



Task Force on Civic Engagement and Public Service
June 2024 Report

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As this report demonstrates, the work of this Task Force was informed to a large degree by the many conversations we held with a wide range of stakeholders across the landscape of Rutgers University. We are grateful to the members of the President's Administrative Council and the numerous faculty members, staff, students, and community partners who took time out of their busy schedules to participate in our focus groups and share their expertise and insights.

We are grateful to Brian Ballentine, Senior Vice President for Strategy and Chief of Staff in the Office of the President, for his guidance and encouragement throughout this entire process – from the formation of this Task Force through the completion and delivery of this report. From organizing our numerous focus groups to facilitating Task Force meetings and resources to completing this final report; Kristen Baker, Senior Project Coordinator for Strategy in the Office of the President, has been invaluable and has our deepest gratitude.

Finally, we thank the Rutgers community at-large not only for the suggestions and good wishes they have offered throughout this process but for the commitment to civic engagement and public service they demonstrate in numerous ways. As this report makes clear and is worth emphasizing at the outset, there are multiple examples throughout Rutgers University of deep engagement and service currently and throughout our University's history. These examples have offered us both models to build upon and the inspiration to carry this work forward.

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Executive Summary

The Task Force on Civic Engagement and Public Service, established by President Jonathan Holloway in November 2023, was charged with exploring and expanding opportunities to enhance civic engagement and participation, highlighting barriers and obstacles to the work, and developing recommendations that could elevate Rutgers' position as a national leader among institutions of higher education.

The Task Force, comprised of representatives from all Chancellor-led units, conducted focus groups and interviews with faculty, staff, students, and community partners. Through the feedback gathered and the knowledge and expertise of the Task Force members, a clear understanding of the current civic engagement landscape emerged along with recommendations to advance the work in the short, medium, and long terms.

Key Findings:

1. Defining Civic Engagement

- Although it is clear that a variety of impactful civic engagement take place across all Rutgers Chancellor-led units engaging a significant number of faculty, staff and students, there is no framework which pulls all of the work together under a shared understanding. To create a unifying umbrella, the Task Force developed a definition of civic engagement focusing on intentional, collaborative actions between the University community and broader society to address public concerns. This definition encompasses a wide range of activities, including volunteering, public service, advocacy, and educational outreach, aimed at fostering an equitable and inclusive democracy.

2. Themes from Stakeholder Conversations

- Impactful civic engagement is happening across Rutgers.
- Lack of awareness and coordination regarding civic engagement efforts results in missed opportunities for participation.
- Internal barriers, structural, logistical and policy challenges hinder participation in civic engagement activities (i.e., lack of transportation between campuses or within the community to participate in activities; uneven number of courses offered with civic engagement components; challenges in compensating community partners).
- There is a greater need for recognition of faculty and staff contributions to civic engagement, which often go unrecognized in professional evaluations or promotion and tenure, thereby limiting motivation and participation.

Recommendations:

- Establish a University-wide civic engagement council to connect civic leaders across Rutgers, share best practices, address challenges, oversee the implementation of recommendations, and promote the visibility of civic engagement initiatives.
- Implement a centralized online platform (RCommunity/GivePulse) to catalog and promote civic engagement opportunities, track participation, and assess impact.
- Enhance civic learning through increased curricular integration, recognition programs, and support mechanisms (e.g., stipends, credits, certificates, faculty training) to connect civic learning to the curriculum.
- Create or expand University-wide efforts that will unify civic engagement opportunities across Chancellor-led units.
- Increase strategic funding support to expand civic engagement initiatives.
- Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy (for internal and external audiences) to highlight Rutgers' civic engagement initiatives, including developing a central website to highlight civic engagement efforts, rally community support, and elevate Rutgers' profile nationally.
- Increase support, acknowledgement, and recognition for publicly engaged scholarship through funding and strengthening promotion and tenure guidelines and incentivizing faculty to use their expertise and knowledge to address community focus needs.

The Task Force's recommendations aim to build on Rutgers' strengths, address existing barriers, and nurture a culture of civic engagement that should be integrated across all academic disciplines and permeate all aspects of University life. By implementing these recommendations, Rutgers University can strengthen its role as a higher education leader in civic engagement, fostering a more inclusive and engaged university community committed to enhancing the public good.

General recommendations and suggested tactical implementations are identified in **red text** throughout this document.

Charge

The Task Force builds on President Holloway's longstanding commitment to civic engagement as highlighted by his 2021 *New York Times* op-ed in which he advocated for a national service program as a way to unite Americans, saying, "There are many problems in America, but fundamental to so many of them is our unwillingness to learn from one another, to see and respect one another, to become familiar with people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds and who hold different political views."

Between the release of the op-ed and the launch of the Task Force in November 2023, challenges in civic discourse mounted. With protests roiling U.S. campuses and a contentious presidential election on the horizon, the need for improved dialogue, engaging across differences and serving the common good, has only grown not only across society, but at Rutgers University.

To that end, President Holloway charged the Task Force with answering the following question: "What are the best means by which Rutgers can elevate and celebrate civic engagement as an ongoing call to action across the university community?" Understanding that impactful civic engagement initiatives are happening across all of Rutgers, the Task Force was to focus on identifying opportunities to build on our strengths as an institution, making visible gaps and barriers to engaging in the work that need to be addressed, exploring what opportunities and outcomes every student should be able to expect from Rutgers, and defining how to make Rutgers, as a whole, a nationally known model for civic engagement and public service.

Governance Structure and Methodology

President Holloway commissioned the Task Force to include key representatives from across Rutgers who, themselves, are involved deeply in civic engagement initiatives and who have broad familiarity with related initiatives within their domain of Rutgers. Task Force members represent Rutgers–New Brunswick, Rutgers–Camden, Rutgers–Newark, Rutgers Health, and the Rutgers-wide offices of Federal Relations, Equity and Inclusion, and the President.

