

**January 24, 2022**

**#RowanVotes – ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge  
Rowan University, Glassboro, NJ  
Sept 2022 – Aug 2023 Action Plan**

**Executive Summary**

In collaboration with Rowan University administration, Rowan University Student Affairs, the Rowan Student Government Association (SGA), the Faculty Senate, the Rowan Institute for Public Policy & Citizenship (RIPPAC), and the Department of Political Science & Economics (PSEC), this ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Action Plan was developed by the leadership team of #RowanVotes, the university's point group for educating, registering, and mobilizing every Rowan University student to participate fully in local, state and national elections.

Our action plan outlines the coordination efforts between these different campus entities to continue our progress on student voter education, registration, and mobilization. We have learned from the past two election cycles and continue to make improvements in our planning and operations.

This Action Plan is for the 2022 – 2023 academic year. In the short term, we hope to increase our student voting percentage in the November 2022 elections relative to the 2018 elections. Over the long term, our goal is to make civic participation a seamless and integral part of a Rowan University education, where every student is afforded multiple opportunities for engagement and support for participation. As the university's student population continues to grow, we will remain focused on the flagship Glassboro, NJ campus with initial efforts at the Camden campus beginning in fall of 2022. As we make strides towards institutionalization, we expect to expand to Rowan's other campuses as well.

**Mission**

Our mission is to ensure that every eligible Rowan University student casts an informed vote in state and federal elections.

**Leadership**

#RowanVotes is the lead campus entity for participation in the ALL IN Democracy Challenge. This group is co-led by Kathy Javian, Ph.D., Faculty, Department of Political Science and Economics, and Ben Dworkin, Ph.D., Director, Rowan Institute for Public Policy & Citizenship.

Together, they have collaborated and coordinated with additional campus leaders:

Anthony Lowman, Ph.D., Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Sean Kennedy, Vice President for Government Affairs and External Relationships  
Rory McElwee, Ph.D., Vice President, Student Affairs  
Bill Friend, Ph.D., President of the Faculty Senate  
Drew Tinnin, Ed.D., Associate Vice President, Student Life, and  
Joseph Lizza, Ed.D., Director, Chamberlain Student Center & Campus Activities.

Further, student leaders from both the College Democrats, College Republicans, Student Government Association, the Rowan Institute for Public Policy & Citizenship, and the College of Humanities & Social Sciences participate in planning and implementation of the #RowanVotes Action Plan.

### **Leadership Succession Plan**

The university administrative offices will continue to play a role in the project indefinitely, and faculty leadership will continue within the Department of Political Science & Economics and the Rowan Institute for Public Policy & Citizenship. Moving forward, faculty from other departments will be invited to join the effort and take on leadership roles as well. Should any faculty member decide to step away from a leadership position, the Rowan administration will seek out an appropriate replacement.

### **Commitment**

Rowan University's mission places "engagement" and "student centeredness" as central tenets of its core operational values. Increasing participation and civic engagement among the student body and the broader community is a critical goal for any 21<sup>st</sup> century research institution.

As a state-funded institution, politics and public policy are uniquely linked to student opportunities. Thus, it is understood by university leadership that a more engaged campus will benefit the Rowan community as well as the state of New Jersey. Further, the university has a broader commitment to educating the general public through its programming, influence on issue agendas and policy discussions, and scholarship, thereby strengthening the goals of a citizen-focused democracy. One way for Rowan to enhance its work in this area is to continue to be part of the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge to educate, register and mobilize participation in the electoral process. Below is our action plan for 2022-2023.

By remaining a part of the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, Rowan reaffirms its commitment to civic engagement and participation. Rowan will continue to weave electoral participation into its culture and ensure that students have many points of entry for this. Heading into our third year of involvement with the Challenge, engagement at University-

wide events are becoming more and more routine, including but not limited to: Orientation, Homecoming, and a campus-wide, end-of-the-year concert known as “Hollybash”.

