of Women Voters voters guide: <https://www.houstonvotersguide.org/>

Voting Machine Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dvFaVxSjtI>

Early Voting Location Student Video: coming soon!

Voting for Students Abroad:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1AtGrfDZkJY9BlEArw1Q6VEZSSmRY_ukvXN_EBndxND4/edit?usp=sharing

Voter ID Flyer:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yXuxIPAt0i16hPb1AamrBhWwQ7H6_RXT/view?usp=sharing

Public Affairs Voter Resources Flyer and Map:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/18gdgLH5BPhSQeOJTUqXWv4pyRz4OA1Nr/view?usp=sharing>

Sample Ballot for On-Campus Students:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ukKw9dBQnBKq3tlzkmHufYCgz-AWOnLJ/view?usp=sharing>