

NJPIRG Student Chapters and Higher Education



*A
Shared
Mission
of
Teaching,
Research
and
Service*



NJPIRG Student Chapters

New Jersey Public Interest Research Group Student Chapters

Table Of Contents

Mission	1
Introduction	3
Education	5
Research	9
Service.....	12
Planned Program 2013-2016	18
NJPIRG Student Chapters Accomplishments	21
Funding and Structure.....	24

NJPIRG Student Chapters' Mission

“Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and nonpolitical processes”

Thomas Ehrlich, Stanford University School of Education

For the last forty years, New Jersey Public Interest Research Group Student Chapters has been an institution at Rutgers University recruiting and training students to conduct public interest research, educating the campus and local community about civic engagement, and advocating for real solutions that impact students and New Jerseyans alike on important social issues. NJPIRG Student Chapters has been able to ensure that Rutgers University furthers its mission of education, research, and public service through its work in the last four decades.

From direct service to the community to advocating for common sense policy solutions, NJPIRG Student Chapters melds the technical knowhow of University research and classroom education with real world advocacy and hands on experience to give students a full range of educational experiences while at Rutgers.

Currently, half the states in the United States, including New Jersey, do not have a civics requirement for high school graduation. This is a situation that former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor describes as “a remarkable withdrawal from the very purpose we had originally for public school.” The impact of this on our nation's youth has been devastating. According to the

2011 report *A Crucible Moment: College Learning and Democracy's Future* only 24% of graduating high school seniors scored at the proficient or advanced level in civics in 2010, fewer than in 2006 or in 1998.

This puts the onus of civic education and engagement on our higher education institutions. Here, the numbers are not much better. College seniors were able to correctly answer only 54% of questions on a test measuring basic civic knowledge. According to the last report by the Corporation for National and Community Service, New Jersey residents rank 50th out of 50 states and Washington D.C. in hours of volunteering per person.

Moving forward, the data shows that young people are ready to change the course in terms of civic engagement. In 2008 we saw record numbers of young people turn out to the polls to vote on Election Day, and the 2012 voter turnout numbers show another record breaking year. *A Crucible Moment* recognizes “the full competencies in civic learning cannot be learned only by studying books; democratic knowledge and capabilities are honed through hands-on, face-to-face, active engagement in the midst of differing perspectives about how to address common problems that affect the

well-being of the nation and the world.” NJPIRG Student Chapters is committed to continue our work in engaging the campus community and offer, 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 two recent examples:



Jesus Alcazar '14

In addition to serving on the NJPIRG Student Chapters State Board, Jesus also plays in the Rutgers Marching Band and works multiple jobs. Higher education funding and student loans are a key part of his success at Rutgers. When Congress was considering a proposal in the summer of 2012 to double student loan interest rates, he knew he had to act. Along with the national coalition of Student PIRG's, NJPIRG Student Chapters delivered over 130,000 letters to Congress to stop student loan interest rates from doubling. In recognition for his work, and all of the students involved with NJPIRG Student Chapters Jesus was invited to attend the signing ceremony with President Obama in Washington D.C.



Stefany Farino '14

In her second year working with NJPIRG Student Chapters, Stefany wanted to tackle the issue of plastic pollution in New Jersey's waterways. She recognized the growing consciousness of the student body regarding single use plastic bags and worked with University Dining Services to provide students with an alternative. She organized educational tables about the impacts of plastic pollution on our oceans and concurrently collected thousands of pledges from Rutgers – New Brunswick students committing to reduce their plastic bag use. Stefany recruited interns and volunteers, organized local non-profits and on campus student groups, and worked with Dining Services to explore the benefits of offering reusable bags for take-out. In Fall 2012, Dining Services Executive Director Joseph Charette said, “We've had a lot of concern by students that the plastic bags are not environmentally sound as far as the choice for carry out.” Students can now get reusable bags for \$1 a bag. Stefany learned how to work with all the stakeholders in the campus community to make an impact on an issue she cared about. She now is a Senator with the Rutgers University Student Assembly (RUSA) and continues to work with the NJPIRG Student Chapter's campaign to Protect our Oceans.

Introduction

The Rutgers University mission is to “[provide] for the instructional needs of New Jersey’s citizens through its undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs.”

NJPIRG Student Chapters programs have enhanced learning by providing students with hands-on extracurricular activities which complement both undergraduate and graduate classroom studies of disciplines ranging from political science and business to biology and engineering.

NJPIRG’s programs provide opportunities to place classroom study in a context of real world social problems and increase the effectiveness of classroom instruction. Consider the profound impact of an engineering student’s classroom studies on energy efficiency combined with the “real world” experience of performing energy audits and studying the economic and environmental benefits of implementing energy efficient technology in the local community. Or the ways in which theories of business ethics are made more meaningful when coupled with a study of actual credit card marketing practices.