The Task Force gathered information expansively from national and international sources, from units across all of Rutgers, and from community stakeholders. Best practices related to civic engagement, broadly construed, were gathered from organizations such as the World Health Organization, the U.S. Congress, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the American Association of Colleges and Universities, the Anchor Institutions Task Force, and higher education institutions across the country.

In addition to culling ideas from external organizations, the Task Force sought information about examples of, and feedback on, civic engagement initiatives and activities from across all of Rutgers and external stakeholders from across the communities in which Rutgers is located, This included:

- Hosting administrative leaders of civic engagement initiatives from across Rutgers at Task Force meetings.
- Hosting a series of focus groups including the following constituencies:
 - Faculty
 - Staff
 - Students
 - Senior administrators
 - Community partners from across all Rutgers locations

Through the many hours of convening, research, interviews, focus groups, and collective deliberation, the Task Force gained a coherent, composite view of civic engagement at Rutgers and was able to arrive at a set of recommendations for actions that Rutgers' leadership may undertake to strengthen and grow civic engagement across the institution over the short, medium, and long terms. Those outcomes of the Task Force's work are addressed in subsequent sections of this report. Ultimately, this process enabled the Task Force to arrive at the **following definition of civic engagement** at Rutgers going forward.

Rutgers University defines civic engagement as the intentional actions of individuals and communities, in partnership with each other, to identify and address issues of public concern.

Civic engagement activities focus on building mutually beneficial relationships aimed at co-creating solutions and pursuing goals that emanate from and benefit the community, and the health of its democratic processes and institutions, while simultaneously strengthening teaching and serving the mission of Rutgers University.

These relationships are collaborations between the University community of faculty, staff, students, and alumni and its larger communities (local, regional, state, national, global) for the advancement of an equitable and inclusive democracy, built on respect for difference and civil discourse.

It encompasses political and non-political activities, including, but not limited to, volunteering, community and public service, advocacy, educational outreach and curricular and co-curricular activities that encourage and advance civic inquiry, deliberative dialogues, and collaborative problem solving for the most pressing societal issues.

At its core, civic engagement can and should happen through every academic discipline, all forms of scholarship and creative expression, and throughout all facets of the University.

As one of the leading comprehensive, public research universities in the nation, Rutgers takes seriously its obligation to the betterment of society by emphasizing and

supporting its students, faculty, and staff in work that promotes democratic participation, active citizenship, and social change.

Current Initiatives

In his charge to the Task Force, President Holloway acknowledged that a culture of civic engagement already flourishes at Rutgers with stellar examples of civic engagement existing in every Chancellor-led unit. The Task Force gathered a representative sample, but certainly not an exhaustive list, of how each campus reflects in their respective communities the partnerships and initiatives between Rutgers faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the external community that focus on public service, working towards the common good that center reciprocity and mutual benefit. Please see the Appendix for these initiatives.

Conversations with Stakeholders, Themes

Out of the series of focus groups convened with various Rutgers University stakeholders, a set of themes emerged that have helped the Task Force shape the set of recommendations offered in the next section. These themes address the expectations, challenges, and opportunities surrounding the University's civic engagement work and reflect the views of those participating in the focus groups. Although the Task Force does not necessarily endorse all of the content contained within them, we have endeavored to highlight the topline themes that came from the focus groups and have kept these themes in mind when crafting recommendations.

The Need for Enhanced Communication and a Central Hub to Facilitate Civic Engagement

A common theme that emerged across the focus groups was that communication related to civic engagement tends to hamper the University community's appreciation for what qualifies as civic engagement and what civic engagement efforts are available across the University.

- To achieve University civic engagement priorities, focus group participants indicated that clearly advanced definitions and direction is needed from university leadership to senior University administrators (deans, chairs) that civic engagement outcomes and impacts are expected and evaluable measures of institutional leadership and campus performance.
- Participants in the focus groups shared that one universal and clear civic engagement definition is needed across the University. Departments and administrative units currently have different definitions and the terms "civic and community engagement" overlap.

Challenges related to conceptualizing civic engagement and identifying civic engagement opportunities sparked discussion regarding the need for a central hub for civic engagement efforts, opportunities, and participants.

- Focus group conversations suggested that inter- and intra-University (i.e., within and across campuses and schools) communication is needed to promote greater access to University resources, coordination of community engagement efforts, and celebration of community engagement successes. The University does not presently report in any systematic manner on civic engagement success stories or impacts (e.g., an annual report, “Rutgers in Your Community” informational resources, etc.).
- Students feel civic engagement opportunities are difficult to find. The need exists to curate and communicate civic engagement opportunities for students. Word-of-mouth and peer-to-peer communications were reported by some students as a primary pathway for learning of civic engagement opportunities.
- Community partners report challenges identifying students for civic engagement work/activities. For example, it is unclear how and with whom contact should be made at the University to identify potential students.
- There is limited awareness of existing off-campus and community-based infrastructure (e.g., Rutgers Cooperative Extension’s county offices, staffing, and county government relationships) that can facilitate community relationship building and civic engagement.
- Participants in the focus groups indicated that there is a need for a robust, efficient, and user-friendly system for collecting, curating, analyzing, and reporting on civic engagement activities of faculty, staff, student, and University volunteers.

Eliminate Barriers, Increase Incentives, and Create Multiple Pathways for Civic Learning and Engagement

Across the focus groups, participants identified a variety of barriers that often hamper participation in civic engagement ranging from structural to policy to curricular barriers.