University administrators along with increasing numbers of college deans and faculty are providing encouragement and information to students through email and social media communication to help them get engaged, educated and mobilized to vote. Rowan’s office for Civic Engagement continues to be a strong partner and incorporates the ALL IN goals into their programming.

With respect to curriculum, faculty across the university are helping alert students to opportunities for registration and participation, and continue to support students in their efforts to register, vote and engage in other civic activity. There is a 3-credit course that runs concurrently with federal elections that trains students to lead efforts to register and mobilize students. Undergraduates in this class create a Rowan University Voter Guide which will be distributed widely to the student population.

### **The Landscape – Rowan University**

Rowan University is ranked one of the top ten fastest growing doctoral universities in the country<sup>1</sup>. Rowan’s student population is 23,000, with most students attending Rowan’s Glassboro campus. In addition to the Glassboro, NJ campus, Rowan has a campus that serves undergraduates in Camden, NJ. The student body is relatively diverse, with 32% coming from underrepresented groups. Rowan has seven colleges and five schools<sup>2</sup>. Rowan’s influence in the South Jersey region is increasing as the university continues to grow towards a stated goal of 40,000 students.

Rowan is now heading into its third year of participating in the Challenge. In February 2020, Rowan University officially became a participant of the NSLVE. We are planning to use 2020 NSLVE data to help us determine where there are barriers to participation for our students so that we can target our efforts more effectively. Rowan’s student body is a mix of students who begin their college careers at Rowan and those who come to Rowan after attending one of the local community colleges. As such, students are entering Rowan at different stages of their academic careers. Further, we have many students who are commuting to campus rather than residing here. According to *U.S. News and World Report*, 63% of Rowan students live on campus<sup>3</sup>. These data suggest that we will need to be prepared to register and mobilize students throughout the mid-Atlantic region in the years to come. The state of New Jersey now has a Vote By Mail (VBM) option, which will allow students to more easily vote regardless of their home address or residence.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://sites.rowan.edu/fastfacts/\\_docs/at-a-glance-2018-19.pdf](https://sites.rowan.edu/fastfacts/_docs/at-a-glance-2018-19.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/rowan-university-2609/student-life>

*U.S. News & World Report* has also noted that 35% of Rowan's student population are first-generation college students<sup>4</sup>. Past research suggests that parental education is correlated with a propensity to vote<sup>5</sup>. First-generation students are therefore less likely to participate in politics. However, the research also shows that holding constant these background variables, college education, that focuses specifically on civic engagement makes students more likely to participate<sup>6</sup>. Our approach to addressing Rowan University student participation will focus on best practices based on research.

Because Rowan has a large number of students who experience barriers to participation, the ALL IN Challenge is needed and necessary.

Prior to Rowan joining the Challenge, efforts at increasing civic engagement and participation on campus have been decentralized. Institutionalizing this effort to the university level is now well underway. The university has a very engaged student body that has a lot of pride and shared identity. We have been fostering this institutional culture and use it to help students identify and accept the ALL IN initiative as a routine part of ongoing efforts to make Rowan a more engaged community.

### **The Landscape – New Jersey**

One of the characteristics of New Jersey politics is that state gubernatorial and legislative elections are held in odd-numbered years. This means that every year there are major elections in the state, and this allows for more consistent education, registration, and mobilization efforts.

For example, the 2021 gubernatorial election in New Jersey, which included a debate between the two major candidates on Rowan's campus, helped generate additional interest and enthusiasm among the student population, a factor that we believe translated into greater voting participation. We are still awaiting the NSLVE numbers to assess Rowan students' performance on this metric.

### **Goals and Strategy**

As part of the Campus Democracy Challenge, Rowan University will continue to promote democratic engagement through three pillars: Education, Registration and Mobilization. To achieve the broader goal of increased participation and engagement, we have identified a number of action items that began implementing in the Spring of 2020 and continue through

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Perrin, A. J., & Gillis, A. (2019). How College Makes Citizens: Higher Education Experiences and Political Engagement. *Socius*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023119859708>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

today. In addition, where applicable, Rowan utilizes the evidence-based practices recommended by the Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) to improve participation and engagement from. Our primary goal continues to be to institutionalize opportunities for voter education, registration, and mobilization. This overall effort on campus is broadly referred to **#RowanVotes**. One strategy we are using is to have it be a student-directed effort as much as possible.

