

NJPIRG Student Chapters and Higher Education



*A
Shared
Mission
of
Teaching,
Research
and
Service*



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NJPIRG Student Chapters' Mission

We are particularly proud of the contribution that NJPIRG Student Chapters' civic engagement and public interest research and advocacy program has made to fulfilling Rutgers' mission of teaching, research, and service. Inspired by these high ideals, we endeavor to tackle the great issues of the day. We tap into the knowledge base of the University to advocate solutions to pressing social problems ranging from environmental pollution to poverty. We marshal the considerable energies of the student body, and the campus community as a whole, to serve. And since the success of these efforts hinges upon a vital civic ethic, our program actively engages students in what President McCormick has described as "full participation in the dynamic life of discovery and of service to society that characterizes Rutgers at its best."

We have seen encouraging signs of civic engagement among young people. In both 2004 and 2005, voter participation among students and young people increased significantly, and at a faster rate than any other age group. In 2004, youth voter turnout increased by 11 percentage points over 2000, and in 2005 in New Jersey votes cast in youth-heavy districts near Rutgers increased an average of 19% over 2001. At the same time, volunteerism is reported to be at all-time highs among youth.

These are very encouraging trends, yet the need for a concerted effort to promote civic engagement persists. Despite the recent significant gains in youth voting, 18-24 year-olds still vote in fewer numbers than any other age group. While the high rates of volunteerism speak to a broad concern about social issues, the same surveys reveal a deep skepticism that our civic institutions can effectively act to solve those problems. In this environment, NJPIRG Student Chapters continues to engage hundreds and thousands of students—creating, as called for in the Campus Compact Presidential Declaration on Civic Responsibility in Higher Education, "innumerable opportunities for our students to practice and reap the results of the real, hard work of citizenship."

Consider just a few recent examples:

Sarah Clader, Rutgers College '08

In spring '06, Sarah combined local service around hunger issues, with a national advocacy campaign for affordable housing. She worked with a coalition of groups and students on campus to organize the 2006 Hunger Cleanup (a day-long community service and fundraising event). Sarah and the coalition recruited 130 volunteers and raised \$10,000 for the Middlesex Interfaith Partnership after school programs for at risk youth, as well as international relief efforts. At the same time, Sarah led an advocacy effort to encourage Senator Menendez to expand affordable housing assistance. She collected petitions, in the form of popsicle stick houses signed by Rutgers Students, wrote letters to local papers, and contacted the Senator's office to update them on her work and invite him to speak at the cleanup. The Senator attended the kick-off of the Hunger Cleanup and committed to the students' requests.

Patrick Adams, Rutgers Newark '10

Patrick joined NJPIRG Student Chapters Water Watch program, to organize river cleanups in the Newark community. The river Patrick focused on, the Passaic River, is one of the most polluted in the country, and central to communities in the Newark area. For his first event, Patrick focused on the community park next to the Passaic, Riverbank Park. He worked with Campus Organizer Nina Loeppky to hold a cleanup for Make a Difference Day, the national day of service. Patrick was excited about the cleanup, both as an opportunity to clean the park, and as an opportunity to educate students and community members about water pollution issues. As part of his project, he called his fellow students, attended community meetings, and did neighborhood outreach. His efforts paid off, as despite pouring rain, he recruited 50 students and community members to the event, who put in 200 hours of service.



Teaching

While advocates of service learning programs emphasize how extracurricular activity can teach democratic values beyond what is accomplished in the classroom, it is also the case that classroom learning is itself enhanced by hands-on extracurricular activities such as NJPIRG Student Chapters projects. And it is clear that NJPIRG Student Chapters projects on environmental public policy could complement classroom study of political science and biology.

“As the sole comprehensive public research university in the state’s system of higher education, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, has the threefold mission of:

- *providing for the instructional needs of New Jersey’s citizens through its undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs;*
- *conducting the cutting-edge research that contributes to the medical, environmental, social and cultural well-being of the state, as well as aiding the economy and the state’s businesses and industries; and*
- *performing public service in support of the needs of the citizens of the state and its local, county, and state governments”*

Rutgers University Mission Statement

But consider the much broader possibilities. An economics student’s study of market forces is more profound, and likely more engaging, when combined with a study of a “real world” problem such as the emerging market for alternative energy sources. Theories of business ethics are made more meaningful when coupled with a study of actual credit card marketing practices or the promotion of a shareholder resolution concerning environmental responsibility. NJPIRG Student Chapters’ programs provide opportunities to place classroom study in a context of immediate social significance and increase the effectiveness of instruction.

Moreover, given the nature and structure of the NJPIRG Student Chapters program, there are many professional skills that are learned and practiced by students who participate in NJPIRG Student Chapters’ internship program and as members of the student Board of Directors. Students hone their writing skills producing reports and educational materials; test strategies for marketing new ideas and information to the campus, the public and decision makers; build and promote team work; and, as directors of the organization, gain hands-on experience managing a nonprofit corporation from budgeting and bookkeeping to personnel and policy decisions.