- A common concern was raised that Rutgers leadership address administrative and logistical processes that impede the expansion and increased impact of University civic engagement. For example, human resource systems might be reformed related to hiring options and processes to more easily engage community members in compensated roles. Similarly, identifying and addressing barriers to community engagement linked to University purchasing systems might allow for great community engagement.
- For those engaged in research who are interested in pursuing civic engagement work, it was recommended that we review F&A rates for research partnerships and explore ways to create a better F&A waiver process that doesn’t penalize researchers for doing this research.
- Barriers related to student participation also were referenced with some noting the need for reducing “competition,” campus politics, or other institutional barriers that constrain student exploration and participation in civic engagement opportunities across programs, schools, or campuses. There is need to identify and alleviate logistical barriers (e.g., transportation or short-term housing needs) or financial barriers that impede student participation in civic engagement (transportation stipends, tuition assistance, stipends, paid internships, etc. were identified as potential aids). “Non-traditional”, commuter, and

international students also face challenges that limit their ability to engage in civic engagement activities due to financial, family, work, or other factors.

Focus group participants also identified the need for incentives that might heighten participation in civic engagement.

- Faculty and staff recognition for civic engagement efforts was an incentive frequently referenced. In the context of faculty tenure and promotion reviews, there is a need to differentiate between service (e.g., to one's profession or the University) and civic engagement and define standards/expand recognition related to community-engaged scholarship. (It should be noted that during the research for this report, the Executive Vice President for Academic Administration issued new guidelines for community and publicly engaged research that may address this issue to some extent).
- Expanding and increasing visibility of formal recognition of civic engagement accomplishments (e.g., through course credit, University/school awards and recognitions, certificates, honors capstone projects, badging or other micro-credentialling) could increase the perceived value of such endeavors for students.

Out of discussions regarding barriers and recommended incentives emerged the need to expand existing pathways and even forge new routes for civic learning and engagement.

- Some asserted that value and clarity would be derived from a common, unifying student experience centered on civic engagement. There is a need to develop and communicate the value of civic engagement (networking, professional skills development, experience-based education, intrinsic value of service, etc.) to students. It also was recommended that we develop a plan to gain a better understanding of free expression and how to dialogue across differences.
 - Methods of incorporating civic engagement (e.g., field trips, projects, speakers, extra credit assignments, etc.) into existing courses are an underdeveloped opportunity for Rutgers students outside of political science.
 - Student focus groups revealed an interest in developing skillsets useful for meaningful participation in political processes (such as how state and local government budgeting/statutory/regulatory processes work, how to write and submit public comments, etc.).

Foster and Grow Relationships with Community Partners, Broadening the Reach of Public Service

- Training programs and resources for University personnel are needed to foster effective, ethical, and mutually impactful civic and community engagement. It is important to ensure students are trained sufficiently to understand the communities in which they are engaged. An example cited by several focus group participants is the detrimental effect transactional or "one-time" engagements between Rutgers staff and communities have on project success and the formation of long-term, trusting relationships.

- It is important to have communities engaged in needs assessments and to solicit their input early in the process of civic engagement planning. It is also important to “close the loop” or have appropriate follow up with communities after university research efforts conclude.
- A toolkit with best practices and teaching resources is needed to define standards and expectations and to facilitate effective community-engaged scholarship, civic engagement, and community service. One participant advocated for a “community IRB” as a professional development strategy to prepare Rutgers researchers for community engagement work.
- Building K-12 relationships with the University community (researchers, students, etc.) would provide mutual benefits to communities and University programs, and serve as a student recruitment opportunity for Rutgers.

Recommendations

Taking into consideration the feedback presented by the focus groups, the various conversations held between Task Force members and stakeholders, and the knowledge and expertise of the Task Force members themselves who are deeply engaged in this work, the following recommendations are offered.

Making Connections and Increasing Visibility

Across Rutgers University there are deep and impactful civic engagement initiatives taking place that engage every member of the Rutgers community – students, faculty, staff, and alumni. However, these efforts tend to not be widely known across Chancellor-led units and sometimes even within Chancellor-led units, let alone among various external stakeholders locally, regionally, and nationally. This lack of connection and visibility limits the ability of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and external stakeholders to know the significant work being done across Rutgers and how to get more deeply involved.

To make Rutgers University, as a whole, synonymous with public service and civic engagement and to underscore the value we place on this work, strategies need to be implemented to create better communication and connections internally among the Rutgers community and externally to highlight the work being done across Rutgers and to increase Rutgers profile as a leader in civic engagement.

University-Wide Civic Engagement Council

Develop a University-wide civic engagement council in central administration, composed of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and external stakeholders, to:

- Connect civic engagement leaders across Rutgers University to share current initiatives and best practices.
- Provide insight and advice on addressing barriers and challenges of doing civic engagement work at Rutgers, as well as increasing visibility of the work.
- Provide advice, insight, and accountability for the implementation of the recommendations set forth in this report.

- Help advance the University's vision for becoming a national model for civic engagement. With representation on the council and adjoining subcommittees from all Chancellor-led units and annual reporting, the council can provide a consistent body to advise the President and central administration and advance civic engagement across Rutgers.

Adoption of RCommunity, a GivePulse Platform

In 2023, Rutgers purchased an enterprise license for GivePulse, a web-based system that can engage and organize individuals and assess the impact of a broad range of civic engagement initiatives. The Task Force recommends University-wide adoption of GivePulse (internally named RCommunity) which would provide one central location for every member of the Rutgers community, and registered external organizations, to list and sign-up for civic engagement initiatives, including, but not limited to, opportunities to volunteer and public service internships, tracking service-learning courses and community and publicly engaged research opportunities, among a range of other experiences.

University-wide adoption of this platform will allow members of the Rutgers community to better know the opportunities available, increase engagement, track participation, and assess the impact of Rutgers civic engagement across the state of New Jersey and beyond – wherever Rutgers is engaged. The data collected from GivePulse will allow Rutgers to tell the story of its commitment to civic engagement to our local stakeholders and various constituencies and to increase its national and international profile as an engaged University.