Furthermore, students involved in the on-campus internship program and students who serve as members of the student Board of Directors learn and practice many professional skills. With the training and assistance of the professional staff, students hone their writing skills by producing reports, learn to work with campus and community members by building coalitions, and discover how to garner media attention by holding news conferences. Students also actively build teams, conduct educational programs, test strategies for communicating pressing social problems, meet with decision-makers, and market new ideas to their campus and local communities. As directors of the organization, they gain hands-on experience in managing a nonprofit corporation, from budgeting and bookkeeping to making personnel decisions, such as hiring an Executive Director, and making policy decisions.



Spring 2012, NJPIRG staff meeting with Congressman Runyan about closing corporate tax loopholes and safe energy.



February 2011, NJPIRG kicks off 25 Days of Service with Mayor Booker, The Newark Municipal Council, Brick City SERVES and PSE&G.

NJPIRG Student Chapters engages thousands of Rutgers students on campus and enriches the educational forum on campus through the formal internship program and through events, projects, and activities, organized by NJPIRG interns, that engage a broad cross-section of the campus community and contribute directly to the on-campus educational experience. The internship program offers students the opportunity to participate in projects with faculty and staff. The projects that the interns organize involve thousands of members of the student body and campus community in performing public services that meet critical needs in local communities. Projects and events that achieve these aims range from panel discussions with academic experts and elected officials on a variety of subjects including poverty and global warming, to performing energy assessments of off-campus apartments and homes, to running voter registration drives.

Education

“Colleges and universities have the opportunity to reflect the value of service in their teaching and research and engage students, faculty, and staff in public service on and off campus. The implementation of strategies to further advance public service is critical to improving the relevance of academic courses, promoting democratic principles, maximizing human potential, and improving the quality of life.”

New Jersey State Commission on Higher Education, 2007 Strategic Plan for Higher Education

New Voters Project: Engaging Students in The Civic Process

The most basic measure of the health of a democracy is its level of voter participation in national elections. Young people especially are an important demographic to engage since those that vote in consecutive elections at a young age are significantly more likely to continue voting throughout their entire lifetime. Since gaining the right to vote in 1972, levels of youth voter participation have declined every year until they reached an all-time low in 2000 with less than half of the eligible 18 – 24-year-old population voting (36.1%). Recognizing this trend, NJPIRG Student Chapters and the Student PIRGs have been engaged in registering and turning out voters since 1984. Since then, the program has helped to register over 1.8 million young voters nationally.

In 2004, we revamped our campaign and launched the New Voters Project. Our work helped to reverse this historical trend and increase youth voter turnout by 11%. In 2008, NJPIRG Students and the Student PIRGs continued to use our time tested model to ensure that the trend of increasing young voter turnout persisted. As a result, voter turnout in student heavy College Ave precincts went up by as much as 58%.

With the record breaking youth turnout numbers in last presidential election and the media buzz already talking about the youth vote in '08 being a fluke, the Student Board knew it had to keep the momentum up.



NJPIRG Students interns and volunteers registering their peers to vote in the Douglass Campus Center.

“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 business 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



Voter registration table at Rutgers – Camden.

From the Spring of 2010 to the Spring of 2012 students registered thousands of students for the midterm elections and presidential primaries both on campus and off. Notably, Rutgers – Newark and New Brunswick interns and volunteers went to local high schools and held presentations in classrooms and assemblies about the importance and mechanics of voting. They registered hundreds of high school seniors through their work.

In the summer of 2012, students geared up for the presidential elections – at the time a Gallup poll showed that only 58% of young people said that were ‘definitely’ going to vote compared to 78% in 2008 and 81% in 2004, a precipitous drop. Studies overwhelmingly show that one of the top tactics for increasing voter turnout among young people is peer to peer contact. So, students hit the ground running. First, they worked to register students to vote, and second, to ensure their peers had all the resources and information they needed to get to the polls on Election Day.

NJPIRG Student Chapters worked with the RUSA Vote Coalition consisting of over 40 student groups to get the word out. From tables asking students why they vote to bringing the Rock the Vote bus to campus, student leaders increased the buzz on campus around voting. Additionally, interns with NJPIRG worked with over 100 faculty, staff and administrators who endorsed the New Voters Project and agreed to engage in the campaign by activating listservs, offering extra credit for students that volunteered, and allowing class announcements. NJPIRG Students also partnered with Residence Halls and did dozens of presentations to first time voters and helped them register to vote.



Students with “I Voted” mustaches on Election Day at the Livingston dining hall.

As a result of their work, the coalition beat their record in 2008 and again organized the biggest voter registration effort to date at Rutgers by helping to register over 8,300 students to vote at Rutgers. NJPIRG Students alone registered over 6,200 students at the three Rutgers campuses. In the final days leading up to Election Day, two polling places had been moved and thousands of students were displaced due to Hurricane Sandy. New Voters Project interns and volunteers maximized their online presence, through NJPIRG Student’s website, Facebook, and Twitter to get the word out about the changes on Election Day. They called hundreds of students on campus to help them make a plan to get to their polling place. On Election Day, they worked with the Dining Halls to host “Mustache the Vote” tables with photo booths and computer stations where students could check their registration and ask questions about voting. Their work was covered by WNYC, News 12, and the Star Ledger.

