**RIT** | Division of Student Affairs
**Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement**

# **Voter Engagement** Institutional Plan 2022

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Rochester Institute of Technology's (RIT) mission statement is a call to creatively leverage the strengths of our university to work for the *greater good*. Our 2025 strategic plan - *Greatness through difference* - furthers this call by outlining our collective commitment to the cultivation of global citizens and leaders who are prepared to address global interconnected challenges.

In furtherance of these objectives over the past few years, RIT has taken steps to enhance our efforts in the areas of community service and engagement, advocacy, community-based research, public policy research and analysis, and civic learning and democratic engagement. Centers and departments like the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement (CLCE) are emerging on campus in support of this work and are making meaningful inroads. Further, university initiatives such as ROAR the Vote (RTV) are developing into full programs in support of these strategic efforts. In preparation for the 2022 Midterm Election, this action plan was created by RTV committee chair and CLCE staff member Alex Tubridy, in consultation with other members of the RTV committee, comprising students, faculty, and staff.[1]

In partnership with students, faculty, and staff from across the University, RTV seeks to elevate (and de-stigmatize) the discourse on campus related to civic and democratic engagement, develop meaningful and relevant opportunities for students to actively engage in civic learning and democratic engagement opportunities, and subsequently increase the percentage of students who vote in local, state, and national elections.[2]

The majority of RIT students study at our main campus in Rochester, NY. However, many additional students study abroad, attend one of our global campuses, and/or pursue their education online. As a result, our action plan addresses avenues available for us to engage RIT Tigers everywhere, whether they learn in-person or virtually.[3]

Though RIT has submitted action plans for the past few elections and seen some success, there is still a great deal of work ahead of us. As we strive to continue removing barriers to voting for our students, the creation of action plans allows us to think strategically about where we have been and where we aim to be. Further, our action plans serve as a commitment to our students and the University as we strive to achieve *Greatness through Difference*.[4]

This voter engagement institutional plan includes a brief review of voter engagement efforts dating back to 2016, as well as a reflection on the 2020 Presidential Election. Further, it explores our plans for the 2022 Midterm elections and a timeline of long-term goals leading

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[1] Executive Summary, Guiding Question 1: Who developed this action plan?
[2] Executive Summary, Guiding Question 2: What is this action plan for and what does it seek to accomplish?
[3] Executive Summary, Guiding Question 3: Where will this action plan be implemented? E.g., name of the institution, the number of campuses the work will take place at, campus locations, in-person, online, hybrid.
[4] Executive Summary, Guiding Question 4: Why was this action plan developed? How does this plan tie to broader institutional norms/values/strategic plans?

toward the 2024 Presidential Election. Our action plan is updated each fall, and a review of what has been accomplished follows each election cycle in the winter (Midterm, Presidential elections).[5]

This action plan will primarily be implemented by two units on campus: The Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement, and the ROAR the Vote Committee. In addition, external partners (e.g. The League of Women Voters, Monroe County Board of Elections) will be active contributors to the success of this action plan. The primary point of contact for this action plan is Alex Tubridy, Civic Engagement Coordinator in the CLCE, ROAR the Vote Chair.[6]

To ensure our action plan is equitable, the ROAR the Vote committee comprises students, faculty, and staff from various functional areas across the University. Further, the committee members hold a diverse set of shared identities with our students (e.g. race, gender, ability, etc.). By intentionally inviting a variety of perspectives and diverse voices to collaborate in this work, ROAR the Vote can more accurately reflect our campus and community. Beyond the recruitment of diverse members, the RTV Committee contains several subcommittees. With members having defined roles, they can best leverage their strengths to promote inclusivity.[7]

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[5] Executive Summary, Guiding Question 5: When does this action plan start and end? Is this an action plan focused on the short-term and long-term goals? When will it be updated?
[6] Executive Summary, Guiding Question 6: How will this action plan be implemented? Who is in charge? What unit/office/division will be facilitating the effort?
[7] Executive Summary, Guiding Question 7: What strategies were employed to make sure this plan was equitable and included a diverse audience?

LEADERSHIP

In the years since its inception, ROAR the Vote and its committee continue to grow in size, responsibility, and accountability for the University's efforts to increase civic learning and democratic engagement. What began as a targeted group of invested student affairs professionals, the RTV committee now has representation from many campus units. As the committee grew, it became crucial to create subcommittees to focus on various areas of voted engagement at RIT. As of the 2020 election, the three subcommittees are:

- Voter Registration
- Marketing & Communications
- Volunteer Training

Listed Below are all current members of the RTV committee (members involved in the 2020 Presidential Election are listed in Orange)[8]:

## Academic Affairs[9]

- Dr. Karen Van Meenen, Senior Lecturer, Department of English
- Lyndsey McGrath, Adjunct Professor, Department of Public Policy | Director of Global Programs and International Partnerships, Office of International Education and Global Programs
- Dr. Eric Hittinger, Interim Department Chair, Department of Public Policy
- Dr. Sean Sutton, Professor, Department of Political Science
- Capt. Austin Fox, Operation Flight Commander, Air Force ROTC Detachment 538

## Student Affairs[10]

- Alex Tubridy, Civic Engagement Coordinator, Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement
- Kathryn Cilano, Associate Director, Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement
- Sri Kartik, Assistant Director of Leadership, Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement
- Erin Clegg, Coordinator for Student Life Programming, National Technical Institute for the Deaf
- Bill St. Jean, Associate Director, Center for Campus Life
- Sara Bayerl, Senior Associate Director of Events/Major Programs, Center for Campus Life
- Marc Goldman, Associate Director, Residence Life

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[8] Leadership, Guiding Question 1: Who are the working group members and how are they involved?
[9] Leadership, Guiding Question 1a: What academic departments and which faculty within academic affairs are involved?
[10] Leadership, Guiding Question 1b: What units within student affairs are involved and which administrators are involved?

- Jenn Bronakoski, Director of Marketing & Communications, Assessment, Technology, & Communications
- Eric Pope, Associate Director of New Student Orientation, Center for Campus Life

## Student Organizations and Students[11]

- Student Government Vice President
- College Democrats Representative
- College Republicans Representative
- Student Government Graduate Senator
- Evan Shelton, ROAR the Vote Leadership Scholar, Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement

## Additional Campus Units[12]

- Assistant Director of Diversity Education, Division of Diversity & Inclusion
- Katherine Beczak, Assistant Dean of Graduate Student Success
- Christopher Harris, Director of Community Relations, Government & Community Relations
- Jeffrey Siegel, Associate Director of Athletics, Intercollegiate Athletics
- Chelsea Petree, Director, Parent & Family Programs
- Belinda Bryce, Program Director, Higher Education Opportunity Program

## Community Partners[13]

- Myra Pelz, League of Women Voters, Rochester Metro Area
- ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
- TurboVote
- Voter Friendly Campus Program
- The Kettering Foundation
- Update NY Vote Everywhere Coalition (In partnership with the Andrew Goodman Foundation)

## Local Elections Office[14]

- Monroe County Board of Elections

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[11] Leadership, Guiding Question 1c: Which students and student organizations are involved?

[12] Leadership, Guiding Question 7: What other offices on campus need to be involved?

[13] Leadership, Guiding Question 1d: What community and/or national organizations are involved?

[14] Leadership, Guiding Question 1e: Is the working group coordinating with the local election office? If so, with whom and how?

The Director of Government & Community relations maintains a relationship with the Monroe County Board of Elections to ensure we have a continued polling place on campus. This voting district encompasses all on-campus residences, and is easily accessible for students who register using their on-campus address. For the 2020 election, the Board of Elections provided boxes of absentee ballot request forms, free of charge, to ROAR the Vote. The Board of Elections also works with ROAR the Vote to distribute information about volunteering as a poll worker.

As the RTV Committee is divided into subcommittees, each subcommittee has a member volunteer to be the chair. To hold members accountable, the subcommittees regularly meet and report progress to their chairs, who in turn report to the RTV chair. As participation on the RTV Committee is voluntary, there is also a level of self-accountability for all members. Further, student-staff involved with the committee are compensated through the offices that employ them, and not through RTV itself.[15]

Historically, the RTV Committee comprised mostly student affairs professionals. As the program grew, committee members became increasingly aware of the limited scope of students they interacted with through their regular positions. With this in mind, new members were intentionally invited from a vast representation of functional areas across the University.[16] As a result, the committee now has representatives whose work sees them interface with all RIT students. Further, each member also has a skillset to work with the unique challenges many students face. In addition to the responsibilities assigned through subcommittees, each member of the RTV committee is expected to work directly with their students to raise awareness of voter engagement at RIT.[17]

Expansion of the RTV committee to include voices that were not previously present has been a top priority of ours following the 2020 election. Following intentional thought about who was missing from the committee, and a review of our 2020 NSLVE data, we identified a number of individuals to invite to join the RTV committee, identified in the bulleted list above in **black**.[18] NSLVE data from 2016 and 2018 showed that our students from traditionally under-represented backgrounds were less engaged than their peers in terms of voter engagement. To address this, we invited a staff member from the Division of Diversity & Inclusion to join the RTV committee. Through their more direct interactions with these student groups, we were able to make substantial gains in registration and voting rate among these students in the 2020

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[15] Leadership, Guiding Question 2: Who is this person(s) and/or office(s) held accountable to, what is their reporting line? If student-staff or community members are involved, how are they compensated for their involvement?

[16] Leadership, Guiding Question 5: How is the working group inclusive of different campus and community stakeholders?

[17] Leadership, Guiding Question 3: What are working group members' unique strengths and, with those in mind, what are their responsibilities?