Increasing Visibility and Reputational Excellence

Excellence is found in every corner of Rutgers and from every member of the Rutgers community; however, the size and scope of Rutgers makes it hard to know and highlight the great work happening across the institution. As a way of strengthening the Rutgers brand and increasing the visibility and impact of the numerous civic engagement initiatives happening across the state, the taskforce recommends the creation of a marketing and communication strategy. This plan, beginning with the development of a central website, should:

- Call attention to the work currently being done across Chancellor-led units and centrally for prospective and current students, staff, faculty, alumni and external constituents.
- Provide a unifying sentiment (i.e. "This is what excellence looks like") to rally the Rutgers and external communities.
- Raise Rutgers' profile as an institution anchored by its commitment to serving the common good while making a meaningful difference in the world.

Additionally, the Task Force recommends making support of civic engagement into a development priority. Even though many impactful civic engagement initiatives are currently taking place across the University, there needs to be additional financial support for these and new initiatives outlined in this report in order to scale up and expand impact.

Teach and Recognize Civic Learning

Civic engagement can and must be taught, and such learning can be woven throughout all disciplines' curricular offerings. Much of this high-impact civic learning already is taking place in classrooms, labs, and recitations throughout Rutgers. More can be done, and there is a growing body of scholarship and set of practices on how to integrate civic learning into pedagogical offerings without sacrificing core curricular content. Rutgers University will demonstrate its commitment to civic engagement learning by recognizing and offering credit and/or credentials to students who pursue civic learning opportunities by developing and cataloging learning opportunities that instill in students of all disciplines the knowledge, skills, and inclination to be civic-minded.

Designate Civic Engagement Learning Through Course Coding and Create Pathways for Students to Earn Civic Badges/Credentials That Can Be Designated on Their Academic Transcripts

The Task Force recommends:

- The development of a strategy to code and designate classes, across all disciplines, that have a civic engagement focus and/or opportunities for building civic competencies. The strategy will allow all students to know what courses exist, across disciplines, that meet their interest and capacity, and provide a way for the University to quantify the number of courses and learning opportunities are offered across Chancellor-led units. Among others, this strategy will be developed by the Office of Information Technology, Enrollment Management, Provosts, and Academic Affairs officials University-wide.
- The development of a system that acknowledges students' civic learning and marks the attainment of various civic competencies. This system might include the designation of e-badges or credentials, certificates, or designations on students' transcripts.
- Systematically explore pathways for a civic engagement requirement or a commensurate threshold that ensures that every student at Rutgers University experiences learning opportunities that will equip them to be informed and engaged members of their communities by the time they graduate.

Support Faculty to Weave Civic Engagement Learning into their Coursework and Assess Student Learning

Understanding that civic engagement can be woven through every academic discipline, faculty may not always feel fully equipped to offer such civic learning opportunities. As such, faculty support and professional development is an essential element of civic engagement education.

As a support for faculty, the Task Force recommends:

- The development of school-specific 1- or 2-credit courses that introduce first-year and transfer students to the mission or topical foci of the school, offer specific examples of issues of global/state/local importance related to the school's mission, and develop

opportunities for experience-based civic learning opportunities that allow students to develop civic competencies while meeting the disciplinary mission of their school.

- The development of a strategy to create and implement a 1-to-3-credit course or learning modules that connect civic engagement to every academic discipline and are broadly offered to students of all disciplines and on every Chancellor-led unit. Any courses developed would include conversations on best practices on ethical community engagement, to ensure both faculty and students engage with the community in ways that are asset-based, mutually beneficial, and values community knowledge and expertise.
- Incentivize faculty to develop civic engagement courses and expand professional development and support to faculty who wish to develop such courses.
- As an extension of Rutgers University's work with the Institute for Citizens' and Scholars Measurement Working Group, construct and disseminate a toolkit of assessments that can be utilized across disciplines and used as a foundation for launching an approach to University-wide civic engagement assessment.

Talking Across Difference

A system of self-government requires us to have productive conversations about difficult and sometimes divisive issues. Indeed, our ability to talk across differences is a fundamental democratic skill that can and should be taught to students of all disciplines. Our collective capacity to talk across differences must be supported with University-wide opportunities to learn and practice constructive dialogue.

As such, our Task Force recommends:

- The integration of the Talking Across Difference microsite into websites/pages across the University (schools, departments, units, offices). An extension of Rutgers University's participation in the Faculty Institute on Dialogue Across Difference and Civic Discourse in the Classroom, the microsite housed at the Eagleton Institute of Politics (launching by the start of the fall 2024 semester) is a dynamic hub for sharing resources and live opportunities for learning and practicing this critical democratic skill.
- Academic departments and campus leaders encourage and incentivize the use of the resources contained in the Talking Across Difference microsite and participation in learning and practicing opportunities as they are offered.
 - The development of a system that acknowledges student, staff, and faculty participation in Talking Across Difference opportunities such as the designation of e-badges, credentials, or certificates to mark the attainment of talking across difference competencies.
 - Developing a "train the trainers" system to enable more students, faculty, and staff to play lead roles in Talking Across Difference learning opportunities.

- Academic departments develop strategies to require graduate students to pursue Talking Across Difference learning opportunities and demonstrate related competencies upon receiving their degree.

Develop and Implement Annual University-wide Civic Engagement Programming

Rutgers University is a key leader in addressing public problems throughout our state and beyond. Reflecting its commitment and powerful role in catalyzing positive change, Rutgers University will enact University-wide civic initiatives that harness our expertise, demonstrate our commitment to public service and civic engagement, and meaningfully address big problems facing our democracy and our communities.

Citizenship and Democracy Week (Each Fall)

Beginning on the first day of in-person early voting and culminating in Election Day, the Task Force recommends:

- That each Chancellor-led unit presents a diverse array of programming focused on citizenship and that is democracy centered.

Citizenship and Democracy Week should at a minimum involve:

- Programming that includes, but is not limited to, speakers, teach-ins, community service projects, and conversations centered around democracy. Activities will involve collaborations between disciplines as well as local communities.
- Working with the respective counties and municipalities of each campus to establish an early voting site on each Chancellor-led unit and at least one drop box to facilitate vote-by-mail for our students.
- Establishing a University-wide Citizenship and Democracy Week calendar of all events.
- Creating and disseminating modules on voting to embed in all Canvas course sites.