There are also countless ways that NJPIRG Student Chapters’ programs—through events, materials, publications and activities—enrich the educational forum on campus. Each year, hundreds of Rutgers students participate in NJPIRG Student Chapters’ programs. In addition to the internship program, which engages thousands of individual students in structured projects with faculty and NJPIRG Student Chapters staff, many NJPIRG projects include forums and other events that reach a broad cross-section of the campus and contribute directly to the on-campus educational experience. Typical examples range from forums of academic experts on poverty and homelessness, to alternative energy fairs on campus, to guest lectures by public officials.

The New Voters Project: Engaging Students in the Civic Process

It is axiomatic that democracy requires an engaged citizenry. A fundamental level of engagement is voting. Studies have shown—not surprisingly—that those who vote while they’re young are more likely to vote throughout their lives. So when youth voting was in decline only 10 years after 18-year-olds had been granted the franchise, NJPIRG Student Chapters embarked on a campaign to promote youth voting. NJPIRG Student Chapters has worked closely with the Governing Associations, as part of the RU Voting campaign, and with many other groups and administrators to register voters at Rutgers.

In 2004, NJPIRG Student Chapters, along with the Student PIRGs across the country, launched the New Voters Project, a nonpartisan voter registration and mobilization effort. Working in over a dozen states that year, the New Voters Project registered over 524,000 18-to-30-year olds and made over 530,000 get-out-the-vote contacts, making it the nation’s largest nonpartisan grassroots mobilization effort targeting young voters. The 2004 Election Day young voter turnout increase by 11%, compared to an increase of just 4% for the overall population.

The New Voters Project focused on eight states in the 2005 off-year elections, registering 18,000 young voters and making over 48,000 voter contacts to turn out the vote. For the 2005 New Jersey elections, students with NJPIRG Student Chapters, along with RU Voting, registered 3000 Rutgers students to vote, and followed that up with get-out-the-vote efforts. According to research by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, in New Jersey, turnout in 5 student-heavy precincts near Rutgers increased on average by 19%, even though overall turnout decreased.

Soojin Stella Shin, Rutgers Newark '07, is one of the students leading NJPIRG Student Chapters’ New Voters Project in 2006. She wanted to find a way to get her fellow students more interested in, and aware of, current events and politics. “I was amazed that so many of my peers were abstaining from the most basic form of civic involvement: voting.”

She began planning ways to register her fellow students, make voting simple for them, and encourage them to turn out to the polls on Election Day. She knew that one of the first steps would be registering students at Newark to vote. She and her fellow students worked with campus groups like the Rutgers Law society and fraternities to run tables in the weeks leading up to the registration deadline. They also went into some classes and worked with residence life to register students in the dorms. In all, they registered 500 students at Rutgers Newark to vote.

As part of the events they organized in the weeks leading up to the registration drive, Stella also worked with the Essex County Board of Elec-



Students pledge to vote as part of NJPIRG Student Chapters’ get out the vote efforts.



As part of the New Voters Project Campaign, NJPIRG Student Chapters’ volunteers worked to get the press to cover youth voting.

Intern Profile

Robin Hollis, Douglass College '08

Interns gain valuable experience that last well beyond their Internship semester. Robin Hollis first got involved with NJPIRG Student Chapters Water Watch project in the fall of 2005. Spring of her sophomore year, Robin was the coordinator of the Water Watch education campaign.

Robin took on a NJPIRG Student Chapters internship as a way to apply her Environmental studies major and get hands-on experience that would help her take that knowledge outside of the classroom. For her internship, Robin coordinated the Water Watch Elementary Environmental Education project.

tions to bring a sample voting machine to campus. They hosted an event in the student center where students could register to vote and also try out the machines to become familiar with the process.

Stella is now in the process of planning some voter education events leading up to Election Day. "It's great that we got so many students registered. Now we're going to make sure that they have plenty of opportunities to hear about the election, where they can vote, and why it's so important they vote."

Developing Student Leaders

Hundreds of students have taken leadership roles in important local and national campaigns through NJPIRG Student Chapters' Internship Program. Internships and independent studies bridge the gap between classroom study and real world experiences. Interns receive 3 to 12 course credits while working with professional staff and Rutgers faculty. Past internships have ranged from developing and organizing community stream monitoring projects, to lobbying Congressmen on behalf of federal student aid funding, to running voter registration drives and get out the vote efforts.

NJPIRG Student Chapters works to provide students opportunities to directly apply their studies. For example, English majors have taken on roles within our media internship, Political Science students have taken on roles within our voting and advocacy campaigns, and Environmental Studies majors have participated in our Water Watch program.

Internships are augmented by a weekly seminar. The curriculum for the seminar includes briefings on specific issues like water quality or global warming, skills trainings, and discussions on current events. It is a chance for interns to broaden their experience while also gaining a sense of community. We have also brought in guest speakers for these trainings including local reporters and community groups.

Service

For many on campus, the most visible aspect of NJPIRG Student Chapters' program is the direct community service projects. From cleaning up and monitoring NJ waterways, to aiding hunger relief efforts, to responding to disasters like Hurricane Katrina, to registering voters and informing consumers of their legal rights, it is hard to miss the hundreds and thousands of students participating in these project. This is, however, but one of the many ways in which NJPIRG Student Chapters helps to fulfill the University's mission of public service. NJPIRG Student Chapters program crafts solutions to many of the great issues of the day. Furthermore, many NJPIRG Student Chapters projects bridge the gap between the research conducted by University faculty and the policy makers and other players in the "real world."