[18] Leadership, Guiding Question 4: How will people be brought into the coalition who currently are not there? Why have these individuals/groups been identified to join?

election. However, our most recent NSLVE data shows that we still have ground to make up here, as well as with graduate students. Our intentional invitation and inclusion of professionals and students from these spaces aims to address the previous shortcomings in engaging these (and other) student groups.[19]

To solidify RIT's commitment to voter engagement, President David Munson has signed the Presidential Commitment through the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. Further, President Munson is a direct recipient of our NSLVE report.[20] [21]

During election years, the RTV Committee meets once per month to provide updates and plan events. Between these monthly meetings, the subcommittees meet at intervals set by the subcommittee chairs. All members of the committee regularly communicate via email, with the RTV Chair coordinating all full-committee communications. Further, the RTV Committee also utilizes a Google Drive to share and store all work.[22]

During non-election years, the RTV Committee is able to work on smaller tasks and contribute to other RTV programming (e.g. updating marketing videos & website content, participate in our deliberative dialogue series, partner with Congress to Campus program, etc.). In the event that a committee member is no longer able to serve in their role, they are asked to identify colleagues in their functional area who may be interested in replacing them. An invitation is then extended to that individual. If those recommended are unable to join, that committee member's responsibilities are to be distributed by their subcommittee chair. The RTV Chair will then work to identify potential campus partners who share a similar skillset or interact regularly with the same students the now-absent member previously had. This ensures that no group of students is left without a voice in the overall RTV campaign.[23] [24]

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[19] Leadership, Guiding Question 4a: Which groups have traditionally been underrepresented within your mobilization efforts and how does your working group work to strategically involve members of those groups?

[20] Leadership, Guiding Question 6: Does the working group have the support of upper administrators who can help advocate on behalf of the working group?

[21] Evaluation, Guiding Question 16: Was campus administration supportive of civic learning and democratic engagement efforts?

[22] Leadership, Guiding Question 8: How often will the working group meet and communicate? Identify who is responsible for communicating amongst the group and how the group will meet.

[23] Leadership, Guiding Question 9: How are you keeping working group members engaged over time and addressing stakeholder turnover?

[24] Leadership, Guiding Question 10: If someone in the working group stops showing up and doing the work or needs to step away, what steps will be taken to ensure the efforts continue?

**COMMITMENT**

ROAR the Vote is a nonpartisan campus initiative created to provide RIT students with the resources necessary to register and vote in local, state, and national elections. To solidify RIT's commitment to voter engagement, President David Munson has signed the Presidential Commitment through the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, and is a direct recipient of our NSLVE report.[25] The growing efforts of RTV are communicated through the RIT News & Events channel, which is distributed internally via email and is readily accessible to external parties.[26] These stories have served as the basis for local media stories related to voter engagement.[27]

- [RIT ROAR the Vote Seek to Engage Students](#)
- [PolySci 101: Civic Engagement for Students](#)
- [RIT Has its First On-Campus Voting Site](#)
- [RIT Promotes Student Voter Education](#)
- [College Students Loom Important in November Elections](#)
- [News & Events: Congress to Campus](#)

The Rochester Institute of Technology's (RIT) mission statement is a call to creatively leverage the strengths of our university to work for the *greater good*. Our [2025 strategic plan - *Greatness through difference*](#) - furthers this call by outlining our collective commitment to the cultivation of global citizens and leaders who are prepared to address global interconnected challenges.[28] However, civic learning and democratic engagement at RIT still has room to grow before it can be considered embedded in our institutional culture. Despite previous action plans and increasing involvement in this work from partners across campus since RTV's inception, most democratic engagement efforts occurred primarily during election years. Yet, since RTV has found a permanent home in the Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement, efforts have been made to make democratic engagement more consistent. A small number of annual campus events have been identified as "key events" where RTV will have an ongoing voter engagement presence (New Student Orientation, National Voter Registration Day, Spring Orientation, and

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[25] Commitment, Guiding Question 1d: Has the institution's senior leadership made an outward commitment to democratic engagement? For instance, signing the ALL IN President's Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation?

[26] Commitment, Guiding Question 1a: Is the commitment communicated within the institution? To whom, specifically, and how?

[27] Commitment, Guiding Question 1b: Is the commitment communicated outside the institution? To whom, specifically, and how?

[28] Commitment, Guiding Question 3: How is the institution's commitment reflected in existing statements and documents? Has the institution created and implemented an action plan in previous years?

Service Week). Further, two new civic learning programs have been created by the CLCE to further engage students during election off-season (Horizons and Congress to Campus).[29]

Learning outcomes related to civic, democratic, and/or political learning are measured and assessed by the Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement. Though discussions on civic learning happen in a handful of places across campus, the CLCE is RIT's home for this learning overall. Our civic learning outcomes are measured primarily through the assessment of two main programs: Horizons (a deliberative dialogue series) and Congress to Campus. Through these programs, successful learning can be demonstrated by the following[30]:

- Students can describe the importance of working across political difference
- Students can articulate possible solutions to difficult problems that are not their own
- Students can identify the broader implications of difficult problems if they are ignored
- Students can identify the trade-offs of their preferred solutions to difficult problems

General Education is a signature curriculum for the university, with an impact on all students and programs. In accordance with RIT's mission, the General Education curriculum is the foundation for preparing students for lifelong learning, for success in their chosen fields and for their role in society as well-educated and knowledgeable citizens. This curriculum has seven Perspective categories that promote different ways of knowing about the world. Of the seven Perspectives, the following integrate understandings about civic learning[31]:

- Ethical - identify contemporary ethical questions and relevant positions
- Global - examine connections among the world's populations
- Social - analyze similarities and differences in human social experiences and evaluate the consequences
- Artistic - Interpret and evaluate artistic expression considering the cultural context in which it was created

The Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement is RIT's home for co-curricular civic learning and democratic engagement. Though other campus units provide opportunities for students to engage, the CLCE is host to ROAR the Vote and its initiatives. In relation to touchpoints, ROAR the Vote has a presence at a handful of annual events, including New Student Orientation and Service Week. Further, our online event management system has a link on its homepage for students to learn more about engaging politically and voting. At least once a year, all eligible

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[29] Commitment, Guiding Question 2: Is educating for civic learning and democratic engagement a pervasive part of institutional culture? Is it ongoing, consistent, systematic, and sustainable across programs, departments, and the entire institution? How do you know?

[30] Commitment, Guiding Question 4: What are the institution's overall civic, democratic, and/or political learning outcomes? Is there a process in place to ensure that outcomes are measured and met?

[31] Commitment, Guiding Question 5: How is educating for civic learning and democratic engagement included in the general education curriculum?

students are sent an email with an invitation to update their voter registration information through StarRez.

The CLCE recently launched the Horizons program, a deliberative dialogue series based on the model and issue guides developed by the National Issues Forum Institute (NIFI). This program creates space for students, faculty, and staff to come together and participate in a structured discussion of contemporary issues, while considering the benefits and drawbacks of multiple possible solutions. Further, we recently hosted two former members of Congress as part of Congress to Campus, a program sponsored by the Former Members of Congress. By partnering with a diversity of campus academic units, student groups, University initiatives, and others, the RIT community was able to interface with former congress members with a record of cross-party collaboration. These two new programs have been successful in bringing a diversity of voices together to engage in dialogue on issues that affect all of us. They both challenge our students to critically consider and evaluate perspectives that differ from their own.[32]

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[32] Commitment, Guiding Question 6: How is educating for civic learning and democratic engagement included in the co-curriculum?

LANDSCAPE

At its core, RIT's mission statement is a call to creatively leverage the strengths of our university to work for the social good. As evidenced by the 2025 Greatness through difference strategic plan, the university acknowledges its role in equipping its students with the necessary tools to explore their civic identities.

To this aim, in 2015, in preparation for the 2016 elections, the university leadership allocated human and financial resources towards the creation of a comprehensive voter education and registration campaign at RIT. ROAR the Vote was the result of that investment!

Parallel to the creation of ROAR the Vote, the Division of Student Affairs reorganized The RIT Leadership Institute and Community Service Center into the Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement (CLCE) expanding the scope of the unit's work to include civic learning and democratic engagement and augmenting the unit's human and financial resources in support of its expanded mission. Appropriately, the CLCE leads the ROAR the Vote initiative; but, by no means is the work limited to this department:

- **The Office of Government and Community Relations** (G&CR) serves as the University's liaison with Federal, State and local government entities and actively supports and advises students, faculty, and staff who are engaging in advocacy work. G&CR also administers the University's policy on Political and Legislative Activities. The Vice President is also an ex-officio member of the ROAR the Vote core team.
- **RIT's Center for Statesmanship, Law, and Liberty** supports scholarship, teaching, research, and student-centered learning related to the "interplay between America's political culture and its leaders, ideas, and institutions".
- **RIT's Sustainability Office** engages the community in education and advocacy around issues of sustainability.
- **The Center for Campus Life** supports and advises student political organizations including College Republicans, College Democrats, and the International Socialist Organization.
- **RIT's Office of University Community Partnerships** "facilitates the integration of experiential community-based learning and research into RIT's academic programs."

Deepening partnerships with each of these key organizations will enhance our collaborative effort to connect with students across campus to increase voter participation and education[33].

RIT's commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement is admittedly a more recent commitment over the past five years, but it is growing; and, since program assessment is an institutional norm at RIT, there is a great deal of evidence to support this assertion.

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[33] Landscape, Guiding Question 9: What additional resources are needed to help the institution be successful?

Voter education and registration efforts at RIT are evaluated every two years utilizing a three-pronged approach: post-election survey results, google and TurboVote analytics, and the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement. The Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement in collaboration with the Office of Assessment, Technology, and Communication is primarily responsible for this work. The last evaluation was conducted in 2020 and was designed to evaluate success based on four goals[34]:

1. The percentage of eligible RIT students who vote in the presidential election will at least match the national percentage for all institutions;
2. 70% of eligible students who plan to vote absentee will describe themselves as informed or very informed about voting via absentee ballot;
3. 65% of eligible students will indicate that they discussed the election at least one time with: friends, other RIT students, and/or their parents; and,
4. 65% of eligible students will indicate that they discussed the election at least one time with: faculty and/or staff at RIT.