Solving Grand Challenges Week (Each Spring)

The Task Force recommends that a University-wide grand challenge be established in which students, faculty, and staff collaborate with stakeholders from their local communities to effectuate positive change on pressing social and civic issues.

Challenges might include addressing issues related to health inequity, climate resilience, or environmental justice. Themes, and funding to support the challenges, will be announced annually by the President, based on input from the Rutgers community. Initiatives must include civic engagement components, which can come in myriad forms, from providing technical expertise, participating in policy-making processes, effectuating behavioral changes (e.g., adoption of healthful practice, increasing voter education and engagement, education of food waste, water conservation, reduction of plastics in the environment). Efforts will be showcased

across the University and beyond with an array of programming during the designated Solving Grand Challenges Week.

Rutgers Scarlet Service (Year-Round)

The Task Force recommends expanding the Rutgers Scarlet Service (RSS) to be a year-round model, allowing students to apply for funding for internships for both the academic year and summer. RSS would not only be connected to career services, but to civic and community engagement entities and efforts across the University. This expansion also will include offering Scarlet Service Fairs annually on all Chancellor-led units as well as creating an annual Presidential Public Service/Civic Engagement award for faculty, staff, students, community partners, and external stakeholders.

Advancing Publicly Engaged Scholarship

Rutgers University has a long-standing commitment to public service and civic engagement and has defined publicly engaged scholarship as scholarship that integrates engagement with the public or community into research and teaching; has a demonstrated public impact; is produced in collaboration with external community partners, individuals, or organizations; is visible to and shared with community stakeholders; and reflects the mission and values of Rutgers. This scholarship is rigorous, with reciprocal and mutually beneficial engagement between the community and Rutgers at the core of the scholarly activities.

The Task Force recommends increasing support, acknowledgement, and recognition for publicly engaged scholarship through funding, strengthening promotion and tenure guidelines, and developing a more nuanced and transparent process for including and weighting publicly engaged scholarly activities. Among other considerations, Rutgers faculty and staff should be incentivized to use their scholarly knowledge and expertise to engage with and respond to the needs of the local communities in which Rutgers is situated and increase scholarly activity in areas that respond to some of the most pressing societal challenges. The recently issued guidelines on incorporating community and publicly engaged scholarship into the tenure promotion process is an excellent step and we recommend closely monitoring its impact in the years ahead.

We also recommend that steps are taken to ensure that the publicly engaged scholarship taking place at Rutgers is of the highest quality and that its public impact is broadly felt by:

- Increasing the professional development for faculty and staff on the ethical standards and evidenced-based best practices of engaging in community engaged research.
- Providing greater support to enhance the translation of all Rutgers' scholarship for public consumption and that Rutgers amplifies and expands the current systems of translational scholar-practitioners, equipping Rutgers to serve as a knowledge broker throughout the state of New Jersey and beyond.

Conclusion

As we were finalizing this report, the Partnership for Public Service issued the results of its annual survey on trust in government. The results were largely discouraging with a near record low of 23% of respondents saying they trusted government. Trust is not identical to civic engagement but efforts to further civic engagement pursued by higher education hold considerable promise for increasing public trust in government. This is particularly true of some of our recommendations above including those that institutionalize teaching dialogue across differences and weaving civic engagement and civics education into coursework and formal recognition when students have attained critical civic engagement competencies

As President Holloway indicated in his charge and as our Task Force has reiterated, exemplary civic engagement already takes place throughout Rutgers University, offering models on how to do this important work well. The challenges facing our country and our democracy require more from us. The themes sketched in this report and the recommendations that have emerged from them offer a roadmap – a way for Rutgers University to unify around aspirations for our community and our democracy and make these aspirations a reality.

Appendix

Sampling of Current Initiatives

Rutgers Scarlet Service

Launched by President Holloway in 2022, the Rutgers Scarlet Service program aims to provide meaningful civic engagement and public service opportunities to Rutgers students while exposing them to a variety of perspectives and opportunities for civil discourse.

Scarlet Service is comprised of two specific opportunities: Rutgers Scarlet Service-Internship (RSSI) and Rutgers Scarlet Service-DC (RSS-DC). Both programs provide students summer internships in a public service-oriented nonprofit organization or direct-service government office, allowing them to receive hands-on experience dealing with pressing local and national issues. Additionally, both programs include a stipend and a three-credit course free of charge. RSSI places students in locations within New Jersey, Philadelphia, and New York City metropolitan areas while RSS-DC brings a cohort of to Washington, DC, where internships are typically on Capitol Hill, at federal agencies, or in nonprofits. The program provides free housing for the students in Washington and professional development programming in addition to the stipend and the three-credit course.

Additionally, President Holloway hosts a Byrne Seminar titled “Citizenship, Institutions, and the Public” which is meant to expose first-year students to the understanding of the roles and responsibilities of citizenship and engage them in discussions with distinguished leaders. Guests have included Institute for Citizens and Scholars President Rajiv Vinnakota, veteran diplomat Richard Hass, Baptist minister and advocate DeForest B. Soaries, Jr., and many more notable leaders.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension

Rutgers Cooperative Extension, an integral part of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, was formed in 1914 with the Congressional passage of the federal Smith-Lever Act. The purpose of the act was to enable land-grant universities to extend research and practical education to people where they live. Rutgers faculty and staff from the departments of 4-H Youth Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Family and Community Health Sciences, are stationed in extension offices in each of New Jersey’s 21 counties. Cooperative Extension also delivers Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program education and resources to families, while its Office of Continuing Professional Education provides lifelong learning and professional certification support to non-traditional adult learners.