Getting Students Involved in the Community

NJPIRG Student Chapters is proud of its commitment to providing community service projects to hundreds of students each year. Each semester, students organize large events around water quality and hunger and homelessness which provide students with that first critical step in making an impact on an issue. For the last five years, the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness has recognized Rutgers University's Spring Hunger Cleanup as one of the top five in the nation for fundraising.

Helping Students Help the Homeless

Sarah Clader, Rutgers College '08, began volunteering with NJPIRG Student Chapters hunger and homelessness program during the fall of her freshman year. She got involved in the hunger campaign because, as she says, "I wanted to do something to help fight hunger. There are so many people at risk for hunger, and there is so much we could be doing about it- it's important that we work to solve the problem."

Her freshman year, Sarah worked with NJPIRG Student Chapters Campus Organizer Lindsey Baughman to learn more about the issues of hunger and homelessness, to organize fundraisers, and organize the annual Hunger Cleanup. By her sophomore year, Sarah was looking to make the Annual New Brunswick Hunger Cleanup even bigger, and expand her work on the issue. She built up a coalition of campus groups across New Brunswick, to fundraise for the the Middlesex Interfaith Partnership for the Homeless and for international relief efforts in Darfur. The groups



"Colleges and universities provide public service in myriad ways, but especially through their faculty, staff, and students, with projects ranging from faculty sharing professional expertise to solve problems to students engaged in internships. Public service significantly expands the boundaries of the institution, promoting democratic principles and maximizing human potential."

NJ Commission on Higher Education
Blueprint for Excellence



At the 2006 Hunger Cleanup, NJPIRG Student Chapters Board Chair Sarah Clader presented Senator Bob Menendez with a popsicle stick house, signed by Rutgers Students, asking him to support funding for affordable housing.



Volunteers with NJPIRG Student Chapters traveled to the Gulf Coast where they worked closely with inhabitants to rehabilitate the area.

and individual students fundraised pledges for a day of service in April.

At the same time as they were addressing local needs, Sarah wanted to fight hunger at the national level. Working with NJPIRG Student Chapters' staff, she organized events to advocate for affordable housing funding at the federal level, including making houses out of popsicle sticks, signed by Rutgers students, asking Senator Menendez to support affordable housing funding.

All of Sarah's work led up to the Hunger Cleanup itself, when 130 volunteers served at several agencies throughout Middlesex County and raise \$10000. Sarah was able to get Senator Menendez to come to the kick-off of the event, to receive the popsicle stick houses and thank the students for their hard work. Sarah was also one of 4 students nationally profiled by MTVU (MTV's campus TV station) in a segment on campus leadership.

Organizing Disaster Relief

Over the past few years, a number of natural disasters have decimated regions of the world. In response to these disasters, like the gulf cost hurricanes and the 2004 Tsunami that hit Southern and Southeastern Asia, NJPIRG Student Chapters has done work to organize disaster relief efforts.

Alternative Spring Break: Hurricane Katrina Relief

When Hurricane Katrina hit the gulf coast, people across the country responded to the disaster with an outpouring of time, funds, and goods. At Rutgers, NJPIRG Student Chapters joined the campus-wide effort to fundraise on behalf of the victims, and coordinate their efforts with many student organizations.

Nearly seven months after Hurricane Katrina, thousands of families were still displaced, and lacked the money or the physical ability to rebuild their homes. Students across the country were asking how they could help in the face of such monumental devastation, and NJPIRG Student Chapters Water Watch program channeled that energy into a massive alternative spring break endeavor. In total, 140 students from 8 New Jersey campuses raised over \$25,000 to fund a 40-car caravan to New Orleans. They chose the Ninth Ward over Cancun, dedicating their spring break to working with two non-profits working with residents to rebuild their homes.

Emily Kadash (Rutgers College '09) was one of 70 Rutgers students who went on the trip. Leading up to spring break she worked hard to spread the word among her fellow students, holding tables and events to fundraise and recruit volunteers. When she returned, Emily went back to her high school to give presentations about the trip, and organized an event during "Tent State" in the spring. She set up a simulation of

a hurricane ravaged house, educated them about the current state of disaster on the Gulf Coast, and encouraged them to sign up for an summer break relief trip. NJPIRG Student Chapters program continued to do relief work during the summer of 2006, and is planning another alternative Spring Break trip.

Issues Affecting New Jerseyans

Each year, students with NJPIRG Student Chapters choose to tackle a variety of issues impacting New Jersey, both on the local and national level. Working with staff, students in the last few years have developed and run campaigns on federal higher education funding, promoting clean energy on the federal level and in New Brunswick, protecting the Clean Air Act, and more.

Advocating on Higher Education

The cost of Higher Education continues to increase. The average student loan debt has increased by 60% in the last 7 years. NJPIRG Student Chapters has worked at the federal level to fight cuts to student aid funding and raise the issue of student debt.