While we did not meet our slated goal for voter turnout (National Average 66%, RIT 53%), these numbers alone do not reflect the breadth and depth of our work nor the range of partnerships that continue to characterize our work[35]:

- Our efforts resulted in a 16.7% increase in voting rates among RIT students from 2016 (36.3%) to 2020 (53%); and a 19.6% increase (56% to 75.6%) in the voting rate among registered students during that same time period.
- Additionally, a super majority of respondents (85%) indicated they were very informed or informed about voting via absentee ballots.
- 64% of respondents who registered that semester were more aware of voter registration deadlines because of ROAR the Vote; and, 55% also indicated that the campaign made them more aware about how to register to vote.

Some of the most meaningful information the post-election survey captured surrounded absentee ballots and on-campus engagement around these topics with faculty and staff. Following trends from past years, assessment has found that a large percentage of students (39%) voted via absentee ballot or early voting (18%). Given this information, RIT has put a particular emphasis on education about absentee ballots and changes to early voting laws throughout our ROAR the Vote campaigns. Another area of focus for ROAR the Vote in the upcoming academic years will be connecting, more effectively, with RIT faculty and staff to encourage meaningful and non-partisan conversations about electoral politics and voting with students. Survey respondents indicated that they often or sometimes spoke with friends (99%),

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[34] Landscape, Guiding Question 1: Are civic learning and democratic engagement overall campus learning outcomes? If so, what are the learning outcomes and how are they measured?

[35] Landscape, Guiding Question 2: Do you have access to assessment data for your campus? If so what does assessment data show about the political climate and democratic engagement on campus?

parents or family members (92%), and other RIT students (91%) about the election. 84% indicated that they seldom or never spoke with a faculty member and 83% seldom or never spoke with a member of the staff.

In addition to the data, there is a great deal of anecdotal evidence that elucidates RIT's growing commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement[36]:

- University leaders have acted as key players in the ROAR the Vote marketing strategies through RIT's public YouTube channel communicating the importance of students exercising their civic responsibility to participate in our democracy.
- The University has committed to a multi-year partnership with Democracy Works for use of its TurboVote platform. We are the first higher education institution to sign a multi-year agreement.
- The University, through our advocacy efforts with the Monroe County Board of Elections, secured an on-campus polling location for the 2018 and 2020 elections.
- Leaders from Government and Community Relations are in the early planning stages of launching a program to have RIT students participate in Lobby Days at the NYS capital.
- This year, RIT launched a campaign highlighting free speech and civil discourse as a matter of practice. "Free Speech on Campus, Past and Present: Why it Matters and Where We are Headed" is a campus wide initiative offered through the support of the RIT President, Provost, Student Affairs Division, and Division of Diversity and Inclusion.

Furthermore, as outlined in the above *commitment* section, RIT's General Education curriculum actively prepares students for their role in society as well-educated and knowledgeable citizens[37]. Specifically, RIT has a political science major that integrates the fields of American government and international relations in order to prepare students for a life and career in an increasingly globalized world. Students can choose from various tracks ranging from "Politics & the Life Sciences" to "Deliberative Democracy & National Government."

The Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement is RIT's home for co-curricular civic learning and democratic engagement. Though other campus units provide opportunities for students to engage, the CLCE is host to ROAR the Vote and its initiatives. Additionally, College Democrats, College Republicans, and the International Socialist Organization are all housed within the RIT Center for Campus Life [38].

Diversity and inclusion are fundamental aspects of RIT's identity as an institution and are intrinsically tied to its historic strength as one of America's most innovative and forward-looking universities. To this aim, we leverage demographic information not only in our evaluation of a program, but also in the planning phases. Last year, the percentage of students who participated in Roar The Vote programmatic offerings from underrepresented groups

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[36] Landscape, Guiding Question 8: What resources are available to help the institution be successful?
[37] Landscape, Guiding Question 3: How is civic learning and democratic engagement present in the curriculum?
[38] Landscape, Guiding Question 4: How is civic learning and democratic engagement present in the co-curriculum?

exceeded their representation on campus in alignment with Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement key performance indicators. Most notably, the percentage of Deaf/HoH students represented in RTV programs increased to exceed representation in the RIT population as a whole, a metric we did not meet in the 2018 assessment report. The inclusion of two NTID staff members on the RTV Committee and the sharing of marketing materials to NTID is a likely contributor to this increased percentage[39].

Approaching the midterm elections, we acknowledge there is much work to be done to continue to increase the RIT campus' awareness of and engagement in our democratic process. One specific barrier we face is the sheer size of our campus and the structure of our eight different colleges within the broader university[40]. Our 2020 NSLVE data can help us chart a course for targeted outreach in our upcoming campaigns. For example, while there were positive increases in many fields of study, there was a 11% decrease within RIT's "Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies" from 2016 to 2018 (41% to 30%). Luckily, a strong partnership between the Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement and the School of Individualized Studies has already been established. We can now leverage this data and our cross-divisional partnership to better engage students in this field.

Externally, the turbulence around voter laws in various states have added an additional layer of outreach and education to our voter registration campaigns. RIT registered students call 46 of the 50 states home. As some states wrestle with voting eligibility for out-of-state students, early voting, and other election laws, our campaign works to educate students appropriately by leveraging resources such as Howto.vote. Unfortunately, we still engage with many students who become frustrated with missing deadlines or complex registration processes[41].

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[39] Landscape, Guiding Question 7: What is the demographic makeup of the institution's student body? How is this information considered when mapping out civic learning and democratic engagement efforts?

[40] Landscape, Guiding Question 5: What internal barriers prevent the institution from being successful?

[41] Landscape, Guiding Question 6: What external barriers prevent the institution from being successful?

GOALS

**Long-Term Goals**

Though civic engagement has been rapidly expanding at RIT, we acknowledge that there remains much work to be done. Being said, our long-term vision is to achieve full student voter participation.[42] As a technical school, our campus climate related to democratic engagement has been weaker than our peer institutions, as we have historically trailed in voter registration and voter turnout rates. In recognized our current position, but with optimism from the growth we have seen from our ongoing efforts over the last six years, we are committed to the following long-term goals[43]:

**Voter Registration**

● By the 2028 Presidential election, our voter registration rate will be 5% points more than the national average for all institutions.

Informed from our NSLVE data, our voter registration rate in all presidential elections between 2012 - 2020 has consistently been ~5-6% points below the national average. Over the next decade of work, we will first meet, and then exceed the voter registration rate of our peer institutions. (Note: we follow the same trend and have the same goal for midterm elections).

● By 2024, voter registration opportunities will be institutionalized at large campus events to the degree that all eligible RIT students have an opportunity to register/update their registration.

As RTV continues to grow in scope and capacity, we have reached a level of staffing to support voter registration efforts at large-scale, campus wide events. This is an opportunity where civic engagement programming has been absent in previous years, and the inclusion of RTV will give all students multiple opportunities to engage.

**Voting Rate**

● By the 2028 Presidential election, our voting rate will at least match the national average for all institutions.

Informed from our NSLVE data, our voting rate in all presidential elections between 2012 - 2020 has been ~12-15% points below the national average. Over the next decade of work, we will incrementally increase our voting rate until we are on par with our peer institutions. (Note: we follow the same trend and have the same goal for midterm elections).

● By the 2028 Presidential election, students of color will vote at the same rate as white students at RIT.

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[42] Goals, Guiding Question 1: What is the long-term vision the institution hopes to achieve?

[43] Goals, Guiding Question 3: What are the outcomes the institution wants to accomplish over the next 10 years?

Informed from our NSLVE data, our voting rate of students of color is significantly lower than that of their white peers. In the 2020 election, white students voted at 68%, while the next closest group, Black students, voted at 52%. Over the next decade of work, we will work intentionally to ensure our traditionally underrepresented students vote at the same rate as their white peers.

**Civic Engagement**

- By the 2028 Presidential election, 70% of eligible students will indicate they discussed the election at least one time with faculty and/or staff at RIT

Integral to building an inclusive, democratically engaged environment at RIT is the prevalence of intentional dialogue between students and faculty/staff. Our internal assessment of ROAR the Vote has highlighted the struggle to get faculty and staff generally to engage students in non-partisan conversations about voting. From our 2020 assessment, a full 78% of respondents indicated that they seldom or never talked with a faculty member about the election (84.5% is 2018); 83% seldom or never talked with a member of RIT's staff (76% in 2018). As ROAR the Vote continues to develop new programming focused specifically on facilitating political conversation (Congress to Campus; Horizons), we should see more students indicate they sometimes or often have these conversations with faculty and/or staff.

Both our biennial internal assessment of ROAR the Vote and our NSLVE data inform our long-term goals for civic learning at RIT.[44] In using the data collected to measure growth and engagement over time, we have set goals that are specific, measurable, ambitious, and realistic.[45] Further, we have used our NSLVE data to identify gaps in our programming and worked to directly address them. Most recently, this involved the inclusion of staff from the Division of Diversity and Inclusion to work with the RTV committee on strategies to increase our registration and voting rates of underrepresented students on campus. As we continue to identify areas for improvement, our data will drive the goals we set to best ensure all students can make informed, educated decisions in their civic participation.[46] [47]

**Short-Term Goals**

To make meaningful and measurable progress toward our long-term goals, we have established progressive short-term goals. These goals will help us stay on track toward realizing our vision

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[44] Goals, Guiding Question 7: Are these goals informed by data and research?

[45] Goals, Guiding Question 4: Are the goals S.M.A.R.T.I.E.?

[46] Goals, Guiding Question 5: Do the goals contribute to expanding access to voting for a diverse set of students?

[47] Goals, Guiding Question 6: Are these goals informed by principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice?

of full student voter participation.[48]

**Voter Registration**

- By the 2024 Presidential election, our voter registration rate will *at least* match the national average for all institutions.