Ultimately, NJPIRG Student Chapters made over 15,000 peer to peer contacts from phone calls to text messages and face to face conversations reminding students to get out to the polls and giving them information on what they needed and how to get there. As a result many student heavy precincts at the Rutgers campuses and across the country saw increased turnout compared to both 2004 and 2008, showing that direct hands on education of the student body produces real results in civic participation.

Energy Service Corps

Reducing energy use in people's dorms, apartments and homes is actually pretty simple. Much of it is inexpensive and easy to do, and for the more advanced improvements there are tons of government programs that can help people out. NJPIRG Student Chapters Energy Service Corps program, a joint program with Americorps, educates people about how they can decrease their energy use. It also informs people about the programs available to help them, and how reducing their energy use can help their financial bottom line as well as the environment.

NJPIRG Student Chapter's interns and volunteers set out to reduce energy use in the community by making sure that students on campus and citizens in surrounding communities knew what actions they could take to reduce their personal energy use. Our professional staff ran trainings and hosted workshops to train student leaders who then went on to hold educational events. They hosted tables on campus with interactive models about energy loss where students could sign up for a free energy assessment of their dorm, apartment, or house. Students worked to increase the number of their peers who had access to energy efficiency information by posting how-to videos on YouTube and going door to door in student heavy housing areas to educate their peers. Through their work, they collected thousands of pledges from students on campus who committed to taking a few basic actions to reduce their energy use.

Finally, NJPIRG Students did basic walk-throughs in homes, small businesses, and public buildings to point out major energy wasters and provide recommendations for energy efficiency improvements. Interns and volunteers performed basic energy assessments of buildings, which included a visual inspection, research on the building's energy systems, and a review of energy usage data. In addition to providing energy-saving recommendations, students also distributed information about programs available through the state



Rutgers – Newark students built a “Vote Bot” to build visibility for the campaign.



The Newark Vote Boat; students at Newark doubled their voter registration goal.

Intern Profile



Justin Habler
Political Science and
Chinese double major,
Philosophy Minor '13

Justin started as an NJPIRG intern in the Fall of 2011 working on a campaign to reduce corporate money in politics by raising awareness around the Supreme Court's 2010 Citizen's United decision. As a Political Science major looking to go into international political work after college, he was concerned about the impacts of 'dark money' overshadowing student and citizen voices in politics. Justin took on leadership throughout the year helping to put the New Brunswick, Highland Park, and Piscataway communities on the map as cities opposed to Citizens United. He helped coordinate events to educate students from tables on campus to a Citizens United panel with Rutgers faculty. When deciding what to do with the second year of his internship, Justin knew that keeping youth voter turn-out high would counter the voice of money in politics so he decided to coordinate NJPIRG Student's New Voters Project. He learned to organize a much larger campaign than the year before, recruiting dozens of volunteers to help register voters at Cook, Douglass, College Ave, Livingston, and Busch. Justin's efforts through this blitz registered over 2,000 voters statewide in final days of the voter registration deadline. In addition, Justin learned to work with the media and was interviewed in three news stories by Election Day.

and federal government that provide financial incentives for professional auditing and energy efficiency services. Since the program was launched in 2009, NJPIRG Student Chapters have educated thousands of people through energy assessments.

Developing Student Leaders

NJPIRG Student Chapters offers an internship program overseen by professional staff that gives students the opportunity to apply knowledge learned in the classroom to leadership roles in local and national campaigns. Through this program, hundreds of students have taken on projects as interns or in independent studies. Interns work with NJPIRG staff and Rutgers faculty and receive between 1 and 6 Course Credits. Projects range from spearheading efforts to engage small businesses in closing corporate tax loopholes, to hosting fundraisers for hurricane relief, to lobbying local elected officials on reducing single use plastic bags and running massive voter registration drives.

These opportunities allow students to test the rubber on the road while still in college. Education majors have taught thousands of K-12 classes about energy efficiency, engineering students have done in depth energy assessments in homes and government buildings, English and marketing majors have crafted our media materials, and fine arts students have managed our fliers, posters, and online presence.

Weekly internship classes supplement the work interns do in the field through skills trainings, guest speakers and reading discussions. Students benefit from a wide range of topics like how to recruit and train other student leaders, building effective coalitions, working with the media, and how to do a lobby meeting.

Research

The Rutgers University Mission is to “[conduct] 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.”

NJPIRG Student Chapters furthers the University mission of research through working with faculty to produce new research, looking at existing bodies of knowledge and expounding on them, and producing independent research reports. From establishing the best ways to solve a problem to exposing wrongdoers or educating the public about new laws, all of these reports endeavor to create or communicate practical solutions to problems facing the state and allow students to form educated decisions about campaign strategies and policy proposals.