In fall '05, Congress was considering whether to cut almost \$12 billion in student loan programs, which would drive up interest rates on student loans. NJPIRG Student Chapters joined together with Student PIRGs across the country, the United States Student Association, and other groups to form a coalition to fight the cuts. The coalition was the first grassroots effort in 20 years in which students were coordinating nationally to approach congress about higher education policy. Organizing campus call in days to representatives, press conferences and media events, students succeeded in generating 300 campus media stories and 10,000 phonecalls into Congress on the issue. While the cuts were included in the federal budget reconciliation, these efforts shifted the vote in Congress, shifting 12 members to make the vote extremely close.

The support and attention the student coalition generated set the stage for a separate decision making process in the Department of Education. NJPIRG Student Chapters, and the rest of the coalition, worked to get the newly formed Commission on the Future of Higher Education to investigate the issue of student loan debt in their report on higher education. Students with NJPIRG Student Chapters at Rutgers organized visibility and public comment events at Rutgers, including organizing an online student debt yearbook (www.studentdebtalert.org) profiling individual students at Rutgers and the impact that student loan debt has on them. In addition to events on campus, students with NJPIRG Student Chapters researched the impact of loan debt on Rutgers students by completing a campus profile and submitting it to the Commission on Higher Education. As part of the campaign, students from across the country also had an opportunity so speak directly to the Commission-



As part of a trip to the Gulf Coast, Elyse Conde with NJPIRG Student Chapters helps to renovate a home.



Professor Patrick Hossay of Richard Stockton College, joins NJPIRG Student Chapters and students from Rutgers Camden in calling for federal student aid funding.



Volunteers pick up trash as part of NJPIRG's Community Water Watch program's river cleanup.



Governor Corzine joins volunteers from NJPIRG's Water Watch program at an Earth Day 2006 River Cleanup

ers at hearings across the country, including Newark SAS-SGA President Mubarak Guy, who attended the hearings in Boston in spring '06. The Commission released its report this fall, and we have now shifted our focus to the Department of Education's rulemaking process, with 4 Rutgers Students planning on speaking at the Rulemaking Hearings in Washington D.C. in fall '06.

Cleaning New Jersey's Water Ways

Twelve years ago, NJPIRG Student Chapters joined with AmeriCorps to create New Jersey Community Water Watch. The project works to cleanup local waterways by engaging community members and college students in service and education events across the state. Last year alone, Water Watch AmeriCorps members organized 58 river cleanups and numerous community education programs. Over 2,900 student and community volunteers worked with the program and logged a total of 8,780 hours of community service.

Brandon Thompson, a student at Rutgers College, helped to organize the 2nd annual Raritan-Wide River Cleanup—one of the biggest Earth Day events in New Jersey. He and fellow interns worked for months to reach out to local community groups up and down the Raritan River, effectively organizing simultaneous cleanups in eight different cleanups. At the largest site, in New Brunswick, 150 Rutgers students pulled literally tons of trash from the river's banks. In total, the eight participating communities turned out over 400 volunteers. We look forward to continuing this tradition as part of our efforts to bring increased awareness to water quality issues in the state.

Research

NJPIRG Student Chapters' projects further the research mission of the university in two ways: First, PIRG staff, as well as student volunteers and interns, collaborate with university faculty to conduct research projects. Secondly, some PIRG projects include independent research that builds upon work already accomplished by the faculty. NJPIRG Student Chapters' emphasis on research embraces the concept that new knowledge can serve society, while endeavoring to ensure that knowledge is in fact applied to societal needs.

Affordable Textbooks

The tight state budgets of recent years have resulted in significant increases in tuition and fees at many colleges and universities. In this context, the cost of education-related supplies such as textbooks, while considerably lower than tuition, can make or break a student's ability to afford an education.

Many students complain about the high cost of textbooks, but there had been no hard evidence of the extent of the problem, if indeed it exists at all. Students from several PIRG chapters decided to investigate. Along with PIRG advocates, university faculty, and those familiar with the textbook publishing industry, the students developed and conducted a survey of textbook prices and faculty opinions about textbook publishing practices. The report, "Rip-Off 101: How The Current Practices Of The Textbook Publishing Industry Drive Up The Cost Of College Textbooks," documented numerous industry practices that result in higher textbook prices.

Among the findings of the report: publishers issue new editions of textbooks unnecessarily (sometimes with few actual content changes), undermining the used textbook market; a majority of faculty surveyed said that new editions were rarely justified; some publishers offer the same books overseas for half the price; and half of all textbooks come "bundled" with CD-ROMs and other materials, increasing the price, yet two-thirds of faculty surveyed did not use the materials.

The study was widely covered in the media, including US News and World Report, USA Today, the Los Angeles Times and the Boston Globe, sparking a lively discussion and prompting legislators in several states to launch investigations and hearings.

NJPIRG Student Chapters students, working with faculty and student government, worked to implement the report's findings and find solu-



"The solution of virtually all the problems with which government is concerned: health, education, environment, energy, urban development, international relationships, economic competitiveness and defense and national security, all depend on creating new knowledge—and hence upon the health of our universities."

Erich Bloch,
Former director, National Science Foundation



NJPIRG Student Chapter's advocate Suzanne Leta releases the annual NJPIRG report, "Trouble in Toyland," highlighting toy safety.