Informed from our NSLVE data, our voter registration rate in all presidential elections between 2012 - 2020 has consistently been ~5-6% points below the national average. Over the next decade of work, we will first meet, and then exceed the voter registration rate of our peer institutions. (Note: we follow the same trend and have the same goal for midterm elections).[49]

- By 2022, voter registration opportunities will be institutionalized at orientation to the degree that all eligible RIT students have an opportunity to register/update their registration.

As RTV continues to grow in scope and capacity, we have reached a level of staffing to support voter registration efforts at both New and Transfer Student Orientation. This is an opportunity where civic engagement programming has been absent in previous years, and the inclusion of RTV will give all students an opportunity to engage. This initiative will be implemented beginning spring 2022.

**Voting Rate**

- By the 2024 Presidential election, our voting rate will be within at least 6% points of the national average for all institutions.

Informed from our NSLVE data, our voter registration rate in all presidential elections between 2012 - 2020 has been ~12-15% points below the national average. Over the next decade of work, we will incrementally increase our voting rate until we are on par with our peer institutions. (Note: we follow the same trend and have the same goal for midterm elections).

- By the 2024 Presidential election, students of color will vote at a rate within 10% points of white students at RIT.

Informed from our NSLVE data, our voting rate of students of color is significantly lower than that of their white peers. In the 2020 election, white students voted at 68%, while the next closest group, Black students, voted at 52%. Over the next decade of work, we will work intentionally to ensure our traditionally underrepresented students vote at the same rate as their white peers.

**Civic Engagement**

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[48] Goals, Short-Term Goals, Guiding Question 1: What outcomes does the institution need to reach during the next three years to stay on track to reach its longer-term vision?

[49] Goals, Short-Term Goals, Guiding Question 7: Is the goal informed by data and research?

- By the 2024 Presidential election, 50% of eligible students will indicate they discussed the election at least one time with faculty and/or staff at RIT

Integral to building an inclusive, democratically engaged environment at RIT is the prevalence of intentional dialogue between students and faculty/staff. Our internal assessment of ROAR the Vote has highlighted the struggle to get faculty and staff generally to engage students in non-partisan conversations about voting. From our 2020 assessment, a full 78% of respondents indicated that they seldom or never talked with a faculty member about the election (84.5% is 2018); 83% seldom or never talked with a member of RIT's staff (76% in 2018). As ROAR the Vote continues to develop new programming focused specifically on facilitating political conversation (Congress to Campus; Horizons), we should see more students indicate they sometimes or often have these conversations with faculty and/or staff.

To best ensure our short-term goals are attainable stepping stones toward our long-term vision, we need meaningful buy-in from academic affairs. The current success of ROAR the Vote initiatives is a result of hard work from student affairs professionals and student volunteers. In order to further deepen our commitment to student voter engagement, we need our peers in academic affairs to contribute to a civically engaged culture. Further, we currently have a single paid student-staff position to support this work. As we strive to achieve our long-term vision, additional financial support could go a long way to fairly compensate any additional student-staff brought in to support their peers.[50] [51] [52]

In addition to the inclusion of academic affairs, the RTV committee must continually evaluate itself to ensure the committee members are representative of the RIT community. As the committee grows to include many new members from various functional areas (listed above in Leadership), we feel that we are making progress toward inclusive representation. However, we acknowledge that this is work that is never done, and we must continue to identify partners to be included in our efforts.

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[50] Goals, Short-Term Goals, Guiding Question 2: What resources does the institution need to ensure its longer-term vision is within reach?

[51] Goals, Short-Term Goals, Guiding Question 3: Who does the institution need to involve in order to reach its longer-term vision?

[52] Evaluation, Guiding Question 18: What resources do we need next year to advance civic engagement and reach long-term goals?

STRATEGY

In the shorter term, we want to accomplish the following:

**Increase student voting rates to 40% (up from 22.8%) during midterm elections and to 66% (up from ~53%) during presidential elections[53]:**

| Strategy | Tactics[54] [55] [56] [57] | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Continuously improve the resources on our web-based platforms with particular emphasis on absentee ballots and usability. *In 2020, 51% of students who voted absentee agreed that RTV made them more aware of the process in a post election survey.* | Update the online decision-tree framework on the Election's website. The framework will be responsive to and guide students through registering, updating, and/or requesting an absentee ballot or navigate the early voting process based on their inputs.<br><br>Deadline: Fall 2022<br><br>Target Audience: Entire Student Body<br><br>Responsible: Core Team, University Web Services | Identify and deploy resources related to absentee voting for students from states most served by our efforts: New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Massachusetts.<br><br>Deadline: Fall 2022<br><br>Target Audience: Entire Student Body<br><br>Responsible: Core Team | Create Roar the Vote Campaign videos that highlight diverse student, staff, and university leadership. The clips will highlight each individual's commitment to voting and the democratic process.<br><br>Deadline: Fall 2022<br><br>Target Audience: Entire Student Body<br><br>Responsible: Marketing Committee & Student Affairs Marketing Team |

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[53] Strategy, Guiding Question 6: Why is each strategy and tactic being implemented and what is the goal for each activity?

[54] Strategy, Guiding Question 2: Who is responsible for implementing each planned strategy and tactic?

[55] Strategy, Guiding Question 3: Who is the audience for each strategy and tactic? a) What methods will be used to make strategies and tactics accessible to diverse populations? b) Are you including tactics that focus on reaching all students, especially traditionally underrepresented students?

[56] Strategy, Guiding Question 4: Where will each activity occur on and off campus?

[57] Strategy, Guiding Question 5: When will the work happen and what preparations are required beforehand to make it happen?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Encourage students' active use of the TurboVote interface to register, request absentee ballots, and receive reminders about upcoming elections. *In AY 20-21 over 1,000 students interfaced with TurboVote.* | Institutionalize the practice of sending emails to students each semester about voting and available resources. This practice began in Fall 2017.<br><br>Deadline: On-Going<br><br>Target Audience: Entire Student Body<br><br>Responsible: Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement; Student Auxiliary Services | Encourage TurboVote registrations by tabling at on-campus events including New Student Orientation, Transfer Orientation, National Institute of the Deaf (NTID) Apple Fest, and National Voter Registration Day. Actively recruit and train volunteers in support of this work.<br><br>Deadline: On-Going<br><br>Target Audience: First year students, ALANA | Actively track TurboVote registrations to measure penetration.<br><br>Deadline: On-Going<br><br>Target Audience: Entire Student Body<br><br>Responsible: Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | students, and Dead/HOH students.<br><br>Responsible: Core Team, New Student Orientation, ROAR the Vote Volunteers | |
| Make registering and voting as easy and exciting as possible[58]! | Secure and maintain an active polling location on campus for the 2022 midterm elections and beyond.<br><br>Deadline: Fall 2022<br><br>Responsible: Office of Government and Community Relations | Renew our multi-year agreement with TurboVote in order to make the voting "process" easier.<br><br>Deadline: June 2022<br><br>Responsible: Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement | Host debate viewing parties or town halls to drum up excitement for the upcoming elections and provide students with the opportunity to learn about the candidate's views on specific issues.<br><br>Deadline: Fall 2022<br><br>Responsible Core Team |

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[58] Strategy, Guiding Question 1: What is the work? a) What are the planned activities and initiatives related to voter registration, voter education, voter turnout and mobilization, and voter access?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Increase efforts to engage first-year students in learning related to civic learning and democratic engagement. | Facilitate curriculum about electoral engagement that can be delivered during RIT 365 (first-year seminar courses) and broadly by faculty.<br><br>Deadline: Fall 2022<br><br>Responsible: Core Team, Year One Programs | Host a voter registration table at the New Student Orientation and Transfer Orientation Resource Fairs.<br><br>Deadline: Summer 2022<br><br>Responsible: Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement, Center for Campus Life, New Student Orientation | Train returning students on nonpartisan voter registration tactics through the ROAR the Vote Campaign. This is a mandatory step before individuals can volunteer:<br><br>Target Audience: Entire Student Body<br><br>Deadline: On-going |

**Increase students' likelihood to discuss the election or electoral process with their peers, as well as RIT faculty and staff.**

| Strategy | Tactics | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Develop and implement an effective model for students to have deliberative dialogues with | Host two Horizon (deliberative dialogue) events each semester. At these gatherings, facilitators will follow issue guides provided by the National Issues | Effectively train an increasing number of moderators each semester to successfully facilitate dialogues on complex social issues[59]. | Meaningfully contribute to the Kettering Foundation's 21-22 Campus Cohort. Participation in this year's collaborative group aims to improve each campus' |

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[59] Strategy, Guiding Question 5: When will the work happen and what preparations are required beforehand to make it happen? Are individuals consistently trained to ensure conversations remain nonpartisan, culturally sensitive, accurate, and that the voter registration processes result in zero errors?

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| university faculty and staff. | [Forum](#). The CLCE will actively recruit student, staff, and faculty participants to create intentional space for students to practice dialogical skills with staff members.<br><br>Deadline: Spring 2022<br><br>Target Audience: Entire Student Body, RIT Faculty and Staff<br><br>Responsible: Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement. | Deadline: On-Going<br><br>Target Audience: Volunteer Moderators<br><br>Responsible: Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement. | current advising structure and practices around deliberative dialogues.<br><br>Deadline: Summer 2022<br><br>Responsible: Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement. |
| Implement a Peer to Peer Post-Election support network. | Offer, in collaboration with Residence life, a Peer-to-Peer facilitated discussions post-election to create meaningful space for students to talk to each other if they are experiencing anxiety or general concerns about an election.<br><br>Deadline: On-going<br><br>Target Audience: Entire Student Body<br><br>Responsible: Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement and Center for Residence Life. | Deliver training to experienced Roar the Vote volunteers and Residence Life Resident Advisors on how to effectively co-facilitate nonpartisan support groups for their peers on an annual basis.<br><br>Deadline: On-going<br><br>Target Audience: Entire Student Body<br><br>Responsible: Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement and Center for Residence Life. | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Deliver programming designed to keep students active in political conversations in off-election years. | Host Congress to Campus in collaboration with departments and student groups across campus. Through this program ex-congress members interact with students, faculty, and staff in a variety of spaces (e.g. classrooms, forums, club meetings, etc.)<br><br>Deadline: On-Going<br><br>Responsible: Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement, Former Members of Congress | Present a summarized version of the NSLVE data to targeted student groups on campus (Student Government, College Democrats, College Republicans, and the ALANA Collegiate Association), with the purpose of educating students on RIT's voting climate and participation rates.<br><br>Deadline: On-Going<br><br>Responsible: Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement | |

By pairing intentional digital outreach with strategic programing and partnerships, RIT believes it can be successful in educating our community on civic learning and voter participation. Evidenced by the charts above, the Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement has outlined key programs that span across election and non-election years to create a sustained cycle for political engagement on our campus[60]. To ensure that voter engagement campaigns continue to deepen RIT's capacity and competence related to diversity, equity and inclusion, the CLCE has invited staff members from various departments that represent the range of identity groups that make up RIT's community to serve on the Roar the Vote committee. Additionally, events are intentionally offered with departments such as Residence Life, the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), and the Division of Diversity and Inclusion (DDI)  to actively engage with traditionally underrepresented groups within the institution[61].