Research shows that this type of experience creates the skills necessary for active political participation and civic engagement<sup>7</sup>. contact is a key way to get potential voters registered and increase their likelihood of participation. This is why we will encourage students to be at the center of this campaign by training student resident life leaders and creating a team of #RowanVotes Captains who will be present at events around campus. In 2021, we had 9 #RowanVotes interns who contacted hundreds of students face to face.

In academic year 2022-2023, we will expand our outreach through several interrelated initiatives. First, we will continue to recruit a cohort of 10 **Democracy Leaders** to spearhead our outreach efforts. Each cohort of Democracy Leaders (operating primarily in the fall) will have a captain. We aim to provide paid opportunities for our student leaders through grant or institutional funding<sup>8</sup>, however, student leaders can also opt to receive 1-2 credits for thier work and fulfill their experiential learning requirements. They will receive training from #RowanVotes faculty coordinators, participate in ALL IN's New Jersey's "Be A Civic Leader Training," attend regular staff meetings, and lead outreach activities.

Next, the Democracy Leaders will visit classrooms on our campuses to provide information and time for students to register to vote. They will engage in tabling events across campus, including regular tabling at our two food distribution sites, at our student center, and at campus recreation locations. Thirdly, our Democracy Leaders will implement a **communications strategy** to reach students over social media, on highly-trafficked university social media handles, and through email blasts. Fourth, our outreach will include a strong **focus on reaching students from groups that experience more barriers to political participation**. Using organizations already in place, we will work with "Flying First" (Rowan's agency for first-generation students) as well as commuter services to reach commuters who may not be involved in campus life in the same way as residential students. In addition, we will designate several Democracy Leaders to lead our outreach efforts on the Camden campus (i.e., contacting students via email, in classes, and tabling on key voter registration dates). Finally, we will continue to work with student clubs on campus that are serving underrepresented populations including Prism (the LGBTIA club), and the Rowan NAACP. We will also use the 2020 NSLVE report to inform how we target other groups on campus.

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<sup>7</sup> Brady, H., Verba, S., & Schlozman, K. (1995). Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation. *The American Political Science Review*, 89(2), 271-294. doi:10.2307/2082425

<sup>8</sup> In Fall of 2021, Rowan University received Students Learn Students Vote funding which was used primarily to compensate our student interns.

In 2022-2023, the cohort of Democracy Leaders, in conjunction with faculty coordinators, will pursue the following strategies in these areas to achieve our primary objective: 100% voting participation by eligible Rowan University students.

### Education

- Voter and Civics Education: We continue to work with university partners such as the Rowan Institute for Public Policy and Citizenship (RIPPAC), the Department of Political Science and Economics, Chamberlain Student Center & Campus Activities, and the Office of Community Engagement, Civic Volunteerism and Commuter Services to organize several events to highlight the importance of the election including teach-ins on gerrymandering, and elections.
- We also will utilize Constitution Day (9/17/22) as another opportunity to engage the campus community on the topic of voting and civic participation generally.
- Educational initiatives will continue to be conducted by various Departments on campus, and our aim will be to connect these events to voter registration and mobilization resources.
- Rowan University and, in particular, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, is emphasizing experiential learning. The creation of the annual Democracy Leaders program will continue to be a primary vehicle for student involvement, though not the only one. Volunteer opportunities on campus and in the election process through work on local and state campaigns provide numerous opportunities for undergraduates to participate in ways beyond voting.
- We continue to offer a class entitled *Social Movements and Political Activism*, which is an experiential course. Students in the class create a non-partisan #RowanVotes guide for students to be distributed at our events and through our campus wide Learning Management System, Canvas. This class runs every fall that coincides with federal elections. The students in the class will also create and distribute a 1-page infographic on the elections that pertain to New Jersey.
- Each semester, #RowanVotes in collaboration with our partners, brings at least one speaker to campus to discuss a relevant topic. In Fall of 2021, we celebrated the anniversary of the 26th Amendment with a speaker Dr. Nicholas Mosvick. We also had Henal Patel, Esq. come to talk about Redistricting and voter engagement from the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice. We plan to have one speaker to discuss political participation, and likely another one to discuss the upcoming Congressional Midterms in Spring and Fall of 2022.
- College administrators and other campus leaders have worked closely with #RowanVotes to promote voter engagement through email reminders to register to vote and participate in the election. Those emails link back to a point person working