Julia Driscoll, Kenny Hunt and Sarah Clader hold an event to call attention to global warming.

tions for these problems on their campus. At The Rutgers-Camden Alexandra Dilba (Camden CAC '08) and Darrick Moore (University College-Camden '09), wanted to find ways to cut textbook prices to students on campus. They began working on it in two ways. The first is to improve used book buyback. They researched the problem and found that if faculty members turn in their booklists two weeks before buyback begins, the bookstore can buy books back from students at 50% of the original cost rather than 25% of the original cost. This also ensures that there will be more used books on the bookstore shelf next semester. Darrick worked with the bookstore manager and a Marketing Professor to develop a pledge for professors, and is running a drive to get faculty to pledge to get their booklists in early.

At the same time, Alexandra focused on getting attention for the issue among the student body. She designed a survey to get Camden-specific data on the National problem highlighted in the report. She is surveying her fellow students to find out how much students at Rutgers Camden are paying for textbooks.

Campus Climate Challenge

Global warming has rapidly become the most pressing environmental problem facing our planet. After years of debate, the consensus now seems solid that Americans believe global warming is a serious problem. Unfortunately, while many people are talking about the problem, very few are actually working to enact solutions.

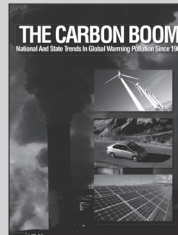
The Campus Climate Challenge is a project of the Energy Action Coalition, a partnership of 25 of the nation's leading campus and youth organizations, including the Student PIRGs. The project is working to tap into the widespread concern among college students about global warming and build a powerful student movement around this issue. To that end, the Campus Climate Challenge works to get students to use their Universities as leveraging points to transform our nation's energy policies. By getting students to tackle global warming at the local level, by getting their own campuses to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, the Challenge gives students a tangible way to address this issue. From there, many students involved with the Challenge then move on to tackle the problem of global warming in larger arenas.

Margaret Roth, Rutgers College '09, Jeffrey (J.J.) McCurdy, Cook College '07, and several other Rutgers students worked with NJPIRG Student Chapters to bring the Campus Climate Challenge to Rutgers. Margaret took a NJPIRG Student Chapters internship sponsored by Dr. Kevin Lyons, Rutgers' Director of Purchasing, to work to bring together many of the Rutgers initiatives around energy efficiency, renewable energy and transportation, as part of the Campus Climate Challenge. She is currently working with Dr. Kevin Lyons and other administrators, faculty, and student groups to figure out ways to position Rutgers as a leader on the

challenge. At the same time, Margaret and J.J. are working to build up student support and visibility around the challenge. During spring '06, Jeffrey organized a "Clean Car Show" on the Cook and Douglass Campus, spotlighting cars that run on alternative fuels, and inviting students to pledge to reduce their global warming impact. Building on that and other events, Margaret, J.J., and several NJPIRG Student Chapters volunteers at Newark, Camden and Livingston are organizing dorm challenges for the spring '07, to get students in the dorms to compete in saving energy.

NJPIRG Student Chapters Reports

The Carbon Boom: National and State Trends in Carbon Dioxide Emissions Since 1960 6/20/06



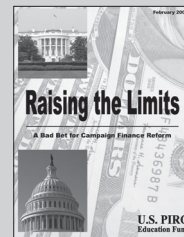
Paying Back, Not Giving Back: Student Debt's Negative Impact on Public Service Career Opportunities 4/10/06

Raising the Limits: A Bad Bet for Campaign Finance Reform 2/2/06

Federal Student Aid Funding at No Additional Cost to Taxpayers 5/5/05

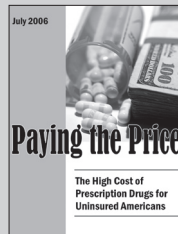
Rip-off 101: How The Current Practices Of The Textbook Industry Drive Up The Cost Of College Textbooks 2/2/05

Towards A New Energy Future: How Clean Energy Solutions Reduce Global Warming And Save Consumers Money 7/20/04



New Energy for Campuses: Energy Saving Policies for Colleges and Universities 10/1/05

Paying The Price: An Analysis Of Prescription Drug Prices In California And 19 Other States 3/31/04



Limited Knowledge: How The High Cost Of Academic Journals Limits Public Access To Research 9/12/05

ExxonMobil Exposed: More Drilling, More Global Warming, More Oil Dependence 7/12/05

Easy Money: How Congress Could Increase

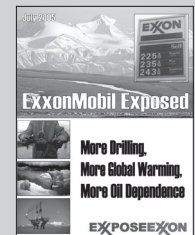
Lethal Legacy: A Comprehensive Look At America's Dirtiest Power Plants 10/28/03

Danger In The Air: Unhealthy Levels Of Smog In 2002 8/26/03

Cleanup Slowdown: How Under-Funding The Superfund Program Harms Communities Across America 8/7/03

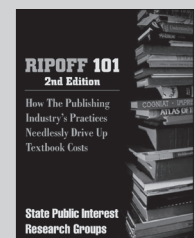
Rail Transit Works: Light Rail Success Stories from Across the Country 6/9/03

