

## **Ringling College of Art and Design 2024 Action Plan**

### **Executive Summary:**

Ringling College has about 1700 undergraduate students and offers thirteen degree programs. The College is the only institution in Florida dedicated exclusively to teaching art and design. Many of our programs are ranked among the best in the nation, including Computer Animation, Motion Design, and Game Art.

Since 1931, Ringling College of Art and Design has cultivated the creative spirit in students from around the globe. The private, not-for-profit, fully accredited college offers the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in eleven disciplines and the Bachelor of Arts in two. The College's rigorous curriculum employs the studio model of teaching and immediately engages students through a comprehensive program that is both specific to the major of study and focused on the liberal arts. The Ringling College teaching model ultimately shapes students into highly employable and globally aware artists and designers. For more information visit [www.ringling.edu](http://www.ringling.edu) and follow the College on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

Ringling College of Art and Design believes in cultivating a campus community of active and socially responsible citizens and ethical practitioners of art and design. The College works towards this with robust instruction across the curriculum and robust programming through the Office of Student Life and several other student support offices. To build civic and community engagement, students have countless opportunities to connect meaningfully with the world around them, through service, engaged learning, professional experiences, and opportunities for civic engagement. RinglingVotes is the campus initiative to cultivate civically-minded students through education and programming about how to be active citizens in the voting and election processes. The purpose of this action plan is to direct and guide RinglingVotes through the 2024 federal election cycle, including educational programming in Spring 2024 and focusing more on the logistical details of voting in Fall 2024 as registration and voting deadlines approach.

Our plan aims to educate and engage all of our campus and includes a series of resources to guide through students through the election process- from voter registration, requesting a ballot, ballot tracking, early voting, voting on Election Day, and election support- including a social media campaign, the creation of a web site, a series of in-person and virtual events, email messaging, community partnerships, and voter education. The programming is based in the department of Community Engaged Learning, within the Office of Student Life. The action plan was developed by Rachel Levey-Baker, Associate Dean of Community Engaged Learning, and RinglingVotes civic engagement leaders, led by Alex Pigg and Sarah Forest, and community partners like the League of Women Voters, the Sarasota Supervisor of Elections, and other local colleges and partners. This plan will continue to be amended when new student members are selected and additional faculty and staff are added to the campus coalition.

Short-term goals include reaching students located all across the Sarasota and Manatee counties and offering voting, civic engagement, and election-related resources that are accessible to everyone. To ensure the highest number of campus constituents are reached, RinglingVotes will partner with the Center of Diversity and Inclusion, Student Access Services, Residence Life, Student Activities, Student Government Association, other student clubs and organizations, and other departments across campus. Long-term goals include increasing engagement in the 2024 election process from beyond our previous voting rate of 62.2% for

presidential elections and beyond 33% for midterm elections (based on previous NSVLE data, 2022 data is not yet available).

Programming will begin in the Spring semester of 2024 and occur through November 2024. In early Spring 2024, RinglingVotes will host several voter registration opportunities and voter education events to inform students about the primary elections occurring across the country. The voter registration events will be in partnership with the Sarasota Supervisor of Elections Office, the League of Women Voters, and other 3<sup>rd</sup> part voter registration organizations. Voter education programming will inform students of registration deadlines, vote by mail request form submission and ballot deadlines, and direct students to ballot guides from their counties.

Voter registration will resume during New Student Orientation, continue through Welcome week, and follow with events for Constitution Day, National Voter Registration Day, and at least once per week through the voter registration period. Once the Florida deadline passes, programming will move to focus on requesting ballots, voting by mail, voting early, ballot guides, and elections laws including necessary identification. Once Early Voting begins, there will be a series of Get Vote Ready events to celebrate elections engagement with music, chalk drawing, giveaways, and tabling to answer voting-related questions. The season will culminate with free shuttles to Early Vote and vote on Election Day. Post-election support programming will be offered in partnership with our campus Health Center.