Healthcare

Young people as an age group are among the most likely to be uninsured - almost 34% of 18 to 29 year olds don’t have health insurance. After the passage of national healthcare reform, students are now able to stay on their parent’s health insurance until the age of 26. There were many changes resulting from health care reform that benefit young people, so NJPIRG Students and the Student PIRGs nationally released the *A Young Person’s Guide to Health Insurance* with a forward by President Obama. This report covered both the September 2010 and January 2014 changes to health care reform nationally and provided students with a resource for how to manage the often messy and confusing task of getting coverage.

In the Fall of 2010, students released the report to news outlets here in New Jersey and across the country and passed out thousands of copies of the report to students on campus, helping thousands of Rutgers students navigate the new law. In the two years since, 1.8 million young people have gained health insurance coverage, a record jump.



NJPIRG staff Gideon Weismann release the Apples to Twinkies report on wasteful agricultural subsidies.

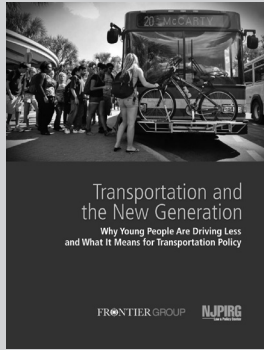


Peter Skopec, NJPIRG staff, releases the 27th annual Trouble in Toyland toy safety report.

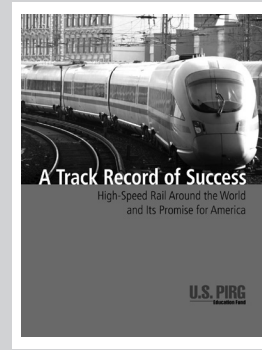
NJPIRG Student Chapters Reports



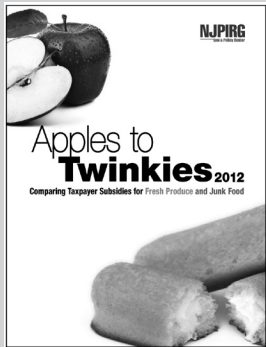
Million-Dollar Megaphones: Super PACs and Unlimited Outside Spending in the 2012 Elections. August 2, 2012



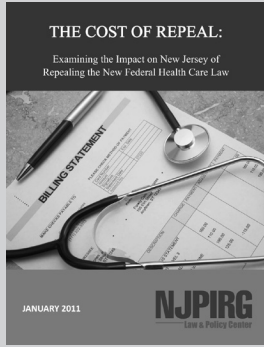
Transportation and the New Generation: Why Young People Are Driving Less and What It Means for Transportation Policy. April 5, 2012



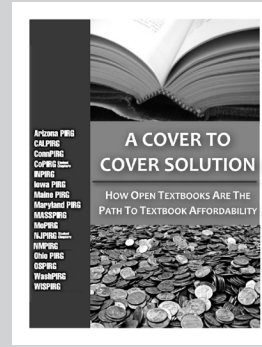
A Track Record of Success: High-Speed Rail Around the World and Its Promise for America. November 11, 2010



Apples To Twinkies 2012: Comparing Taxpayer Subsidies for Fresh Produce and Junk Food. July 25, 2012



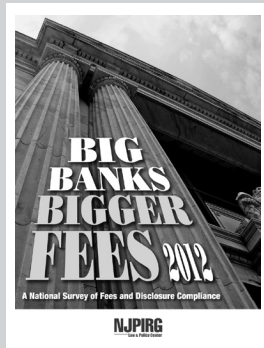
The Cost of Repeal for Young Adults: Examining the Impact of Repealing the New Federal Health Care Law on Young Adults. January 18, 2011



A Cover to Cover Solution: How Open Textbooks are the Path to Textbook Affordability. September 30, 2010



The Campus Debit Card Trap: Are Bank Partnerships Fair To Students? May 30, 2012



Big Banks, Bigger Fees: A National Survey of Bank Fees and Fee Disclosure Policies. Nov 15th, 2012.



Toward Common Ground: Bridging the Political Divide to Reduce Spending. October 2010

Textbooks

NJPIRG Student Chapters was the first group to expose the rising cost of textbooks as a portion of higher education costs in the early 2000s. Since then, we've released numerous reports documenting both the problem and potential solutions. When we started the campaign, the average student spent over \$800 on books per year. That figure is now over \$1,100 with prices rising at over four times the rate of inflation.

In 2008, NJPIRG helped get the Affordable Textbooks provision included in the federal Higher Education Opportunity Act. Since then, we've worked to take advantage of the cost considerations required by the new federal law and push the boundaries on cost saving solutions that would change the textbooks market.

Our September 2010 report *A Cover to Cover Solution* found that a combination of textbook rentals, e-books, and e-readers could reduce the average amount that students pay for course materials by 34%. The report also found that Open Education Resource (OER) textbooks, free online access books published under an open copyright, could save students up to 80% on their course materials each year. The study informed NJPIRG Student Chapter's work moving forward and focused our campaign on three things: educating faculty about OER options, establishing OER resources, and continuing to establish rental programs statewide and nationally.