Generating Solutions: How Clean, Renewable Energy Is Boosting Local Economies And Saving Consumers Money 4/16/03



Toxic Releases & Health: A Review Of Pollution Data And Current Knowledge On The Health Effects Of Toxic Chemicals 1/22/03

Lending A Hand: A Report On The Lobbying Expenditures and Political Contributions Of The Five Largest Student Loan Corporations 10/31/02



Who's Watching The Watchdogs? In The Wake of Enron: A Survey Of State Accounting Board Membership And The Need For Reform 6/27/02

The Burden Of Borrowing: A Report On The Rising Rates Of Student Loan Debt 3/7/02

Planned Program 2007-2011

We think that the next three years of NJPIRG Student Chapters program will be vital, both through continuing our traditional programs and expanding into new issue areas. We also know that it is key to think creatively about our ability to engage the Rutgers community about our issues and opportunities. As Rutgers shifts and crafts its vision over the next three years, NJPIRG Student Chapters will look for new opportunities to engage the Rutgers community.

Community Involvement

Hunger and Homelessness

NJPIRG Student Chapters' work on Hunger and Homelessness will continue to expand. In no state does a full time minimum wage job cover the cost of a one bedroom unit at a fair market rent, and experts are predicting that this problem will only get worse as the cost of living continues to rise. Over the last three years, we have expanded our hunger work to include a Hunger Advocacy Program. We plan to continue our traditional projects of service, education, and fundraising, while deepening the advocacy project. Through the Spring Hunger Cleanup, our goal is to raise over \$9000 for Hunger relief efforts each year, placing Rutgers University in the top five universities for participation in the national event. We will continue our donation drives, such as "Trick or Eat." We plan to continue our participation in the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness' Hunger Awareness Week. We have traditionally organized events such as the Sleep-Out, and the Faces of Homelessness panel, to raise awareness for the program. Our advocacy program will continue to focus research, development, and advocacy around programs in Washington D.C., such as affordable housing.

Starting in 2007, we will be a part of the National Student Campaign's Year of Poverty Action. It is the first phase of a 10-15 year plan to end hunger in many communities. We will coordinate with other schools to organize 365 days of poverty action, and coordinate our education, fundraising,

and service, while working with local community groups. We will also be working with cities on their plans to fight homelessness locally.

New Jersey Community Water Watch

Looking forward, NJPIRG's Community Water Watch will continue its tradition of organizing some of the largest service events in the state, engaging college students and community members throughout New Jersey. Each year, we will engage 3,000 new volunteers in service events, educate over 8,000 children, and remove 60 tons of trash from New Jersey's major waterways. Over the past three years, we have expanded our efforts to improve the quality of the Raritan River by organizing an annual Raritan-wide river cleanup. We will continue to expand this event, which currently engages 8 communities, and over 400 volunteers in a massive one-day cleanup along the length of the river. Beyond the Raritan, we aim to build lasting relationships with community partners throughout the state, and deepen their involvement by training and certifying them as community Water Watch Dogs. These groups will become locally-based stewards of their waterways, working with NJPIRG Student Chapters to monitor local water quality, and organize cleanup and education events in more places than we're currently able to reach.

Disaster Relief

NJPIRG Student Chapters has organized multiple fundraising and service programs over the past two years to respond to natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina. Areas like the gulf coast

will need continued attention over the next few years. NJPIRG Student Chapters plans to continue successful disaster relief programs like fundraising drives. In addition, we will continue to organize alternative spring break trips and other service projects to respond to this need, and to provide an opportunity for Rutgers students to serve communities in need.

New Voters Project

NJPIRG Student Chapters were pleased to be part of the first stages of the RU Voting Coalition, and have been proud to work with and support the program over the past three years. We will continue to work with the program to secure institutionalized voter registration, such as residence hall and orientation registration. We will continue to work with student groups, student government and faculty to run a voter registration drive. We are pleased to be a part of research and studies on youth voter mobilization, and look for new opportunities to educate voters and get them to the polls on Election Day.

Statewide issues

We will continue our commitment to educate New Jerseyans around critical issues and address issues with affect New Jerseyans on a daily basis.

Consumer and Higher Education Programs

We plan to continue our longstanding tradition of investigating and exposing consumer scams, while educating the Rutgers community on their rights as consumers. We will continue our traditional research on credit card debt and rip-offs, unfair bank fees, and product safety. In addition, we plan to continue to expand our research into the increasing costs of student loans to college students, and work to protect grant and loan programs and secure more aid at the federal level.

Environmental Programs

We plan to continue our programs on a variety of environmental issues. We plan to continue to expand our work with professors, facilities managers, science and engineering groups, and others to implement and showcase solutions around renew-

able energy and global warming. At the same time, we expect to continue our National Environmental Program, providing critical research on some of the most pressing environmental problems and proposing real solutions. We will continue to work on Clean Air and Water issues, while researching and advocating for practical clean energy solutions for our country's energy needs.

Additional Programs

Internship

Our internship program currently offers a wide variety of leadership opportunities on a range of different issues. Many of the issues we are working on offer opportunities to continue to broaden these opportunities. In recent years, we have expanded our research and campaign development internships to appeal to upperclassmen. We would like to continue this expansion, and work closely with our advocates and Rutgers faculty to research public interest issues and to increase our report-writing.