Students can reach the RinglingVotes initiative in several ways:

Instagram: @ringlingvotes

Email: [vote@ringling.edu](mailto:vote@ringling.edu)

RinglingVotes site (campus hosted site TBA):

<https://sites.google.com/c.ringling.edu/vote/campus-address>

Phone: 941-359-7504

### **Leadership:**

Our leadership team developed this action plan and includes the following:

Recurring and main contact

Associate Dean of Community Engaged Learning- Rachel Levey-Baker,

Students, Faculty, and additional staff change each year.

Ringling College Civic Engagement Leaders- Recruiting is occurring during summer months to launch in August. Students are being recruited through campus portals for job and volunteer postings, social media, campus wide emails, tabling, and events. Because Ringling College NSLVE reports do not include voter data by race or ethnicity, it is important to reach out to the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, Student Government Association, International Student Affairs, and campus affinity groups for students, Student Access Services, and departments that serve residential and commuter students, and non-traditional students.

Community partners- including local non-profit organizations and government agencies

The succession plan includes posting RinglingVotes leadership opportunities during the spring semester to recruit for placement in the following fall semester. Members who are recruited will be briefed and trained in the spring and summer, when possible. Civic engagement programming is written into the job description for the Associate Dean for Community Engaged Learning to ensure that this programming remains a core offering of the department. This position will be the main point of contact for RinglingVotes and civic engagement programming.

Campus collaboration:

Ringling College faculty: RinglingVotes will reach out to faculty in the Spring and Fall '24 semesters to offer short voter education presentation in class. RinglingVotes provided many such sessions in 2020 and 2022, and will continue to do this in 2024. Email communication will go out to all faculty to offer these presentations in the Fall semester, ideally prior to the Florida voter registration deadline.

Director of Student Activities and Leadership Development- this staff member can connect RinglingVotes with campus clubs and organizations to present at meetings, table at events, or collaborate on programming.

Ringling Volunteerism Opportunities- this group hosts weekly Wonderful Wednesday events that invite other campus groups, departments, and initiatives to co-host.

Health Center- this partnership ensures support for students during the stressful time of an election, before and after.

Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion and the Director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion- This partnership is essential to connecting with students who may experience marginalization and gaining important perspectives, ideas, and suggestions for inclusive programming.

Student Government Association- this group invites RinglingVotes to make announcements or presentations at SGA meetings and also reposts social media content.

Directors of Residence Life: These staff will coordinate sessions to present during Resident Assistant Training to ensure all RAs understand opportunities for collaboration during election seasons and to promote civic engagement and to walk through the voter registration process to make them aware of the common errors their residents might make while registering.

Office of Residence Life- This connection increases communication with Residence Assistants and encourages presentations and civic engagement programming for floors and residence halls. This offers valuable opportunities to ensure campus residents register correctly as there are frequent errors do to the campus address system.

Office of Student Activities- this partnership connects with the Campus Activities Board and has historically partnered on Constitution Day.

Institutional Technology: I.T. supports the website hosting, email, and alias support for [vote@ringling.edu](mailto:vote@ringling.edu)

Audio Visual: Within the I.T. department, the Audio Visual support team is committed to attending events and supporting with presentations, visuals, and sound.

Facilities Department: Campus facilities will bring and set up tables, chairs, event signage and more to support civic engagement events.

Public Safety: Campus Public Safety Officers provide guidance and support for campus programs that require additional oversight or helping coordinate events that involve guests visiting campus.

Community, state, and national partners: Sarasota Supervisor of Elections Ron Turner and staff (Administrative and Elections Operations Coordinator; Director of Communications and Voter Outreach)

Cross College Alliance Initiative Coordinator Josephine Eisenberg

League of Women Voters

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity of Manasota

National partners and resources:

Students Learn Students Vote

All In Democracy Challenge

IDHE NSLVE report

Campus Vote Project

[vote.org](http://vote.org)

**Commitment:**

Our campus president signed the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation in Fall 2022. This has been shared on the updated RinglingVotes website and Instagram. The President also spoke of the honor from campus recognitions for civic engagement here: <https://www.ringling.edu/news/111622-allin/> He also frequently visits campus civic engagement programs to show support for civic engagement as seen here: <https://temponewsflorida.com/alpha-phi-alpha-fraternity-hosts-voter-registration-drive/>

The College's commitment to engagement is evidenced in the first paragraph of the mission statement:

Ringling College of Art and Design recognizes that artists and designers play a significant role in society. The College's primary mission is to provide programs leading to degrees that prepare students to be discerning visual thinkers and ethical practitioners.