In the Fall of 2011, NJPIRG and the Student PIRGs launched a national Textbook Rebellion to gain attention for online textbooks. We hosted press conferences, days of action, and two giant costumed characters at Rutgers to get media attention around the campaign. Students went door to door to talk to faculty, held presentations with departments, and lobbied on the national level for more OER resources.

As a result of our research and the advocacy it launched, a lot of progress has been made in the last few years. The little known idea of Open Textbooks is now at the forefront of progress in mitigating textbook costs. The U.S. Department of Education recently blogged about the importance of expanding OER resources. Over 3,000 faculty members have signed the Open Education Statement of Intent, pledging to consider OER books and/or make the switch. And in March of 2012 NJPIRG Student Chapters and the Student PIRGs helped kick-start the first annual Open Education Week which included webinars, resources, and contributions from over 130 organizations worldwide.



NPIRG Board Chair Stephanie Fishbane meeting President Obama to thank him on this leadership on Healthcare Reform in Fall 2010.



Fall 2011 students partake in the national Textbooks Rebellion, calling for more Open Resource Education textbooks.

Service

Rutgers University's mission is to “[perform] public service in support of the needs of the citizens of the state and its local, county, and state governments.”

Student leaders craft campaigns based on the communities around them and work hard to implement their goals. They have served as poll watchers on Election Day, working to make sure that first time voters know their rights. They have advocated for local and national policies that serve the average New Jerseyan. They have worked to ensure that the basic needs of our community members are met. When it comes to some of the biggest needs facing our community, NJPIRG Students have stepped up to serve thousands in the local community by providing resources, education, volunteer hours, and technical know-how.



Rutgers - Newark student John Chan talks to students about plastic bag pollution in the ocean with a bag monster in tow.

Getting Students Involved in the Community

NJPIRG Student Chapters have a long history of tackling the issues of poverty and clean waterways in the Newark, Camden, and New Brunswick communities. Each year, student leaders host clean-up days, fundraisers, and other large events that serve to bridge the gap between campus and community, provide an opportunity to educate thousands of student volunteers about the simple actions they can take to make a difference, and provide a much needed service to the city.

Helping Students Help the Homeless

For the last ten 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. Camden, New Brunswick, and Newark are all cities that have rising populations of the impoverished, and students at Rutgers –Camden, led by John Han, Marketing Major '15, meant to do something about it.

In the Fall of 2011 John recruited a group of his peers to provide direct service to the community right before Thanksgiving through Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. He recruited a coalition of a dozen student groups that hosted events from fundraisers to panels and food and clothing donation drives during the week. In addition, he organized students to donate money to make 'take-out' meals; students did weekly trips to the soup kitchen to volunteer, and were able to give away meals to go for the needy.



Rutgers – New Brunswick students host a food drive in Fall 2011.

In the Spring, John coordinated the annual Hunger Clean-up, a national event hosted by the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness. The event is an all-day service-a-thon fundraiser in which participants ask friends, family, and community members to sponsor community service work at the clean-up. Funds are donated to local programs, the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness, and international relief efforts. Over the past two years, John and students at Camden have engaged over 50 students at Camden during this national day of service and raised over \$5,000 to combat poverty that was donated locally to the Cathedral Kitchen.

Cleaning up Our Communities

NJPIRG Student Chapters got its start in 1972 working to stop polluters from dumping toxins into New Jersey's waterways. Students helped pass national reforms regulating polluters and since then students have worked with our Community Water Watch program to conduct hundreds of stream and river clean-ups throughout the state to help address the trash that often ends up in our waterways.

Much of this trash is a result of pollution run-off from our cities. Since 2008, students at Rutgers – New Brunswick have partnered with Panhellenic, the Interfraternity Council, and the City of New Brunswick for as a part of the City's Clean Communities litter reduction education program. In that time, over 500 students have participated in Street Clean-up Days walking the streets of New Brunswick to pick up hundreds of pounds of trash.

Partnership with the State Commission on National Corporation for National and Community Service

NJPIRG Student Chapter's Community Water Watch program is a part of a fifteen year history working with the NJ State Commission on National and Community Service, which administers Ameri-corps funding. In 2009, we launched a new program with Ameri-corps, the Energy Service Corps, which works to tackle the issue of energy waste in our communities. We could reduce our overall energy use by 30% just by taking simple actions in our homes and businesses like replacing old lightbulbs and weatherizing windows and doors. With this knowledge in mind, student leaders and volunteers have educated students on campus about the steps they can take to reduce their energy use, set up lessons and educational assemblies in K-12 classrooms, and gone door to door in neighborhoods to provide energy assessments and weatherizations.

In addition to running these campaigns throughout the year, students continued NJPIRG Student Chapter's tradition of taking ac-



New Brunswick students Fall 2012 Hurricane Sandy Relief dodgeball game fundraiser.