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[60] Strategy, Guiding Question 3: What will it take to build toward this vision of sustained commitment beyond a single election cycle?

[61] Strategy, Guiding Question 2: How might your institution deepen capacity and competence related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in tandem with civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation?

NATIONAL STUDY OF LEARNING, VOTING, AND ENGAGEMENT (NSLVE)

RIT's participation with NSLVE has been crucial in informing the democratic engagement climate of our campus. Detailed summaries of our previous NSLVE reports can be found here:

- [2014 NSLVE Report](#)
- [2016 NSLVE Report](#)
- [2018 NSLVE Report](#)
- 2020 NSLVE Report (Appendix B)

Please refer to *Landscape* of our action plan for summaries about and more detailed examinations of our NSLVE data, including analyses, findings, and conclusions.

Please refer to *Goals* of our action plan for information about how our NSLVE data informs our short and long-term vision for student voter engagement.

REPORTING

We have plans to host our campus action plan on the Center for Leadership & Civic Engagement website (this site is currently being redesigned–the action plan will be posted when complete). Once complete, the action plan will be reviewed with the full ROAR the Vote Committee and Student Government. Further, the action plan will be available through both the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and Voter Friendly Campus.[62] [63]

Our 2014, 2016, and 2018 NSLVE reports are publicly available on the ROAR the Vote website (this site will be integrated into the new CLCE website) and through the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and Voter Friendly Campus.[64]

As ROAR the Vote is known as the hub for voter engagement at RIT, our hope is that any campus organizations that wish to coordinate their own voter engagement activities will connect with our data, reporting, and committee members. With all our resources available to the greater community, RIT at-large can plan and strategize programming to ensure full voter participation.[65]

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[62] Reporting, Guiding Question 1: How will the plan be shared, internally and externally? Please state where the plan will be shared. Keeping in mind to share the report with multiple stakeholders. This could take place by sharing during departmental meetings, student organization gatherings, and with community partners.

[63] Will the plan be made public? If so, how? This could take place by posting the report on your institution's website, social media, etc.

[64] Reporting, Guiding Question 3: Will the data, such as your institution's NSLVE report, used to inform the plan be made public? If so, how? This could take place by posting the report on your institution's website, social media, with stakeholders, etc.

[65] Reporting, Guiding Question 4: How will this plan be used to execute student voting coalition work on campuses? This will ensure all campus organizations and groups have access to data and reporting to be able to plan and strategize programming.

EVALUATION

Voter education and registration efforts at RIT are evaluated every two years following midterm and Presidential elections utilizing a three-pronged approach: post-election survey results, google and TurboVote analytics, and the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement.[66] Following the distribution of the survey, the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement analyzes the data in conjunction with relevant data from NSLVE, TurboVote, and Google for the given year and produces a comprehensive report. The report is shared with senior leadership in Student Affairs and Government and Community Relations. The report is also shared with Assessment, Technology, and Community in the Division of Student Affairs and with Institutional Research as part of our ongoing reporting requirements for accreditation. Finally, the report is shared with the ROAR the Vote Core Team in order to inform future practice related to voter engagement.[67] [68] The primary purpose of our evaluative work is to improve our practice in order to increase voter engagement among our students.[69] By regularly evaluating our work, we can identify both our strengths and the gaps that exist in our work. In evaluating data we collect through assessment, we can continue to make informed decisions on how to continue strengthening our commitment to voter education and engagement not only for our students, but for the entire RIT community.[70] [71]

The post-election survey is sent to all RIT community members who participated in ROAR the Vote voter engagement programs during the same election year. The sample is stratified by race (AALANA, non-AALANA), gender, and undergraduate/graduate.  The survey is distributed in November following either a mid-term or presidential election and is used to provide additional context for the quantitative data obtained via NSLVE as well as TurboVote and Google analytics.

Data gathered from our internal assessment is compared to results from previous assessment reports. By directly comparing metrics between elections, we are able to know if we are meeting our learning outcomes and key performance indicators. In the case we have added new metrics to our assessment, the data can be used to better understand and inform us on how to continue improving our work.[72] After the completion of each assessment report, the report is shared internally with the Vice President of Student Affairs. Further, information

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[66] Evaluation, Guiding Question 5: When will the evaluation be carried out and completed?

[67] Evaluation, Guiding Question 4: Who will carry out the evaluation?

[68] Evaluation, Guiding Question 9: Will efforts to evaluate be limited to one person/one area of your campus or be part of a larger campus effort?

[69] Evaluation, Guiding Question 1: What is the purpose of the evaluation?

[70] Evaluation, Guiding Question 2: What does the institution want to know and be able to do with the information gathered?

[71] Evaluation, Guiding Question 3: Who is the audience for the evaluation?

[72] Evaluation, Guiding Question 8: How will information be analyzed?

gathered from the report is compiled into a presentation and presented to the ROAR the Vote Committee, Student Government, and other stakeholders. Learnings from assessment are incorporated into future action plans, which are available upon request.[73]

Our internal assessment of RTV programs includes both program and learning outcomes related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. As our data is delivered broken down by various identities, we are able to critically examine the responses to form a clearer picture of the experiences of different communities on campus. This has helped us strengthen and improve our efforts with underrepresented student populations in the past, and we look forward to further improvement opportunities identified by our data.[74]

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*Sample Survey Questions:*

1. Are you registered to vote?
    1. If not, why did you choose not to register to vote?
2. Did you use TurboVote to register?
3. How easy was it to register using TurboVote?
4. If registered, did you vote?
    1. If not, why did you choose not to vote?
5. How informed are you about the issues in the recent election? What issues were most important to you?
6. Over the past few months, how often did you talk about the election with the following people: friends, parents/family members, other RIT students, faculty, and staff?
7. How important is voting?

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ROAR the Vote is rooted in the CLCE's strategic goal to cultivate awareness of complex local, national, and global issues, in addition to the CAS Learning and Developmental Outcome: Humanitarianism & Civic Engagement. Effective execution of ROAR the Vote will be measured by[75]:

1. The percentage of eligible RIT students who are registered to vote; and

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[73] Evaluation, Guiding Question 8a: How will the results of the evaluation be shared?

[74] Evaluation, Guiding Question 8b: How will the success of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts within the plan be evaluated, beyond NSLVE race/ethnicity breakdown information?

[75] Evaluation, Guiding Question 10: What are your institution's metrics for success? Share what worked, what didn't, why, and how things will be altered for future action plans.

2. The percentage of eligible RIT students who do vote in Midterm and Presidential elections.

Further, the 2020 election had established the following project goals[76]:

1. The percentage of eligible RIT students who vote in the presidential election will at least match the national percentage for all institutions.
2. 70% of eligible students who plan to vote absentee will describe themselves as informed or very informed about voting via absentee ballot
3. 65% of eligible students will indicate that they discussed the election at least one time with: friends, other RIT students, and/or their parents
4. 65% of eligible students will indicate that they discussed the election at least one time with: faculty and/or staff at RIT

As our 2020 assessment showed us, ROAR the Vote continues to be successful in increasing students' understanding about the process for registering to vote and voting. The majority of respondents agreed when asked whether RTV made them more aware of registration deadlines (64%) and the registration process (55%). Though these numbers are down from the previous two elections, there are a few conceivable reasons that don't fault ROAR the Vote itself. First, the survey was adjusted to eliminate forced-choice in favor of a neutral value. By introducing a neutral value, we can more accurately capture sentiment on the effectiveness of RTV. By totaling the somewhat agree and somewhat disagree values from 2018 for both "awareness" questions, we can compare their sum (18.8%--deadline for registering to vote; 24.4%--how to register to vote) to the neutral value for 2020 (neither agree nor disagree). With a respective difference of 7.2% points (26%--deadline for registering to vote) and 7.8% points (32%--how to register to vote), one can assume that respondents who tend to select an option slightly favoring one direction now opt for the neutral option. It is also possible that selection of the neutral value reflects the different RTV programs respondents attended. For example, a student attending a debate viewing party or interfacing with TurboVote is much less likely to receive information about voter registration process/deadlines than a student attending a registration drive. Thus, they are more likely to select a neutral or negative value when answering these questions. Lastly, respondents could have simply known this information before attending a RTV event, and thus did not experience an increased awareness as a result. As the 2020 election saw the largest overall voter turnout in history, the election season was inundated with numerous agencies and advertisements focused on the young-adult vote. It is easy to infer that many students had some election information before attending an RTV event.

Additionally, 85% of respondents that voted absentee indicated that they felt very informed or informed about the absentee ballot process, with 0 respondents indicating they were not at all informed. To better understand if this can be attributed to RTV efforts, respondents were asked if ROAR the Vote made them more aware of how to vote via absentee ballot, of which 51%

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[76] Evaluation, Guiding Question 15: What are your key performance indicators, and did you satisfy expectations?

agreed. A further 36% selected the neutral neither agree nor disagree, while only 12% disagreed. This large neutral selection could indicate that respondents received information about voting absentee elsewhere. However, as a majority of respondents indicated that the campaign made them more aware of the process, we can see that RTV is successful in distributing information about absentee voting.