County Extension Agents and Extension Specialists, disciplinary experts within the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, support the needs of the state through applied research and evidence-based educational outreach across areas spanning agriculture, climate resilience and adaptation, natural resources stewardship, environment, food security and nutrition education, health and wellness, fisheries and aquaculture, marine and coastal resource management, home horticulture and gardening, and youth and community development.

Rutgers Global

Rutgers Global hosts an office dedicated to helping students navigate the process of applying to the [Peace Corps](#), a federal service program that seeks out dedicated, skilled volunteers with welcoming host communities, offering service opportunities in over 60 countries. Through the Peace Corps, volunteers immerse themselves in a community, and focus on collaborating on locally prioritized projects, fostering relationships, sharing cultures and knowledge, and making a lasting impact on countless lives.

Rutgers–New Brunswick

Eagleton Institute of Politics

Established in 1956, the Eagleton Institute of Politics provides myriad civic engagement opportunities for students at Rutgers. In addition to hosting a wide variety of classes and certificate programs, such as the [Eagleton Undergraduate Associates Program](#) and the [Graduate Fellows program](#), Eagleton also hosts multiple centers that house different studies and focuses on how politics affects certain populations.

Eagleton's [Center for Youth Political Participation](#) (CYPP) has two main programs that allow students to work directly with Rutgers students and young people in the surrounding communities. [RU Ready](#) and [RU Voting](#) hire Rutgers students as interns to create curriculum for teaching middle and high school students about the importance of civic engagement and political discourse and work to mobilize fellow Rutgers students as voters. CYPP also includes the [Darien Civic Engagement Project](#), where enrolled students work together with the Eagleton Institute of Politics and CYPP staff on RU Ready or RU Voting, while also learning vital research, communication, and leadership skills. Lastly, CYPP houses the [Young Elected Leaders Program](#) (YELP). Started in 2002 with funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts, YELP studies and collaborates closely with young people who run for or hold public office to provide unique insight into youth representation in U.S. political institutions.

Eagleton's [Center for American Women and Politics](#) (CAWP) hosts a variety of programs that allow students to enhance their leadership and civic engagement skills. [Ready to Run®](#) is a program designed to train women to run for office and includes partners in more than 20 states around the country. [NEW Leadership®](#) is a national nonpartisan college students' public leadership training program also run by CAWP that addresses women's underrepresentation in politics. During the three-day residential program, college students learn about the important role that politics plays in their lives, and they are introduced to a variety of successful women leaders.

Division of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement

The Collaborative Center for Community Engagement, housed within the Division of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement, connects hundreds of students each year to community partners in New Brunswick and beyond through in-depth placements and projects involving policy research, access to education, health, language, and the arts, to name a few.

The Collaborative Center offers a variety of ways for the Rutgers community (staff, faculty, students, and student organizations) and the general public to engage in the surrounding community. Volunteers have the opportunity to assist non-profit organizations and government agencies in food distribution, community clean-ups, among other opportunities.

- **Bonner Leader Program**

The Bonner Leader Program is a selective, highly competitive program and is part of the national Bonner Foundation Network of college students who are committed to community engagement and social justice. Bonner Leaders are Rutgers students who receive Federal Work Study who do their work-study hours at partner sites either on or off-campus. Participants work on special projects and high-level engagement work with our partner sites.

- **Advancing Community Development**

The Advancing Community Development Program is a one-semester, community-based learning program administered by Rutgers Collaborative Center for Community Engagement and a gift to the Rutgers Foundation by Johnson & Johnson (J&J). Participating students learn about community health and wellness interventions, non-profit management, and the role of anchor institutions in their communities. Working in project teams guided by J&J skill-based volunteers and non-profit professionals, students execute community-based projects for local New Brunswick organizations so they can better serve the health-related needs of residents. The program fosters a community of practice where individuals from multiple sectors collaborate and learn from one another to improve health outcomes in our host communities. Participants will have some time devotion to the project, which will be a few hours a week to ensure a successful project.

- **Community Walking Tours**

Rutgers Collaborative Center's Community Tours are an informative and fun way to familiarize the Rutgers community with its surrounding city neighborhoods. The tours are approximately 90 minutes and are designed for students, faculty, staff, and the community at large to gain an understanding of the city's history, cultural assets, and major institutions. We walk through historical neighborhoods around College Avenue, Douglass campus, and downtown New Brunswick. Frequent stops are made in front of city murals, parks, local institutions, and restaurants.

- **CIVIC VOICES**

CIVIC VOICES is a community-based audio project developed by George Street Playhouse and Rutgers Collaborative Center for Community Engagement. Designed to better understand the unique, diverse voices of communities throughout New Jersey, CIVIC VOICES encourages civic engagement by strengthening community discourse through theatre arts.

- **Community Partner Breakfasts**

The Collaborative Center hosts three community partner breakfasts that are open to select faculty, staff, and students who wish to connect with community partners in the area of engagement.

- **Presidential Volunteer Service Award**

The Collaborative Center for Community Engagement will be awarding the Presidential Volunteer Service Award. The Collaborative Center will recognize 150 students who meet the requirements for the award during the academic year.

Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy

The Bloustein School has a number of research centers that work directly with communities on issues around community engagement. Most explicitly the Ralph Voorhees Center of Civic Engagement seeks to enhance dialogue and discussion among communities, government, students, and scholars, increase community development capacity, conduct research on urban problems, and, in partnership with communities, enhance educational opportunities in and outside of the classroom. It has focused on housing, homelessness, and food security, with a particular emphasis on New Brunswick and Camden.

Other examples of Bloustein research programs that foster civic engagement include the New Jersey Safe Routes to School and New Jersey Travel Independence Programs at the Voorhees Transportation Center and the Raritan River Initiative and the NSF-funded Smart Kids and Cool Seniors project at the Center for Urban Policy Research. The master's in community and regional planning degree includes a community development concentration and many students in all of the graduate and undergraduate programs do required internships in public or nonprofit organizations that work extensively in New Jersey communities.