The College's Core Values further demonstrate such commitment through a focus on social responsibility in its Core Values and Indicators of the Mission and Values in Action:

- Integrity and social responsibility in an interdependent world.
- Exploring ways to play a greater leadership role in the advocacy, understanding and protection of the visual arts at the community, state, national and international level. This includes recognizing and providing opportunities that assist the entire campus in the understanding of the social role, value and ethical implications of the artist/designer in society.
- Engaging actively in the exploration of historical, multicultural, global and future-oriented perspectives, and striving for a diverse educational environment of inclusiveness, acceptance and equal opportunity.
- Promoting greater awareness and a more active commitment to environmental issues in a future-oriented perspective that acknowledges our individual and institutional relationship with the earth and our obligations to conserve natural resources.
- Building a community of mutual respect for differences, that values relationships and works to break down barriers that divide. On campus, this means continuing to provide opportunities for personal connection and building bridges across departments and disciplines. It is a campus community of shared responsibility working together toward common values and goals that will enable each person to continue a life of learning and growth.

And the following Student Learning Outcomes:

- Global Perspectives Demonstrate an understanding of differences in cultures and societies.
- Social Responsibility Recognize the social and ethical responsibility of creating art and design.

Further evidence of institutional support

Throughout the election cycle, communication occurs by email, posting on institutional social media channels, and the creation of a RinglingVotes website through Google sites. During past election cycles, we have relied on in-person tabling events and large group presentations to keep our students informed. In 2020, due to COVID-19, with such a large percentage of our students learning remotely and participating from all across the country, we launched new ways to get the information to students where they are: virtually- through our campus social media channels, using the #RinglingVotes and through the creation of a RinglingVotes website. That site was used through the 2022 elections.

The Google Sites URL is very lengthy and hard to share or remember. To further connect the initiative with the college, RinglingVotes has been working with campus Media and Community Relations to migrate the site to a college hosted URL in hopes to have the site live by orientation in August 2024.

To increase the visibility of our announcements, events, updates, and events, we partner with the campus Social Media Specialist and other campus department social media accounts to share our content. This includes posting photos from our events to increase awareness, interest, and engagement.

As part of this initiative, we worked with Institutional Technology to create an easy-to-remember email alias, [vote@ringling.edu](mailto:vote@ringling.edu), for any member of campus with a question related to the election. RinglingVotes has also worked with I.T. to create the ability to send emails from [vote@ringling.edu](mailto:vote@ringling.edu)

The RinglingVotes website was created with institutional support from Institutional Technology and from Marketing and Media Relations in partnership with Ringling College's Social Media Specialist, to house all information related to the election and how to engage. The website continues to be updated by Civic Engagement leaders with new and relevant information. In addition to posting our presentations from the local Supervisor of Elections and other events, we include tools for the following:

- Voter Registration
- Requesting Vote-by-Mail and Absentee Ballots
- Early Voting
- Election Day Voting
- Ballot, candidate, and issue guides
- Election laws and deadlines for each state
- Resources for faculty and staff
- Post-election support materials
- Help webform
- Email alias for election-related support: [vote@ringling.edu](mailto:vote@ringling.edu)

Student Life is currently discussing department Student Learning Outcomes. These will include the importance of programming that leads to civically-minded and engaged students.

Civic holidays have become a regular part of the yearly programming calendar and RinglingVotes consistently offers events for the following:

Voter registration during New Student Orientation, at the Volunteer and Club Fair, and frequently during election seasons

Debate watch parties

Constitution Day

National Voter Registration Day

National Voter Education Week

Vote Early Day

Election Hero Day

Election Day

Landscape:

Our campus is located in Florida, which has recently experienced changes in laws related to voting and registration. Some of these laws inhibit students' ability to register their peers and as a result, the Coalition will rely on off campus and community partners to conduct this process at RinglingVotes events.