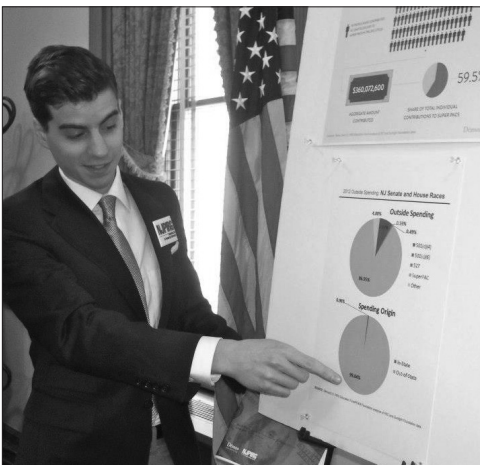
NJPIRG student Jesus Alcazar (left) with President Obama after our successful campaign to stop student loan interest rates from doubling.



Newark students with Mayor Booker Proclamation in support of our Energy Service Corps program.



Weatherizing homes in the Rutgers community with the Energy Service Corps.



Peter Skopec, NJPIRG Staff, joined the NJ Coalition for the Overturn of Citizens United to draw attention to the disastrous impact of the Citizens United ruling on American democracy. Marking the third anniversary of the ruling, NJPIRG released its analysis of 2012 election spending.

tion and serving the community on national service days and using their winter and spring breaks to make an impact.

In March 2010, NJPIRG Student Chapter's Energy Service Corps members hosted "Energy Lost is at Your Cost," an alternative Spring Break trip. The trip was an opportunity to bring together student volunteers, community members and local leaders around a series of local energy efficiency projects. During the week, student volunteers and community members performed 17 energy assessments and basic weatherizations in a service tour of Atlantic City and Trenton. Our work in Atlantic City was on the NBC 40 local news and was highlighted in the Press of Atlantic City, the Trentonian and the Times of Trenton.

On Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Rutgers – Newark students launched their "25 days of Service," a joint event with the City of Newark, Brick City Serves and La Casa de Don Pedro, on MLK Day in January 2011, kicking off 25 days of weatherizations, education, and service. Statewide over winter break 2011, Americorps members and student volunteers educated over 1,500 K-12 students about energy efficiency through lessons targeted by grade level. One called "What is Energy?," educated 1st and 2nd graders about energy and how we use it. 3rd, 4th and 5th graders played the Carbon Dioxide Game, a lesson aimed at teaching them about greenhouse gases and how they can decrease their impact. In recognition for our work, Mayor Cory Booker presented a plaque to NJPIRG Student Chapters' Energy Service Corps program.

Just in the 2011 – 2012 school year, NJPIRG Student Chapters educated over 10,000 K-12 students about energy efficiency, well above our yearly goal of 3,000 students educated. Together with the Student PIRGs the program in the last two years has educated over 85,000 kids and done over 9,600 in home surveys nationwide.

Issues Affecting New Jerseyans

NJPIRG Student Chapters have tackled a wide variety of issues impacting the citizens of New Jersey over the years. Student leaders work with staff to identify the most pressing concerns impacting people statewide, viable solutions to the problems they face, and effective strategies for making real change. In the last few years, student leaders have worked from the ground level in local communities all the way to national level in Washington DC to ensure that New Jerseyans have their needs addressed.

Addressing a Financial Crisis

In 2007, New Jersey and indeed the world saw the beginnings of one of the worst financial crises in generations. It cost the country eight million jobs, millions of foreclosed homes and trillions of dollars in lost home and retirement values. In the wake of the collapse, New Jerseyans were forced to tighten their belts while elected officials looked for solutions. NJPIRG Student Chapters worked to make sure that the entities that caused the crisis were held accountable and that in a time when everyone in the country was hit hard, everyone paid their fair share to get back on track. We also prioritized giving students the resources they needed to navigate a financial recession.

Regulating Wall Street

The failure of federal banking agencies to stem sub-prime mortgage lending abuses after the Wall Street crash was well documented. Less well known were federal regulatory failures that contributed to the extension of unsustainable consumer loans, such as credit card, overdraft and payday loans, which imposed a crushing financial burden on many families.

NJPIRG Student Chapters helped to release the report *10 Reasons We Need the CFPB Now* in conjunction with Americans for Financial Reform, which outlines the lapses in regulation of these unfair practices and the systematic failures that resulted in the financial crash. Thanks to this report, NJPIRG's work on the ground generating media and citizen support, and the advocacy of our Washington D.C. staff, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau was established in 2011 and has helped all consumers, from students being charged unfair private student loans to homeowners receiving inaccurate mortgage bills. This will all help ensure that another financial crisis like this one does not happen again.

Closing Corporate Tax Loopholes

The financial blowback from the recession caused state legislatures and Congress to consider deep cuts for essential public programs — from education, to health care, to clean air and drinking water. Average citizens were forced to tighten their belts and make sacrifices. At the same time, corporate and individual tax havens were costing us \$100 billion a year. If ordinary tax filers were to pick up the full \$100 billion tab in the form of higher taxes, they would need to pay an additional \$426 on average nationally, and \$668 on average in New Jersey. That's enough money to feed a family of four for a month.