Alternative Service Breaks Student Organizations

Rutgers University Alternative Breaks (RUAB) programs provide groups of Rutgers University undergraduate students with a life-changing experience: a semester-long experience centered on community service. Participants learn about social justice issues within the United States during five weeks of pre-trip meetings, which is followed by a volunteer winter or spring break excursion.

Rutgers–Newark

Office of Student Life and Leadership

Under the Community Engagement and Service-Learning sector, this Newark office hosts several programs to help students achieve hands-on experiences with the community. This includes Community Engagement Day and the Community Engagement Program which grants students, staff, and their families an opportunity to experience and service opportunity throughout the City of Newark. Students may participate during both the fall and spring semesters and volunteer for organizations that cover issues spanning from food insecurity, community clean-up, education and literacy, community activism, homelessness, AIDS and HIV awareness, community gardening, and more. This office also hosts the annual Ballot Bowl, which is an initiative led by students to raise voter awareness and participation through campus-wide voter registration drives.

Rutgers–Newark Honors Living Learning Community

This Honors Living-Learning Community (HLLC) was founded in January 2015 and aims to redefine the idea of “honors” by creating intergenerational and interdisciplinary learning communities filled with students, faculty, and community partners focused on tackling some of the nation’s most pressing social issues. As part of HLLC’s core course, Voice, Citizenship, and Community Engagement, the students are tasked to work in teams to develop a project that will address a need within the campus community. The inaugural cohort chose to create a social justice mural with the intent of portraying the campus diversity and social justice. HLLC also housed the RISE Program at Westside High School where students co-designed a college access program to engage students at Newark’s Westside High School in efforts to support and encourage their preparation for college.

Rutgers–Newark School of Public Affairs and Administration | Office of Public Engagement

The Office of Public Engagement at Rutgers–Newark School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA) facilitates faculty and student engagement and collaborative initiatives with government and nonprofit organizations in the Newark area and throughout New Jersey. The school’s institutes and programs provide assistance and resources to community organizations. Additionally, SPAA’s curriculum includes educational experiences designed for transformative student learning which encapsulates internships, study abroad, service learning, and applied research opportunities. These interactions occur across government, nonprofit, and public sector organizations.

Rutgers–Newark School of Arts and Sciences | Center for Politics and Race in America (CPRA)

CPRA leverages the expertise of Rutgers–Newark’s scholars in political science, sociology, psychology, history, public administration, and data science, along with local and state-level partners, to explore the connection between race and political attitudes, beliefs, practices, contexts, and structures. In addition to being a data and research resource, CPRA serves as a resource to bring diversity to the field of people who have access to and ultimately pursue careers in public service.

Rutgers–Newark’s P3 Collaboratory (Pedagogy, Professional Development, and Publicly Engaged Scholarship)

The P3 Collaboratory is a faculty/instructor-focused center across Rutgers whose mission includes supporting faculty/instructors in improving their abilities/skills at public engagement. It is positioned to help facilitate conversations about supporting faculty in this kind of work across Rutgers.

Rutgers–Camden

Division of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement (DICE)

The mission of DICE is to engage in efforts that educate minds, empower communities, and enact positive change by intentionally weaving diversity, equity, inclusion and community engagement into policy and practice at Rutgers University—Camden. The focus of the work is

on the continuous progression towards a more just and equitable society on campus, and in Camden city and the surrounding communities.

- **Bonner Civic Scholars**

Rutgers–Camden Bonner Civic Scholars is a learning community of select students who make a substantial commitment to civic engagement in Camden and the region. Students have access to distinctive educational opportunities that integrate academics with intensive service experiences, fostering the development of leadership and professional skills. Civic Scholars strengthen partnerships between Rutgers–Camden and the broader community, gain in-depth understanding of social issues through service, and actively engage their peers in service and volunteer activities. It includes many components such as an annual service commitment of 300 hours (70 percent direct service, 20 percent training and enrichment, and 10 percent fundraising), planning of and participation in the Martin Luther King Day of Service, participation in regular meetings and leadership development trainings, invitation to regional and national student conferences, a Rutgers–Camden Scholarship, an AmeriCorps Education Award, internship opportunities, and eligibility for Federal Work-Study.

- **Certificate in Civic Engagement and Social Change**

The Certificate in Civic Engagement and Social Change is an academic credential for Rutgers University–Camden undergraduate students who are passionate about putting their academic learning into on-the-ground action. Through a combination of coursework, community work, and research, students who complete the certificate will be well-poised to understand the origins and shape of social problems and how best to work with diverse populations as they search for and implement solutions. Finally, students can develop a year-long capstone project that will bring all elements of their civically engaged time at Rutgers–Camden together. These projects are meant to develop students’ passion for social justice and prepare them to become positive change makers in their future careers.

- **RUC Votes Coalition**

Founded in 2021, the RUC Votes Coalition is a nonpartisan student, staff, and faculty coalition of individuals and entities at Rutgers–Camden who are committed to increasing voter participation and voter education on our campus and in the Camden community.

- **Civic Engagement Faculty Fellows Program**

The Civic Engagement Faculty Fellows program prepares Rutgers–Camden faculty members to design and implement high-quality Engaged Civic Learning courses. The program centers on a two-day institute where Fellows learn about the pedagogy of engagement and start designing or redesigning their courses. In the spring semester, two follow-up sessions are held to review syllabi and plan the implementation of civic learning courses. Faculty course grants are offered to support courses integrating the pedagogy of civic learning.

- **Engaged Civic Learning**

Rutgers–Camden faculty members advance student learning and community development through courses that integrate civic engagement into the curriculum.

- **Graduate Fellows Program**

The Civic Engagement Graduate Fellows program at Rutgers–Camden connects emerging scholars with faculty across disciplines to support engaged learning and civic development among undergraduates.