on the Challenge who can help students who are experiencing problems with registration or figuring out where to vote.

- We will also expand our use of social media to field student questions about the elections from our local experts and to troubleshoot any problems students are encountering.
- This fall, we are seeking university approval for large signage (at least 50' wide) that will promote voter registration deadlines and then another pushing voter participation. This signage will be affixed to a long wall that bifurcates the center of campus.

### Voter Registration

- Meeting students where they are, we will work to have voter registration as an option for students during check in when they come to Rowan, either as a first-year student or as a transfer student. The COVID-19 pandemic restricted our ability to implement this initiative fully in fall 2021, but we expect much greater participation in years to come.
- #RowanVotes will continue to check the individual voter registration status of every undergraduate. This major undertaking allows targeted messaging to those students who remain unregistered, including encouragement, information on how easy it is to register and then to vote. This also allows us to conduct an evaluation of our efforts.
- Student clubs: Many student clubs and organizations already conduct voter registration efforts. Clubs are required to complete a certain number of service hours in order to receive funding from the Student Government Association. We already have representatives in our working group from the Student Government Association (SGA), the Rowan Democrats, and the Rowan Republicans. In addition, we will reach out to heads of the Greek Life organizations as well as other clubs. We will provide training to clubs who are interested in doing this, as well as create a system for clubs across campus to track voter registration. This is an ongoing effort.
- Resident Student Life: One of our goals is to train student life representatives annually, including Resident Assistants to register people to vote and circulate relevant voter information. Planning for this is underway, having been sidelined by the COVID 19 crisis.
- Commuter Student Life: Work with the Office of Volunteerism, Civic Engagement and Commuter Services on helping our commuter students register to vote and “make a plan” to vote. Specifically, we will make connections with commuter students at events that are set up for them, such as “Commuter Taco Tuesdays”.
- National Voter Registration Day Campus Wide Event (9.27.2022). We plan to make this an annual campus-wide event with voter registration tables at prominent spots around campus, signage explaining where and how to vote, as well as a guest speaker or other program.

## Mobilization

In order to help students get to the polls on election day, or vote by mail, we will host a number of events to encourage participation.

- One such initiative will be having students post “why I will vote” in the Student Center on a large board in a central location.
- Another mobilization tactic will be to host a vote by mail event, where students can mail their ballots at the Post Office on campus and get an “I Voted #RowanVotes” sticker.
- Students will be encouraged to vote through email blasts and social media takeovers.
- If the pandemic recedes enough, then Rowan University will host a Get Out the Vote concert or event through a national organization such as Rock the Vote or Headcount.org. The hope is that this can become a regular event on campus.

## **Self Assessment and Evaluation**

The Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) has a tool for assessing which nonpartisan election engagement practices are being implemented on campus. We have used this to guide our approach. There are many practices that are already underway. We will use this tool to assess our progress as we implement and review the initiative. In particular, we will focus on several items that have been adopted from the CEEP self-assessment.<sup>9</sup>

Below are a list of self-assessment items that were adapted from the CEEP that we will continue to work on in 2022-2023:

- We will continue to build our coalition of faculty, staff and students. (ongoing)
- We will formalize and institutionalize processes for updating students about key dates and deadlines for voter registration and turnout. We will use the official calendars and email blasts, and official social media platforms for this purpose. (ongoing)
- We will work on creating resources for supporting the ALL IN initiative. For example, several grants were secured in 2021-2022 to augment the financial support from the university.
- We will create opportunities for students to register to vote as they begin to matriculate at Rowan.
- Rowan University is actively working to increase experiential learning opportunities on campus. We currently have one class that will use experiential education to “foster student’s political learning and culminates in a project that registers, educates and empowers their fellow students to vote.” (PS 07327 - *Social Movements and Political Activism*). This class will also create non-partisan voter guides for the Rowan Community.