NJPIRG students working for energy efficiency.

"My interactions with NJPIRG's professional staff members have been a refreshing reminder of the important work that Rutgers students can aspire to do to serve the public interest. Moreover, NJPIRG's activities are highly synergistic in serving the public on an array of critical issues such as voter registration, clean water and consumer safety. NJPIRG also provides Rutgers students with an opportunity for civic engagement that will make them better citizens while strengthening our democracy."

Robert Chant

Assistant Professor Physical Oceanography



NJPIRG students and staff delivering a check petition against wasteful corporate tax loopholes to Congressman Rothman.



NJPIRG students join PIRG students and staff from across the country in Washington D.C.



NJPIRG Students with Newark Deputy Mayor Muniz and Councilman Payne.

In the Fall of 2011 Gabriel Johnson, Rutgers – Newark '14, and Nina Medakovich, Rutgers – New Brunswick '12, organized events on their campuses asking students to sign a giant check for \$100 billion from taxpayers to corporations. They worked with NJPIRG Student Chapter's staff to lobby Congressman Pallone and successfully secured his co-sponsorship of a bill that would close these wasteful tax loopholes. Gabe and Nina joined dozens of other students and staff from across the country for National Lobby Day in the spring of 2012 and delivered their giant check to New Jersey's elected officials to gain support for the bill.

Ending Wasteful Agricultural Subsidies

In the face of crushing national debt, a weak economy, and a rising obesity epidemic, billions of taxpayer dollars are subsidizing junk food ingredients. In 2011 NJPIRG Student Chapters released the report *Apples to Twinkies* to highlight the extent of the problem. The recent 2012 release of the report found that in 2011, over \$1.28 billion in taxpayer subsidies went to junk food ingredients, bringing the total to a staggering \$18.2 billion since 1995.

Students statewide worked to host events, collect petitions, and talk to their neighbors door to door from 2011 to 2012 to make sure that we got rid of these wasteful tax subsidies. They organized small farmers, who oppose the subsidies because 75% of subsidies go to just 3.8% of U.S. farmers and 90% of farmers in New Jersey get no subsidies at all. They worked with teachers and school boards who recognized the growing problem of obesity. The latest versions of the bill have removed the worst forms of subsidies through the direct subsidy program, but there is still work to do to make sure our tax dollars are put to good use.

Protecting the Delaware Water Gap

The northeast has seen a boom in the last few years of hydraulic fracturing, a practice that when unregulated can cause significant harm to drinking water, open spaces, and public health. In 2011, the Delaware River Water River Basin Commission faced a decision on whether to open the Delaware Water Gap for fracking. David Bedford Rutgers – New Brunswick '13 organized students statewide to collect petitions to Governor Christie, attend rallies, and pressure the commission to keep fracking out of the Water Gap. As a result, the vote was postponed and the Delaware River Water Basin remains frack free.

Hurricane Sandy Relief

Following the devastating impact of Hurricane Sandy, NJPIRG Student Chapters statewide mobilized to offer relief. In the few weeks following the Hurricane, students planned donation drives, clean-ups, and fundraising events in addition to volunteering their time at shelters and food banks to provide immediate service to local communities and those most devastated by the storm.

Notably in Newark, Camden and New Brunswick, students called local shelters and statewide relief organizations in the days following the hurricane to do immediate needs assessments; they then organized grocery store donation drives where they passed out fliers listing the top items that were needed statewide. Shelters from Atlantic City up the shore to Newark and Jersey City benefited from the drives.

Marta Adamu, a Rutgers – New Brunswick Political Science and History '15 student, knew that one of the biggest challenges facing relief agencies was money, so she organized a Dodge-ball Tournament for Hurricane Sandy Relief a week after the hurricane hit – players pitched in to play while a local band and the Rutgers Cheer squad cheered them on. The event raised over \$2,000 for the Red Cross and the Highland Park Reform Church, a donation hub for shelters along the shore.



Students lining up at Hurricane Sandy Relief Dodgeball.

Planned Program 2013 – 2016

Community Involvement Hunger and Homelessness

The economic downturn, coupled with the impacts of Hurricane Sandy, has been devastating to New Jerseyans. According to the Poverty Research Institute, the poverty rate in New Jersey rose from 8.7 percent in 2007 to 9.3 percent in 2009. From 2009 to 2011 rate grew at an even higher rate, from 9.3 percent to 11.4 percent, the highest level in 30 years. After Hurricane Sandy, the Labor Department reported that initial claims for state unemployment rose by 78,000 to a seasonally adjusted 439,000. That is the highest level since April 2011 and the biggest one-week increase in new claims since 2005.