To best serve students through these changes, Rachel Levey-Baker attended the National Student Voting Summit in November 2023. At the summit, representatives from Florida campuses met and connected to provide support and ideas through the 2024 election cycle. Campus Coalition members also partner with counterparts at other local Cross College Alliance campuses to address local and state issues.

Our campus demographic and voting data: In 2016, our voting rate was 45.8% and was 62.2% in 2020. Comparing midterm elections, our campus voting rate in 2014 was 9.4% and in 2018 it was 33.5%. The estimated number of American citizens enrolled at Ringling from Fall 2018 was 1,269 students who were eligible to vote and students from 44 states. The Ringling College NSLVE data does not provide data for year levels or for race and ethnicity. It also lumps several majors together into a few categories, so it is difficult to determine if there are sub-communities of the campus that could benefit from more targeted outreach.

Over the course of the federal election cycles since 2016, students have become empowered to be more vocal about their concerns and values. Several campus populations- such as the LGBTQ+ community and those representing the diversity of our campus- and their allies have become more active in programming that addresses the social issues and challenges they face. There is increased participation in Student Government evidenced by initiatives sparked by nationwide events and movements, like the creation of the Committee for Diversity and Inclusion. Students have also created organizations like Green Ambassadors, Students of Color Alliance, Black Student Union, and the Asian Student Alliance.

In 2023-2024, Ringling College reports that our student body of 1,722 students comes from 58 countries, 45 states, and one territory. International students comprise 21% of the campus population and 29% are from Florida (source: <https://www.ringling.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FactSheet.pdf>).

With such a large portion coming from Florida, there is an emphasis on resources for voters from this state and information related to the local and state ballots and candidates.

Materials and support are always offered for out of state voters, and RinglingVotes will assist those students in finding the forms, deadlines, and processes for their home county election offices. The website includes links to nationwide resources such as Campus Vote Project, All In To Vote, and the U.S. Vote Foundation.

The majority of students, between 70-75% live on campus and use the residence hall addresses. Because of the confusion that results from this, 3<sup>rd</sup> party voter registration organizations are not permitted to conduct voter registration on campus with our RinglingVotes support. The College has maintained productive partnerships and relationships with many 3PVROs to ensure success for student voter registration.

Most events are held during the lunch hour to catch students passing from class to lunch, and this will include both residential and commuter students. RinglingVotes rotates campus locations and through different weekdays to increase opportunities for students to pass by tabling events.

According to the 2020 Ringling College NSLVE report, the majority of students did not vote in person. On Election Day, 61 students voted in person while 159 students chose to Early Vote, but 500 students voted by mail- a huge increase from the previous Presidential election in 2016, when 174 students voted by mail. Because of this, more time and emphasis will be put on how to vote by mail, track ballots, etc.

In 2020, the report also showed across the board increased in voting by age group, though a much smaller increase was seen in the 25-29 range. This is a small percentage of the overall campus voting population, but RinglingVotes can connect with campus resources for non-traditional students to increase communication and access for this group. The highest increase was seen in the 22-24 range (from a voting rate of 34 in 2016 to 52 in 2020) and this could offer an opportunity to those students to become more involved in civic engagement. The 18-21 group also saw a significant increase from a voting rate of 39 in 2016 to 51 in 2020.

There was an equal increase in voting rates among male-identifying (voting rate of 49, up from 37) and female-identifying student (voting rate of 51, up from 39) though the campus has a much higher population of females than males (1,142 in 2020 vs 439). The campus population has many students that do not identify as male or female, so programming will continue to rely on campus partnerships with the CDI and other campus partners and groups to ensure inclusive messaging and programming.

Ringling College is not a typical college campus. All of our students are studying art and design and work incredibly hard because of the very rigorous curriculum. And while students have become increasingly civically engaged and socially aware of current events and challenges, one does not see the type of political activism that has become much more visible and common on other campuses. When other students might be protesting, Ringling College students are very likely submerged in project, deadlines, and finals to such an extent that they are not able to frequently check on the news.