ROAR the Vote continues to struggle to get faculty and staff generally to engage students in non-partisan conversations about voting.  A full 78% of respondents indicated that they seldom or never talked with a faculty member about the election (84.5% is 2018); 83% seldom or never talked with a member of RIT's staff (76% in 2018). Though this is a slight improvement in regards to faculty, the rate of seldom or never for staff increased. However, the percentage of respondents who never talked with faculty and staff decreased, particularly among faculty (17.6% point difference). Thus, it appears an increasing number of students are having at least one conversation with faculty and/or staff. As ROAR the Vote continues to develop new programming to pilot in 2021 focused specifically on facilitating political conversation (Congress to Campus; Horizons), we should see more students indicate they sometimes or often have these conversations with faculty and/or staff.

Overall, our programs provided an option for students who wish to engage with each other in conversations about voting. A full 89% of respondents indicated that they often or sometimes talk to friends about the election (76% in 2018); 73% indicated that they often or sometimes talked to other RIT students (46% in 2018). Lastly, we also saw that students engaged in these conversations more often with their parents, as 76% indicated they often or sometimes talk to their family (65% in 2018).

Generally, the survey results mirror the 2018 assessment in that RTV appears to do a good job of providing information and support to students who are already interested in voting specifically and electoral politics generally. As we receive our NSLVE report for the 2020 election, we hope to have improved turnout such that RIT is on par with other 4-year privates or national averages.

We also identified some next-steps in our 2020 assessment. First, the development of both Congress to Campus and Horizons will encourage and support faculty and staff conversations with students on topics related to voting. Congress to Campus looks to engage two ex-congress members with students, faculty, and staff across campus as we invite them to different spaces (e.g. classrooms, forums, club meetings, etc.). Horizons looks to bring students, faculty, and staff together in a room to discuss trending social issues following the National Issues Forum's guide to deliberative dialogue. As both of these novel programs intentionally place students and faculty/staff in the same room to discuss politically-tied topics, we should increase engagement between these two campus community groups. This will help improve the relationship between students' academic interests and politics, and hopefully translate to increased turnout in future elections.

In the future, the survey should be modified to gauge which ROAR the Vote programs respondents are interacting with. As each individual RTV program serves a different function, this data will help identify which programs are actively meeting our goals and which need to be remodeled.

The percentage of students who participated in RTV programmatic offerings from underrepresented groups exceeded their representation on campus in alignment with CLCE key performance indicators. Most notably, the percentage of Deaf/HoH students represented in RTV programs increased to exceed representation in the RIT population as a whole, a metric we did not meet in the 2018 assessment report. The inclusion of two NTID staff members on the RTV Committee and the sharing of marketing materials to NTID is a likely contributor to this increased percentage.[77]

| | Participants | RIT Population |
|---|---|---|
| The % of African American students who participate in RTV will exceed their representation on campus. | 13.4% | 7.3% |
| The % of Latino students who participate in RTV will exceed their representation on campus. | 9.1% | 8.2% |
| The % of women who participate in RTV will exceed their representation on campus. | 43.1% | 34.9 % |
| The % of first generation who participate in RTV will exceed their representation on campus. | 16.8% | 15.7% |

[77] Evaluation, Guiding Question 13: Were efforts advanced regarding diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice priorities on campus?

| The % of Deaf/HOH students who participate in RTV will exceed their representation on campus. | 8.8% | 5.9% |
|---|---|---|
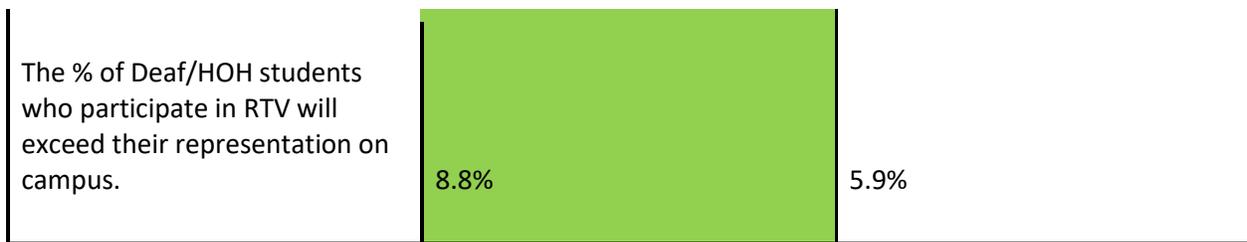
Looking at the results from our 2020 NSLVE report, RIT has made significant progress toward our voter registration and voting rate goals. On average, our percentage-point growth for both registration rate and voting rate outpaced the national average. Despite making progress in these areas, we have not yet met our goal of being on-par with our peer institutions.[78] For more detailed information, see Appendix B.

Our efforts to intentionally target student populations whose voting rates were significantly behind their peers both on campus and nationally proved successful. To better reach our underrepresented student population, we invited staff from Diversity & Inclusion to the RTV Committee. Through their contributions and connections, we raised the voting rates of Asian (+19), Black (+22), and Hispanic (+23) identifying students on campus by significant percentage points. Further, intentional placement of voter registration tables in areas highly trafficked by first (+16) and second (+18) year students yielded great results.[79]

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[78] Evaluation, Guiding Question 11: What progress has been made toward each short and long-term goal?

[79] Evaluation, Guiding Question 14: Which efforts were most successful in contributing to shifts in NSLVE and other data?

**APPENDIX A**

<p align="center">**Assessment Report**</p>

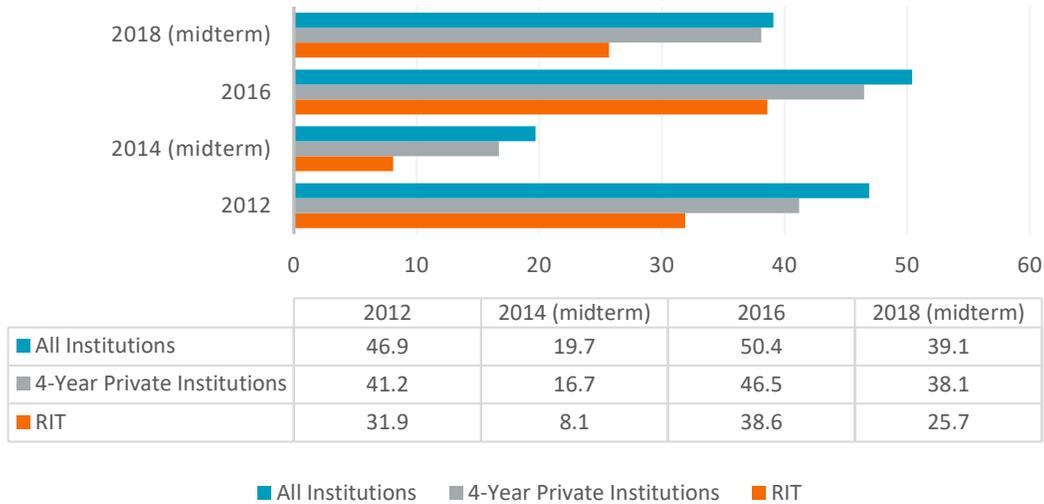<p align="center">**Rochester Institute of Technology**</p>

<p align="center">**Division of Student Affairs**</p>

| | |
|---|---|
| **Date:** | December 17, 2020 |
| **Project name:** | ROAR the Vote |
| **Department:** | Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement |
| **Point person:** | Alex Tubridy |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Target population:** | RIT Students |
| **Participation start/end dates:** | August 1 – November 3, 2020 |
| **Survey start/end dates:** | November 10-23, 2020 |
| **Number of surveys distributed:** | 866 |
| **Number of survey responses:** | 175 |
| **Response rate:** | 20.2% |
| **Incentive offered, if applicable:** | None |

**ABOUT ROAR THE VOTE**

ROAR the Vote (RTV) was created in the lead-up to the 2016 presidential election based on a need to expand voter registration and education efforts for students.  In partnership with students, faculty, and staff from across the University, RTV seeks to elevate (and de-stigmatize) the discourse on campus related to civic and democratic engagement, develop meaningful and relevant opportunities for students to actively engage in civic learning and democratic engagement opportunities, and subsequently increase the percentage of students who vote in local, state, and national elections. This work is accomplished through a variety of RTV programs, including voter registration drives, debate viewing parties, and open office hours (see appendix). A full list of fall 2020 events can be found in the appendix. While we have experienced some success in this space, there is still a great deal of work ahead of us; in each of the last four national election cycles, turnout among RIT students was significantly less than college students nationally.

Comparsion of voting rates (%) among students at RIT, 4-year privates, and all Institutions that participated in the NSLVE (2012, '14, '16, & '18)



|  | 2012 | 2014 (midterm) | 2016 | 2018 (midterm) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ■ All Institutions | 46.9 | 19.7 | 50.4 | 39.1 |
| ■ 4-Year Private Institutions | 41.2 | 16.7 | 46.5 | 38.1 |
| ■ RIT | 31.9 | 8.1 | 38.6 | 25.7 |

■ All Institutions    ■ 4-Year Private Institutions    ■ RIT

*Source: Institute for Democracy & Higher Education: National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement*

Following a comprehensive assessment of ROAR the Vote following the 2016 Presidential and 2018 Midterm elections, several changes and enhancements were made to RTV leading up to the 2020 Presidential election:

- The RTV website was updated to include more detailed information about the voter registration process; and since absentee voting is the preferred method for our students (and a barrier), the website was also updated to include detailed information about absentee voting with particular emphasis on the 4 states where most of our students vote: MA, NJ, NY, and PA.
- A RTV Leadership Scholar was hired in the CLCE to facilitate peer-to-peer engagement in the area of voter engagement. Fall 2020 saw our first successful hire for this position.

**PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

<u>Students:</u>

ROAR the Vote is rooted in the CLCE's strategic goal to cultivate awareness of complex local, national, and global issues; in addition to the CAS Learning and Developmental Outcome: Humanitarianism & Civic Engagement. Effective execution of ROAR the Vote will be measured by:

1. The percentage of eligible RIT students who are registered to vote; and
2. The percentage of eligible RIT students who do vote in Midterm and Presidential elections.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY**

In order to determine the overall effectiveness of ROAR the Vote programming, two methods of assessment were implemented:

**Survey**

The survey was sent, via Qualtrics, to 866 students who interfaced with RTV programming in fall 2020 (August 1 – November 3, 2020). A reminder email was sent one week following the initial request for feedback.

It is important to note that though the survey was distributed to 866 students, an estimated 1035 unique students interfaced with RTV programming. Students who use the TurboVote system are not required to enter an RIT email address, and TurboVote itself does not collect unique identifiers that we could match to students within the RIT database. To get an estimate on total unique students, the TurboVote data was cross-referenced with the personal email addresses RIT does have on file for students. Those we could positively identify as belonging to RIT students were then included in a list with students who attended all other RTV events, resulting in 866 unique students. A further 169 TurboVote users were not able to be matched with data in the RIT database, and thus were not sent the survey.

**National Survey of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)**

Our participation in the NSLVE was renewed and we expect to receive our report in summer 2021. Student registration and voting data in this report will inform success of overall program outcomes.

**Project Goals**

1. The percentage of eligible RIT students who vote in the presidential election will *at least* match the national percentage for all institutions.
2. 70% of eligible students who plan to vote absentee will describe themselves as informed or very informed about voting via absentee ballot
3. 65% of eligible students will indicate that they discussed the election at least one time with: friends, other RIT students, and/or their parents

4. 65% of eligible students will indicate that they discussed the election at least one time with: faculty and/or staff at RIT

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

The percentage of students who participated in RTV programmatic offerings from underrepresented groups exceeded their representation on campus in alignment with CLCE key performance indicators. Most notably, the percentage of Deaf/HoH students represented in RTV programs increased to exceed representation in the RIT population as a whole, a metric we did not meet in the 2018 assessment report. The inclusion of two NTID staff members on the RTV Committee and the sharing of marketing materials to NTID is a likely contributor to this increased percentage.

|  | Participants | RIT Population |
|---|---|---|
| The % of African American students who participate in RTV will exceed their representation on campus. | 13.4% | 7.3% |
| The % of Latino students who participate in RTV will exceed their representation on campus. | 9.1% | 8.2% |
| The % of women who participate in RTV will exceed their representation on campus. | 43.1% | 34.9 % |
| The % of first generation who participate in RTV will exceed their representation on campus. | 16.8% | 15.7% |
| The % of Deaf/HOH students who participate in RTV will exceed their representation on campus. | 8.8% | 5.9% |

**RESULTS**

**Did you vote in the November 3rd election (n=174)?**

93% (n=162) of respondents indicated that they voted in the election. 80% (n=130) voted by absentee ballot and 20% (n=32) voted in person. Similar to the 2018 assessment report, a small number of respondents (n=12) indicated they did not vote in the election. It is worth noting, though, that voters are probably more likely to respond to a post-election survey.

## Why did you choose not to vote (n=11)?


When asked why they chose not vote, 36.4% of respondents' answers related to disinterest in the election or a belief their vote did not matter (n=4); another 18.2% indicated that they didn't have time (n=2). Further, 27.3% appeared unaware of their options to register to vote (n=3); and 18.2% had issues external to our process (lost in the mail; local embassy closed) (n=2). In previous assessments of ROAR the Vote, reasons associated with absentee ballots were the primary reason respondents chose to not vote (64.7% in 2016; 67% in 2018). This year, only 18.2% gave reasons associated with absentee ballots ("I was not registered in this county"). Interestingly, the most common theme from respondents was apathy or a belief that their vote would not matter ("I can't choose who to become president"; "Just didn't want to").

**The ROAR the Vote campaign made me more aware of the deadline/the process of registering to vote:**

In comparison to previous ROAR the Vote assessments, the Likert item range *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree* was condensed from a 6-level to a 5-level Likert item, with *somewhat agree* and *somewhat disagree* replaced in favor of *neither agree nor disagree* as the neutral value. Since the population the survey was distributed to have interacted with ROAR the Vote in different capacities (e.g. only TurboVote; only registration tables; a combination of events; etc.), the forced-choice scale was eliminated as it would not encapsulate which ROAR the Vote programs respondents based their answers on.

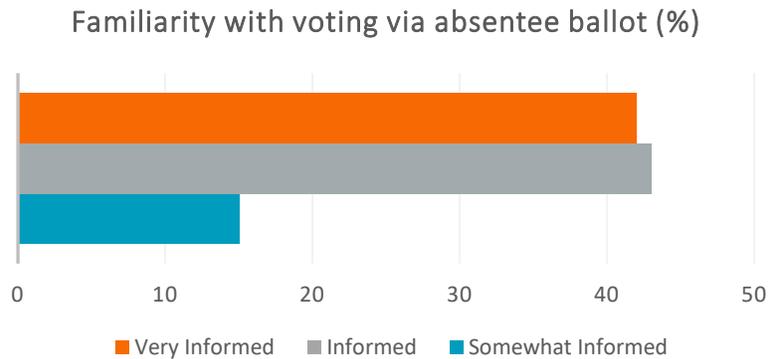|  | The RTV campaign made me more aware of the deadline for registering to vote | The RTV campaign made me more aware of how to register to vote |
|---|---|---|
|  | 2020 | 2020 |
| *Strongly Agree* | 33% | 35% |
| *Somewhat Agree* | 31% | 20% |
| *Agree total (%)* | 64% | 55% |
| *Neither Agree nor Disagree* | 26% | 32% |
| *Somewhat Disagree* | 3% | 6% |
| *Strongly Disagree* | 6% | 8% |
| *Disagree total (%)* | 9% | 14% |
| *Total Respondents* | 172 | 173 |

Though agree totals relating to awareness of the deadline for registering to vote dropped 7.1% points from 2018, disagree totals also dropped 19.6% points. Similarly, agree totals relating to awareness on how to register to vote dropped 14% points, while disagree totals dropped 17.2% points. Though many respondents chose the neutral *neither agree nor disagree*, RTV continues to be successful in education students about the voter registration process.

|  | The RTV campaign made me more aware of the deadline for registering to vote | | The RTV campaign made me more aware of how to register to vote | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 2016 | 2018 | 2016 | 2018 |
| Strongly Agree | 23.2% | 32.4% | 19.2% | 27% |
| Agree | 32% | 27% | 30.4% | 24.3% |
| Somewhat Agree | 20.9% | 12% | 24% | 17.6% |
| Agree Total(s) (%) | 76.1% | 71.4% | 73.6% | 69% |
| Somewhat Disagree | 3.2% | 6.8% | 3.2% | 6.8% |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 10.4% | 13.5% | 11.2% | 14.9% |
| Strongly Disagree | 10.4% | 8.1% | 12% | 9.5% |
| **Disagree Total(s) (%)** | **24%** | **28.4%** | **26.4%** | **31.2%** |
| **Total Respondents** | **125** | **74** | **125** | **74** |

## How informed were you about voting via absentee ballot? (n=130)

The majority of respondents (85%) were very informed or informed about voting via absentee ballot, while 0 respondents who voted absentee indicated that they were *not at all informed* of the process.

**Familiarity with voting via absentee ballot (%)**



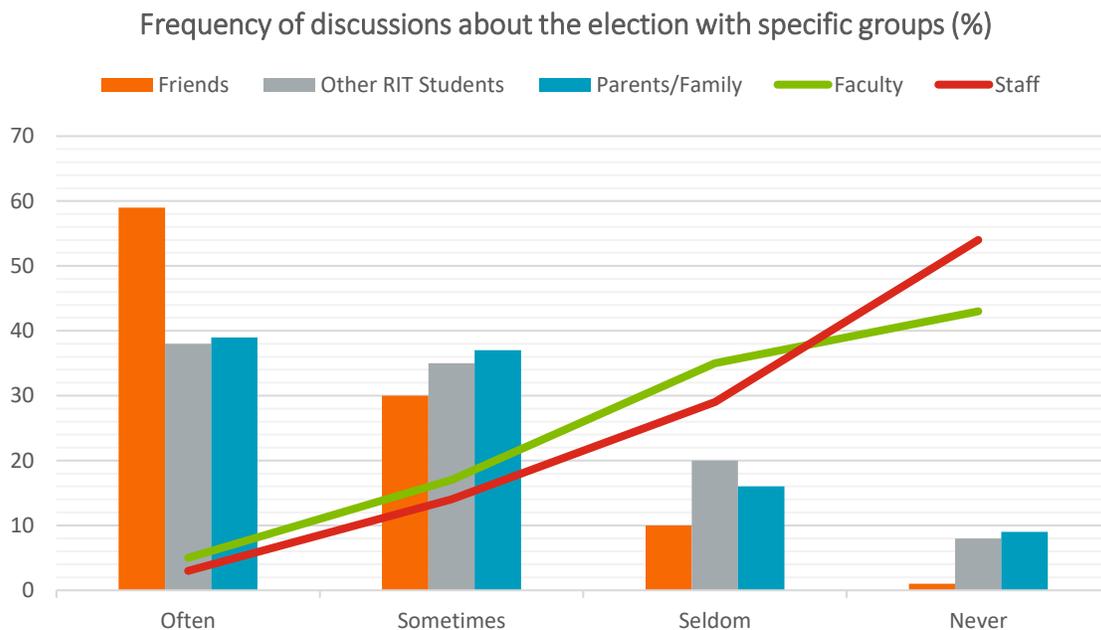Legend: ■ Very Informed   ■ Informed   ■ Somewhat Informed