Internet and Web Design

NJPIRG Student Chapters has placed greater emphasis in recent years on our ability to reach more of the Rutgers community via email, while working to upgrade our websites. We are working to use technology ranging from Facebook to instant messenger, to email alerts to organize and engage the Rutgers community around the issues. In addition, we have added internet and web internships to our program, to ensure that Rutgers students are able to develop the skills to use the technology and use it creatively to run the programs.

Promoting Public Interest Careers

As we work to increase civic engagement on college campuses, NJPIRG Student Chapters is also interested in ensuring students know about opportunities to take on public interest careers after graduation. We would like to work with departments and career services to co-host events like panel discussions and brown bag lunches, giving students an opportunity to talk to professionals in a variety of public interest fields and learn more about these careers.



As part of early NJPIRG water monitoring projects students would walk miles of New Jersey streams and other waterways surveying for debris and hidden toxic waste outlets and taking samples for water quality testing.



NJPIRG Program Director Rob Stuart speaks at Asbury Park ceremony to mark the signing of the New Jersey Clean Water Enforcement Act by Gov. Jim Florio (seated, right).

NJPIRG Student Chapters Accomplishments

33 years ago, Edward Lee Rosenthal, a junior at Rutgers University, wanted to find a way for students to address “gut-level social problems” and win. With the help of a dedicated group of fellow students, he worked to establish the first chapter of NJPIRG, welcomed with overwhelming support from the campus community. NJPIRG has grown to be the premier public interest group in the state. The following is a list of some of the victories that involved students of NJPIRG Student Chapters over the past 33 years:

A Selection of NJPIRG Student Chapters Accomplishments

1974: NJPIRG Consumer Guide and Report: Food in NJ and Where to Shop

1977: NJ Bank Survey

1978: Tocks Island Dam

1980: Clean Water Enforcement Study

1980: A Students Primer on Tenant’s Rights Report

1980: Insurance Redlining in NJ Report

1982-1992: NJPIRG filed suits against 60 of the states most egregious water polluters. All were required to clean up and pay penalties

1984: Founding member of the National Student Campaign for Voter Registration, registers 500 Rutgers Students

1984: Water Conservation Alternative Study

1985: Founding member of the National Student Campaign against Hunger and Homelessness. NJPIRG Student Board Chair Pat Donahue receives an award from the United Nations for NJPIRG’s work on combating hunger

1987: Won lawsuit requiring nozzles on gas pumps to reduce hydrocarbon emissions

1989: Set standards for the most number of Clean Water Lawsuits in the country

1990: Clean Water Enforcement Act, which requires penalties for water polluters

1991: Pollution Prevention Act, for companies to reduce their use of toxic chemicals

1992: NJPIRG and a coalition of over 100 groups registers 5,000 Rutgers students to vote

1994: NJPIRG Student Chapters wins polling places in River Dorms on College Ave Campus.

1994: NJPIRG Law and Policy Center created NJ Community Water Watch, an AmeriCorps program that since its inception has involved over 25,000 volunteers. The program has also educated nearly 100,000 elementary school students about water issues, and monitored 50 rivers and streams for pollution, and removed over 1 million pounds of trash from NJ waterways.

1995: NJPIRG Student Chapters is part of a coalition that delivers 1.2 million petition signatures to Congress, helping stop rollback of environmental laws

1997: NJPIRG wins funding for cleaner natural gas buses

1998: NJPIRG wins regulations to reduce smog emissions from power plants

2000: NJPIRG Student Chapters was one of the leading organizations to help collect 1.5 million public comments to protect 58 million acres of national forests from logging, mining and road-building.

2001: the Higher Education Project secured an additional \$1.7 billion in federal financial aid

2001: Distributed a guide to help students avoid credit card debt

2002: Passed a New Brunswick city ordinance, which requires

tri-annual inspections of rental properties to help prevent landlords from renting unsafe and ill-maintained apartments.

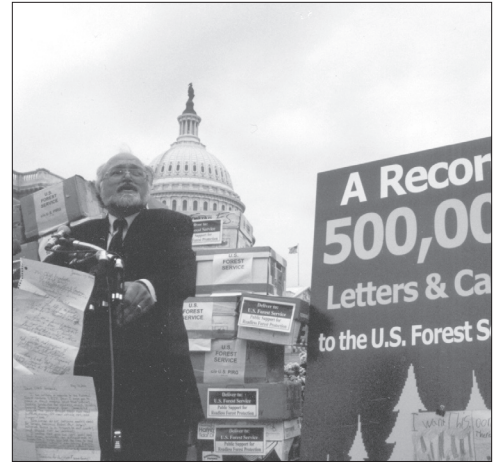
2002: NJPIRG Student Chapters held a news conference on toy safety with 10 media outlets in attendance, releasing the most dangerous toys on the market before Christmas shopping season. The PIRG annual toy safety report has resulted in over 40 unsafe toys being removed from store shelves and the passage of tough choking standards.