However, several local groups and organizations frequently reach out to visit campus for presentations, events, and tabling. Each year, the League of Women Voters frequently reaches out to conduct non-partisan voter registration and education, and other groups like a local chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity or Democratic Clubs.

Locally, Sarasota has an incredibly supportive Supervisor of Elections office who regularly reaches out to visit and present on campus and has open communication to solve student voter issues.

In earlier elections, there was a polling place that campus staff could walk students to, but as precincts have shifted, the nearest polling places are slightly further, at 1.6 miles, requiring shuttles, which are available for early voting and election day. There is also an early vote location 1.8 miles away.

### **Goals:**

Our campus democratic engagement short-term goals include reaching as many students as possible, offering resources that are accessible to everyone, and asking every eligible student to register to vote. Representatives from RinglingVotes will be attended the Ask Every Student overview and implementation grant overview on January 17, 2024, applied for and received the grant. The grant will be used to hire student workers to create and deliver civic and voter engagement programming in Fall 2024. The goal is to hire 2-4 students and partner with them to

deliver weekly opportunities to register to vote through the voter registration deadline the week of the deadline, which would total 8 programs; then one program per week to address voting by mail through October for a total of 4 programs. Other goals include offering 3 opportunities (3 different days) for in person voting.

Long-term goals include increasing engagement across the campus in the election process and increasing opportunities for campus dialogue on election-related issues important to students through a deliberative dialogue event series. The goal would include increase the campus voting coalition to 7 core members by 2026, including 4 students, 2 additional staff, and one faculty member.

As Ringling College strives to better integrate civic engagement into the campus culture, the aim is to encourage students to think critically about the issues facing their world, how to become better informed about them, how to discuss opportunities for progress in a civil and respectful manner, and how to take actionable steps toward creating the future they hope for. Beyond opportunities for discussion and dialogue, students should have the opportunity to create and display art that shares their current concerns, their values, and how their creativity can positively impact the world around them. Long-term goals include increasing engagement in the 2024 election process from beyond our previous voting rate of 62.2% for presidential elections and beyond 33% for midterm elections (based on previous 2020 NSVLE data). In 2020, Ringling College's voting rate was 4 points below the national average of 66%.

The goal will be to increase the campus registration rate to 85% (2020 rate was 81.8%), the voting rate of Ringling College students to 80% (2020 rate was 76%) and the campus voting rate to be 3-5 points greater than the national average across all institutions participating in the survey in 2024.

## **NSLVE**

Screenshots

### **Strategy:**

RinglingVotes will expand beyond 2-4 student leaders and one administrator by inviting new members to the coalition, with an aim to add representatives from other student support offices, faculty, student groups, community organizations, and representatives from the Supervisor of Elections. RinglingVotes will work with campus and community partners to provide support and resources for voters and a full calendar of events carrying students from voter registration, through Election Day, and Beyond. Our plan aimed to educate and engage all of our campus and includes a series of resources to guide through students through the election process- from voter registration, requesting a ballot, ballot tracking, early voting, voting on Election Day, and election support- including a social media campaign, updating the RinglingVotes web site, a series of in-person and virtual events, email messaging, community partnerships, and voter education.

The programming is based in the department of Community Engaged Learning and created by RinglingVotes in partnership with other members of the campus and local community. Each year, during and outside of federal election cycles, RinglingVotes will host a series of voter registration and voter education events for Constitution Day, National Voter Registration Day, Vote Early Day, and Voter Education week, and bi-monthly information booths and tabling events. The campus will host the Supervisor of Elections office yearly to present on the significance of our right to vote and how to be an active voter. The RinglingVotes website will provide voter registration and ballot request tools, ballot guides and other voter resources, a



help webform, and a new email address alias that is easy for students to remember if they have questions about voting or the election. Informational campus-wide emails will be sent, with links back to the web site, and events are listed on our campus activities site, Ringlink. We will partner with resident assistants, student clubs and organizations, and faculty to do voter presentations during programs, meetings, and classes. We will partner with the Health Center and Campus Activities Board to host a series of pre- and post-election support events.