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<sup>9</sup> [https://campuselect.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/2017\\_electoral\\_engagement\\_assessment\\_final.pdf](https://campuselect.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/2017_electoral_engagement_assessment_final.pdf)



To evaluate our efforts in reaching our goals and assess our performance, we will:

- Use the report from the NSLVE to take stock of where students are lagging in voter registration and turnout.
- Collect information about how many people attended #RowanVotes events and invite feedback on how these events helped students to participate in politics.
- Track the number of students, especially first-year students, that we register to vote and determine where they may be most likely to take the opportunity to do this.

The NSLVE report will be shared with the committee as well as with the university's top leadership so that the administration can help us with resources and support where it is needed. In addition, we plan to share the report with the campus community as a whole so that students and faculty can be involved in helping to identify ways to improve participation and registration as well as be a part of the wider community efforts. Finally, we will use the report to look critically at our own efforts and discuss what new initiatives need to be added, what worked and what should be changed.

### **Timeline, Budget, and Announcement**

The grid below outlines our proposed events and initiatives by semester and month for 2022-2023.

<b><i>Date</i></b>	<b><i>Activities</i></b>
<b>August 2022</b>	Issue call for all students interested in becoming Democracy Leaders through email blasts and campus-wide Announcer.
<b>August 2022</b>	Design and insert 1-page voter registration info sheet to be included in all packets received by new students during orientation.
<b>August 2022</b>	Explain to new student orientation leaders and Resident Advisors the basics of voter registration and voting in New Jersey.
<b>September – October 12, 2022</b>	Initiate data collection upon release of the university's official census of students. Email those students identified as unregistered or with inactive registrations before voter registration deadline in the state.
<b>September 6, 2022</b>	Interview and get commitments from Democracy Leaders.
<b>September 13, 2022</b>	Deadline for a formal commitment from our Student Democracy Leaders
<b>September 19, 2022</b>	National Constitution Day program and voter registration info session.
<b>September 14 – 27, 2022</b>	Preparation for National Voter Registration Day including social media campaign conducted jointly with Student Government Association.
<b>September 27, 2022</b>	National Voter Registration Day – tabling, email, signage, and social media blasts. Get the Rowan mascot – The Prof – to visit all voter registration tables on campus.
<b>September 28 – October 12, 2022</b>	Promote last days to register to vote in NJ.
<b>Oct 3 – 7, 2022</b>	Celebration of National Voter Education Week, including program with guest speaker, voter registration tabling, large signage in center of

	campus, targeted canvassing of students identified as not yet registered, and broad social media messaging to all students.
<b>October 12, 2022</b>	Last day to register to vote in NJ will be marked by expanded tabling across campus.
<b>October 27 – Nov 4, 2022</b>	Promote “Early Voting” in New Jersey to all students.
<b>October 31 – November 4, 2022</b>	Ramp up “pledge to vote” competition with large display in Student Center.
<b>November 8, 2022</b>	Election Day. Tabling. Email blasts. Red, white and blue bunting around campus. T-shirt raffles and “#RowanVotes” sticker giveaways.
<b>October 12 – May 2023</b>	Continue with data collection and analysis
<b>October 12 – May 2023</b>	Hold bi-monthly voter registration events at various locations around campus.
<b>October 12 – May 2023</b>	Continue to visit classes informing students about maintaining their active voter status, especially when they move.
<b>October 12 – May 2023</b>	Bring an educational speaker to campus to talk about voting.