- **K-12 Education Outreach**

The K–12 Education Outreach initiatives focus on developing collaborative partnerships and initiatives that help to achieve better outcomes for youth and families in the city of Camden, especially those in North Camden, the neighborhood adjacent to the Rutgers–Camden campus.

- **Chancellor’s Awards for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement**

Since 2012, the Chancellor’s Awards honors faculty, staff, student’s alumni and community partners work to advance the communities of southern New Jersey and the region.

Center for Urban Research and Education

The two key missions of Center for Urban Research and Education (CURE) are:

- To encourage, facilitate and promote research on urban issues by Rutgers–Camden faculty and their collaborators around the nation; and
- To help train the next generation of urban scholars by providing opportunities for students to become involved with ongoing research projects.

CURE encourages, facilitates, and promotes innovative research by scholars at Rutgers University and around the nation on issues that face Camden, New Jersey, the Philadelphia metropolitan region, and other large cities and metropolitan cities in the U.S. and abroad. It also helps train the next generation of urban scholars by providing opportunities for students to become involved with ongoing research projects. Through its research and partnerships, the center creates innovative solutions that promote equity and opportunity in communities throughout the nation. CURE seeks to increase the understanding of cities through cross-disciplinary research, instruction and civic engagement and by providing links to regional, national and international networks in pursuit of new ideas and approaches that address urban issues. A forum for collaborative, interdisciplinary scholarship, CURE helps to inform public policy development and decision-making at the local, national and global levels.

Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs

The Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs at Rutgers University–Camden reinforces and amplifies Rutgers service, teaching, and training goals by:

- Conducting multidisciplinary community-focused research and evaluation that connect to public policy and practice issues in Camden and across southern New Jersey.
- Convening stakeholders to make connections across research, policy, and practice in support of southern New Jerseyans.
- Connecting the multidisciplinary expertise of university faculty to regional problems.
- Training and mentoring students from across disciplines in community-focused research.

Community Leadership Center

The Community Leadership Center is a service and research center focused on advancing new strategies for urban transformation centered on community development, community engaged research, experiential academic learning, global university partnerships and public programs. Most notable of the center's efforts is the Rutgers/LEAP initiative, a comprehensive cradle-to-career educational pipeline, that has advanced educational excellence in Camden since 1997.

Law Clinics

Addressing injustice through a variety of clinics and lawyering programs, Rutgers Law in Camden sponsors centered law clinics focused on children's justice, child and family advocacy, civil practice, domestic violence, pro bono bankruptcy, pro bono financial literacy, and pro bono mediation.

Rutgers–Camden Center for the Arts

The Rutgers–Camden Center for the Arts provides performances, exhibitions, education programs, and community projects that inspire a full appreciation and enjoyment of the arts, create meaningful opportunities to participate in the arts, advance the central role of the arts in pre K-12 education, and increase awareness of the arts as essential to cultural, economic, and community vitality.

Rutgers Health

Rutgers Health Service Corps

Rutgers Health Service Corps (RHSC) equips students, faculty, staff, and community members to positively influence health and wellness at Rutgers and throughout New Jersey through education, innovation, and service. Through a variety of opportunities in fields such as Health Promotion and Education, Social and Environmental Health, Health Policy and Advocacy, and Research and Innovation, RHSC aims to inspire the next generation of health care and public health professionals to improve the health and equity of surrounding communities.

Free Community Participatory Physical Therapy Clinic

The Community Participatory Physical Therapy Clinic serves people in Newark with physical therapy services along with wellness and health education. The clinic is supervised by a licensed physical therapist and student volunteers from the entry-level doctoral program in physical therapy at the Rutgers School of Health Professions.

HIPHOP Community Health Initiative

The Homeless and Indigent Population Health Outreach Project (HIPHOP) Community Health Initiative links Robert Wood Johnson Medical School students who seek to meet health-specific learning objectives, with services that address health and social needs. The program provides community outreach, health promotion, preventive education, and clinical services to underserved populations in New Brunswick and Middlesex County.

Oral Care at Rutgers School Of Dental Medicine

The Rutgers School of Dental Medicine provides oral health services while training the next generation of dentists. Care is provided by dental students working under the direction of faculty members who are fully licensed dentists. The clinics in Newark offer free screenings, preventive treatment, and oral health education to local children.

H.O.P.E. Clinic

The Health Outreach Practice Experience (H.O.P.E.) Clinic in Plainfield, NJ, provides free primary care and management of acute and chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension for uninsured adults. The clinic, led by the Rutgers School of Health Professions' Physician Assistant Program, provides opportunities for student learning and engagement with the local community.

Promise Clinic

The Promise Clinic, an extension of the HIPHOP project, is a volunteer-based, student-run clinic in the Eric B Chandler Health Center in New Brunswick. The clinic provides free primary care services to the uninsured clients of Elijah's Promise Soup Kitchen and assists with health maintenance, screenings, medications, and laboratory work.

Student Family Health Care Center

Run by medical student volunteers from New Jersey Medical School, the Student Family Health Care Center serves the needs of medically underserved populations by providing free, quality health care to Newark community members. Services include physical examinations, chronic disease management, gynecological care, and psychosocial counseling. All services are provided under the supervision of board-certified family physicians.

NJ Climate Resource Center

The New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center was established by statute in January 2020 to "generate and promote the use of unbiased, actionable science to support efforts by government, public, private, and non-governmental sectors to adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate." Their mission is to conduct research with practical applications to New Jersey's most urgent climate-related issues; develop planning tools, provide technical guidance, initiate pilot projects, and offer practical support for addressing climate change in New Jersey; and link actionable research with policymakers, planners, practitioners, the media, communities, students, and others through outreach, training, and education.

Rutgers Office of Global Engagement

Housed in Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS), the Office of Global Engagement is dedicated to providing opportunities for Rutgers faculty, staff, and students to participate in the University's global programs. The office also connects with the global community through various outreach activities, such as hosting international scholars, supporting partnerships across academic and professional communities, and engaging with Rutgers alumni.