Programming will include:

- ongoing in-person and virtual voter registration/voter education events; Partnering with Residence Assistants, Students of Color Alliance, Campus Activities Board, student affinity groups, and several faculty for in-class presentations
- info booth tabling events with printed information, necessary forms, voting swag, election support, copies of the U.S. Constitution, selfie booths, question box, and a help station
- Co-host Wonderful Wednesday events with Ringling Volunteerism Opportunities and the Health Center during the month of October to create election support kits to give out to students that include important voting info (I.D., dates/schedules, vote by mail info, post-election guides, etc) and emotional support items determined and contributed by the Health Center.
- Debate watch events
- Voter outreach events
- events to celebrate 6 election/voter-related national days: Constitution Day, National Voter Registration Day, Voter Education Week, Vote Early Day, Election Hero Day, Election Day
- Election support tabling events with the Health Center with emotional health tools and giveaways, Election process guides

RinglingVotes will continue past successful programming initiatives, the “Taco ‘Bout It” series, which had high attendance and partner with the Center for Diversity and Inclusion to create deliberative dialogue programming.

Longer-term strategies:

Programming calendars are discussed in Student Life Program Team meetings in the summer prior to an Academic Year, which offers great opportunities to make the above programs part of the regular campus programming schedule. A staff representative from RinglingVotes should attend the summer and ongoing bi-weekly Program Team meetings, especially in election seasons, to ensure opportunities for collaboration and partnership.

Additionally, a RinglingVotes student member should be present at all Student Government Association meetings to announce programs, present voter education info, and promote participation in the initiative.

RinglingVotes events will continue to be posted on social media, the student portal, and on the campus event platform, Ringlink (Corq app).

The Student Life Program Team is continuing to discuss student learning outcomes for the entire department. RinglingVotes will work towards adding civic engagement learning outcomes for the whole department of Student Life.

Faculty attend a professional development day each semester. RinglingVotes will work towards presenting or sharing civic and voter education resources and opportunities, as well as invitations to join the coalition, at professional days prior to federal election cycles.

For future members of RinglingVotes updating this action plan, resources- including the Strengthening American Democracy guide and sample action plans- can be found on the All In Campus Democracy Challenge site here: <https://allinchallenge.org/resources/action-plans/> and other campus action plans can be found here: <https://allinchallenge.org/participating-campuses/>

### **Reporting:**

We will report our campus action plan and NSLVE reports in the following ways: To the voter engagement stakeholders on campus -including the Office of Student Life (at Student Life department meetings, Program Team meetings, and Community Engaged Learning meetings), senior campus leadership, student civic engagement leaders and the RinglingVotes group, Student Government Association, and faculty. Ringling College NSLVE reports have been posted on the student portal and are currently on the RinglingVotes website (here: <https://sites.google.com/c.ringling.edu/vote/nslve-reports>), and shared with the campus community. The report has been shared in multiple in class presentations about voter engagement.

All In Campus Democracy Challenge recognitions and action plans can be found here: <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/ringling-college-of-art-and-design/>

### **Evaluation:**

Assessment and evaluation occurs throughout the programming calendar as our RinglingVotes team debriefs after every event and uses feedback to plan future programs- both those events in the short term and long term. Coalition members will utilize the action plan at regular meetings to mark progress and discuss short and long terms steps.

RinglingVotes can work with I.T. to find any data that shows website engagement. The Associate Dean for Community Engaged Learning can track emails to the [vote@ringling.edu](mailto:vote@ringling.edu) alias and entries to the site's help form.

Attendance reports from campus events will tell us which students are being reached through programming. Our staff and student leaders will utilize the NSLVE information, reporting from campus programs (including attendance/engagement), and data from our web site and social media to help determine which digital resources were viewed.

For the 2024 election cycle, RinglingVotes will aim to capture accurate attendance through the campus event platform called Ringlink to determine how different events pulled student participation.