2004: The Student PIRGs' New Voters Project registers 524,000 young voters and works to turn them out to the polls

2005: The New Voters Project contributes to dramatic increases in youth voter turnout in New Jersey's off-year gubernatorial elections. NJPIRG Student Chapters and RU Voting register 3000 Rutgers Students, and 5000 students state-wide to vote (2005)

2006: In response to Hurricane Katrina, NJPIRG Student Chapters students across the country raised thousands of dollars and sent 70 volunteers to the Gulf Coast to help with rebuilding efforts

2006: Raised over \$10,000 for hunger relief efforts. Since the Hunger campaign started in 1986, tens of thousands of dollars have been raised to help the homeless



NJPIRG Student Chapters is one of the organizations delivering 1.5 million public comments to help protect 58 million acres of national forests.



In 1985, NJPIRG Student Chapters was a founding member of the National Student Campaign against Hunger and Homelessness.

Funding and Structure

Rutgers students formed the New Jersey Public Interest Research Group (NJPIRG) Student Chapters 33 years ago as a non-partisan, non-profit corporation. NJPIRG Student Chapters is controlled by a 30 seat Board of Directors comprised solely of student leaders elected from each chapter with proportional representation based on the students enrolled in each division where students have established chapters. The board elects an Executive Committee comprised of five students who work closely with the staff to manage the organization.

The principle responsibilities of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee include: approval of the annual budget, approval of all new issues areas and programs, initiation of litigation, and hiring of the Executive Director. The State Board, in consultation with local chapters, decides on which projects chapters will do.

The Executive Director, hired by and responsible to the Board of Directors, manages NJPIRG Student Chapters on a day-to-day basis. NJPIRG employs a staff of 12 issue experts, campus programs staff, and administrators. The staff bring technical expertise and credentials while providing the stability to undertake large projects.

NJPIRG Student Chapters is affiliated with NJPIRG Law and Policy Center, a tax-exempt research and education foundation, and NJPIRG Citizen Lobby, a non-student citizen funded research and advocacy group. NJPIRG Student Chapters shares staff with these affiliated organizations in cases where the program relates to the program decisions of the Student Board, often times including

the Executive Director, Field Staff, Administrative Director and some advocacy staff.

Through these affiliations, NJPIRG Student Chapters is able to conduct joint educational, service and research projects. New Jersey Community Water Watch is an example of a successful joint project. For the last 12 years, the NJPIRG Law and Policy Center has received a grant from the Corporation for National Service to place full-time AmeriCorps members with NJPIRG Student Chapters. NJPIRG Student Chapters and Rutgers students benefit from the expertise of these members as well as the impact made on local waterways. Other joint projects include energy, public health, federal student aid and preservation issues.

NJPIRG Student Chapters does not lobby the state Legislature and is in compliance with Public Law 1995 Chapter 63 (see Legal Addendum for details). Each year NJPIRG Student Chapters is audited by one of the state's leading accounting firms to demonstrate compliance with the law's requirements. NJPIRG Student Chapters provides a copy of this audit to Rutgers University each year.

NJPIRG Student Chapters is funded through a fee, which appears on the term bill. The fee is assessed at divisions of Rutgers University where 25% +1 of the eligible students vote in the affirmative in a campus-wide referendum to fund the program, according to the University Senate's guidelines regarding special student organizations. NJPIRG Student Chapters is proposing that students vote on a waivable fee of \$11.20 per semester during its next scheduled referendum in the fall of 2007.

Legal Addendum

In 1995, the state legislature enacted a law that bars student-funded groups at state colleges and universities from lobbying the Legislature or employing legislative agendas. NJPIRG Student Chapters fully complies with this law. In 1995, the NJPIRG Student Chapters Board of Directors resolved that:

- NJPIRG Student Chapters would not engage in or fund any state legislative programs.
- NJPIRG Student Chapters would not engage in joint projects that involve taking a position on pending state legislation

To ensure strict compliance with the state law, NJPIRG Student Chapters has established rigorous financial systems that are certified by annual audits. This audit is undertaken by Mercadian Group, an independent accounting firm. This audit is provided to the University at the end of the fiscal year. NJPIRG Student Chapters maintains its own bank accounts. There is no co-mingling of funds between NJPIRG Student Chapters and any other corporation.

NJPIRG Student Chapters Board of Directors has further defined the corporation as a discrete non-profit corporation, funded and directed by Rutgers University Students by:

- Changing the name of the Public Interest Research group of New Jersey to NJPIRG Student Chapters.
- Moving the corporate headquarters from Trenton to New Brunswick
- Creating NJPIRG Student Chapters letterhead and business cards
- Identifying NJPIRG Student Chapters projects as such in all media releases.

No members of the NJPIRG Student Chapters Board of Directors sit on the Board of Directors of NJPIRG Citizen Lobby and the Law and Policy Center. NJPIRG Citizen Lobby and the Law and Policy Center have separate missions and Governing boards.

NJPIRG Student Board Executive Committee

Sarah Clader
Rutgers College
Class of 2008

Jeffrey McCurdy
Cook College
Class of 2007

Margaret Roth
Rutgers College
Class of 2009

Robin Hollis
Cook College
Class of 2008

Mike David
Newark College of Arts and Sciences
Class of 2010



NJPIRG Student Chapters

New Jersey Public Interest Research Group Student Chapters

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