**To better understand whether RTV was directly responsible for raising awareness of the absentee voting process, respondents that indicated they voted absentee were also asked if the RTV campaign made them more aware of how to vote via absentee ballot. Of those respondents, 51% agreed that RTV made them more aware of the process.**

**RTV made me more aware of how to vote via absentee ballot(%)**



Legend: ■ Strongly Agree   ■ Somewhat Agree   ■ Neither Agree nor Disagree   ■ Somewhat Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree
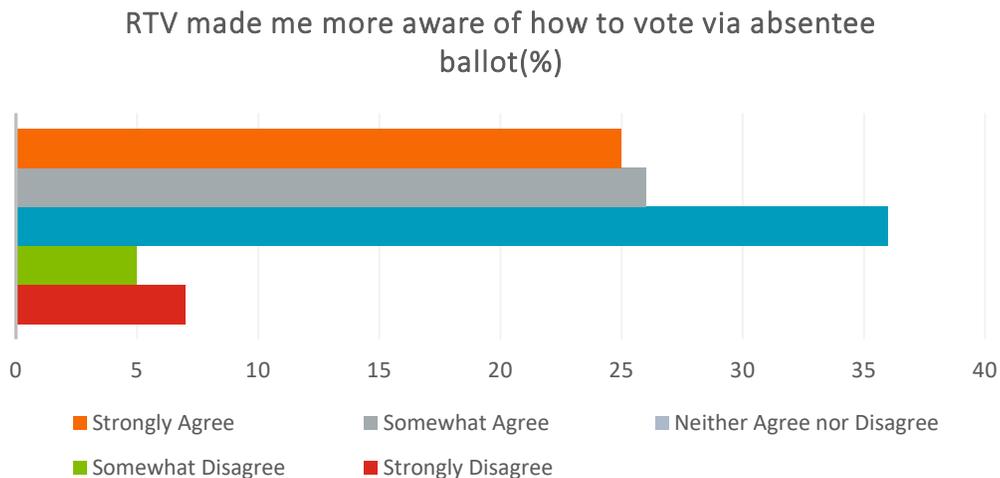
**Over the past few months, how often did you talk about the election (e.g. candidates, issues, voting) with the following people?**

Continuing the trend from previous assessments, respondents spoke about the election most often with friends and family members, though more often than in the past. They continue to speak with RIT faculty and staff the least. A full 78% of respondents indicated that they seldom or never talked with a faculty member about the election (84.5% in 2018); 83% seldom or never talked with a member of RIT's staff (76% in 2018). Though this is an improvement among conversations with faculty members, we saw a higher percentage of students seldom or never talk with staff members about the election.

What is encouraging from this data is the percentage of respondents who *never* talked with faculty decreased significantly (17.6% points difference); the percentage of respondents who *never* talked with staff decreased slightly (5% points difference).

## Frequency of discussions about the election with specific groups (%)

Summary of Learning Outcomes

| Learning Outcome | Evidence | |
|---|---|---|
| 70% of eligible students who plan to vote absentee will describe themselves as informed or very informed about voting via absentee ballot | • 85% of respondents indicated they were very informed or informed about voting via absentee ballot | *Met* |
| 65% of eligible students will indicate that they discussed the election at least one time (often, sometimes, seldom) with: friends, other RIT students, and/or their parents | • 99%, 92%, and 91% of respondents indicated they discussed the election with their friends, other RIT students, and parents (respectively) at least one time | *Met* |
| 65% of eligible students will indicate that they discussed the election at least one time (often, sometimes, seldom) with: faculty and/or staff at RIT | • 57% and 46% of respondents indicated they discussed the election with faculty and staff (respectively) at RIT at least one time | *Not Met* |

**OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS**

ROAR the Vote continues to be successful in increasing students' understanding about the process for registering to vote and voting. The majority of respondents agreed when asked whether RTV made them more aware of registration deadlines (64%) and the registration process (55%). Though these numbers are down from the previous two elections, there are a few conceivable reasons that don't fault ROAR the Vote itself. First, the survey was adjusted to eliminate forced-choice in favor of a neutral value. By introducing a neutral value, we can more accurately capture sentiment on the effectiveness of RTV. By totaling the *somewhat agree* and *somewhat disagree* values from 2018 for both "awareness" questions, we can compare their sum (18.8%--deadline for registering to vote; 24.4%--how to register to vote) to the neutral value for 2020 (*neither agree nor disagree*). With a respective difference of 7.2% points (26%--deadline for registering to vote) and 7.8% points (32%--how to register to vote), one can assume that respondents who tend to select an option slightly favoring one direction now opt for the neutral option. It is also possible that selection of the neutral value reflect the different RTV programs respondents attended. For example, a student attending a debate viewing party or interfacing with TurboVote is much less likely to receive information about voter registration process/deadlines than a student attending a registration drive. Thus, they are more likely to select a neutral or negative value when answering these questions. Lastly, respondents could have simply known this information before attending a RTV event, and thus did not experience an increased awareness as a result. As the 2020 election saw the largest overall voter turnout in history, the election season was inundated with numerous agencies and advertisements focused on the young-adult vote. It is easy to infer that many students had some election information before attending an RTV event.

Additionally, 85% of respondents that voted absentee indicated that they felt *very informed* or *informed* about absentee ballot process, with 0 respondents indicating they were *not at all informed*. To better understand if this can be attributed to RTV efforts, respondents were asked if ROAR the Vote made them more aware of how to vote via absentee ballot, of which 51% agreed. A further 36% selected the neutral *neither agree nor disagree*, while only 12% disagreed. This large neutral selection could indicate that respondents received information about voting absentee elsewhere. However, as a majority of respondents indicated that the campaign made them more aware of the process, we can see that RTV is successful in distributing information about absentee voting.

ROAR the Vote continues to struggle to get faculty and staff generally to engage students in non-partisan conversations about voting. A full 78% of respondents indicated that they seldom or never talked with a faculty member about the election (84.5% is 2018); 83% seldom or never talked with a member of RIT's staff (76% in 2018). Though this is a slight improvement in regards to faculty, the rate of *seldom* or *never* for staff increased. However, the percentage of respondents who *never* talked with faculty and staff decreased, particularly among faculty (17.6% point difference). Thus, it appears an increasing number of students are having at least one conversation with faculty and/or staff. As ROAR the Vote continues to develop new programming to pilot in 2021 focused specifically on facilitating political conversation (Congress to Campus; Horizons), we should see more students indicate they *sometimes* or *often* have these conversations with faculty and/or staff.

Overall, our programs provided an option for students who wish to engage with each other in conversations about voting. A full 89% of respondents indicated that they often or sometimes talk to friends about the election (76% in 2018); 73% indicated that they often or sometimes talked to other RIT students (46% in 2018). Lastly, we also saw that students engaged in these conversations more often with their parents, as 76% indicated they often or sometimes talk to their family (65% in 2018).

Generally, the survey results mirror the 2018 assessment in that RTV appears to do a good job of providing information and support to students who are already interested in voting specifically and electoral politics generally. As we receive our NSLVE report for the 2020 election, we hope to have improved turnout such that RIT is on par with other 4-year privates or national averages.

**ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BASED ON RESULTS OR NEXT STEPS**

It should be noted that we are still awaiting our 2020 NSLVE report which may or may not impact our next steps. Without the benefit of that report the following next steps are presented.

First, the development of both Congress to Campus and Horizons will encourage and support faculty and staff conversations with students on topics related to voting. Congress to Campus looks to engage two ex-congress members with students, faculty, and staff across campus as we invite them to different spaces (e.g. classrooms, forums, club meetings, etc.). Horizons looks to bring students, faculty, and staff together in a room to discuss trending social issues following the National Issues Forum's guide to deliberative dialogue. As both of these novel programs intentionally place students and faculty/staff in the same room to discuss politically-tied topics, we should increase engagement between these two campus community groups. This will help improve the relationship between students' academic interests and politics, and hopefully translate to increased turnout in future elections.

In the future, the survey should be modified to gauge which ROAR the Vote programs respondents are interacting with. As each individual RTV program serves a different function, this data will help identify which programs are actively meeting our goals and which need to be remodeled.

**APPENDIX**

**RTV fall 2020 programs**

| Program: | Date: | Attendance: |
|---|---|---|
| Voter Registration Tables | 9/3/2020 | 35 |
| | 9/8/2020 | 16 |
| | 9/11/2020 | 22 |
| | 9/14/2020 (Virtual) | 1 |
| | 9/15/2020 | 16 |
| | 9/16/2020 | 17 |
| | 9/18/2020 | 18 |
| | 9/22/2020 (National Voter Registration Day) | 35 |
| | 9/22/2020 (Virtual) | 0 |
| | 9/23/2020 | 10 |
| | 9/25/2020 | 10 |
| | 9/29/2020 | 12 |
| | 9/30/2020 | 50 |
| | 10/2/2020 (RTV t-shirt giveaway) | 74 |
| | 10/6/2020 | 17 |
| | 10/9/2020 | 15 |
| Debate Viewing Parties | 9/29/2020 (Presidential Debate #1) | 51 |
| | 10/7/2020 (Vice Presidential Debate) | 33 |
| | 10/22/2020 (Presidential Debate #2; RTV t-shirt giveaway) | 109 |
| RTV Open Office Hours | 10/19/2020 | 1 |
| | 10/28/2020 | 2 |
| Election Day Table | 11/3/2020 | 127 |
| TurboVote | 9/7/2020 (RIT 365) | 27 |
| | 9/8/2020 (RIT 365) | 27 |
| | 9/15 – 11/3/2020 (StarRez Referral Code) | 243 |
| | 8/1 – 11/3/2020 (Registration tables & individual users) | 353 |

**APPENDIX B**

https://drive.google.com/file/d/19EV1RqCqX1j0P4ob-mICwqJCfZIuPiyt/view?usp=sharing