Our program will first and foremost provide direct service to those in need. NJPIRG Student Chapters has partnered with the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness (NSCAHH) and Student PIRGs from Massachusetts to California to recruit and train interns and volunteers to meet the growing needs of relief organizations, soup kitchens, and shelters around the state. Students will plan service trips to the shore to and prioritize areas heavily devastated by Sandy for their volunteer work.

We plan to continue our work in providing direct donations to shelters, food banks, and relief organizations. NJPIRG Student Chapters will host Trick or Can events on Halloween, grocery store donation drives and door to door neighborhood clothing canvasses, among other events to help meet the needs of the community.

Of course, many organizations that work to alleviate poverty provide services that require direct funds like job training, legal assistance, and housing. NJPIRG Student Chapters will continue to work with our longtime partners in the Highland Park First Reform Church and the Cathedral Kitchen, and with relief organizations like the Red Cross, to provide effective monetary support. We'll continue to participate and rank highly in the Annual Hunger Clean-up and raise over \$21,000 for poverty relief.

Finally, in order to elevate the work we do in the public consciousness, we'll continue to host educational and advocacy events through our Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week each fall; Rutgers students can look forward to events such as the faces of Homelessness panel and the Hunger Banquet hosted in conjunction with Oxfam.

New Voters Project

NJPIRG Student Chapters will continue to help register tens of thousands of students to vote on campus and to provide those students with the resources to get to the polls on Election Day. Rutgers students will have many important elections to make choices in from the gubernatorial election to the next presidential race, and NJPIRG Students intend to be at the forefront of establishing young people as constant participants in democracy. We will continue to work with student groups, faculty, staff, student government, and others in the Rutgers community to run voter registration drives and increase youth turn-out locally. We will keep working on new and innova-

tive ways to outreach to students through developing technology, and document our work through research and studies to help establish the best ways to increase voter participation.

Energy Service Corps

NJPIRG Student Chapters will continue to help students and community member save money while saving the environment through energy efficiency. We will educate over 1,000 school children a year, conduct 50 energy assessments of local houses and small businesses, do weatherizations to help residents reduce their energy use, and host educational events on campus, at farmers markets, and with local community groups. We'll also expand our program in the coming years to advocate for and help create local energy efficiency laws and programs through cities, boroughs, townships, and counties.

Statewide Issues

Consumer and Higher Education Program

Young people are the most likely targets for identity theft and on average graduate from college with over \$4,000 in debt. NJPIRG Student Chapters will continue to release reports and guides that highlight abusive practices and run campaigns to curb them. We will continue to educate Rutgers students to make sure they can make the smartest consumer choices.

Student leaders will also be at the forefront of the national student movement to protect current grant and loan programs, and work to secure more federal financial aid. We will continue our work to expand Open Education Resource textbooks in order to create a more fair textbooks market.

Environmental Programs

We'll continue to make sure that New Jerseyans have access to a healthy and clean environment by advocating for national legislation that reduces air pollution, keeps our waterways pristine, and defends the natural spaces that we enjoy from the Jersey Shore to the Delaware Water Gap. We'll work to keep hazardous fracking from being allowed in the state and fight against measures to make New Jersey a frack waste dump site. Climate change will be a key issue for this generation so NJPIRG Student Chapters will continue to engage the community's top minds from faculty members to engineers to work towards clean energy solutions. We will continue to conduct research that documents environmental problems and provides for practical solutions.



Students telling us why they vote at Rutgers – New Brunswick.



NJPIRG Students Energy Service Corps interns with Council President Payne and Assemblywoman Spencer kicking off their 3 day service trip, Summer 2012.



Alicia Quirolo and Marta Adama gardening at the Camden for Environmental Transformation.



New Brunswick student Dave Bedford, who now works with RUSA, teaching kids about recycling.

Water and Ocean Pollution

NJPIRG Student Chapters will continue its long history of doing community, river, stream, and beach clean-ups. We will expand our work to reduce our reliance on single-use plastics through service, education, research, and advocacy for reusable solutions. We'll engage community leaders, small business owners, student groups, and faculty to create long-term solutions for reducing our contribution to river and ocean pollution.

Additional Programs Internship Program

Our internship program will continue to offer students a wide variety of opportunities to make an impact on public interest issues. Students will continue to have a hands-on experience running campaigns from the bottom up, from public policy research to graphic design and organizing large scale service events. NJPIRG Student Chapters will work to institutionalize our for credit internship program in more divisions and will keep working with experts in the Rutgers family to offer our interns the best experience.

Internet and Web Design

More and more, the student community can be found interacting virtually. In recent years, NJPIRG Student Chapters has expanded its web presence through an overhaul of our website design and creating more internships that center around internet organizing. From Twitter to Tumblr and of course Facebook, we will continue to engage Rutgers students through social media while developing new ways to organize digitally and working to maximize existing mediums.

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. Among Rutgers Alumni who have made careers in the public interest movement are Dave Rosenfeld, Rutgers College '95; Ellynn Bannan, Rutgers College '97; Liz Glynn, Cook College '03; Sarah Clader, School of Arts & Sciences '07; Heather Plante, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences '07; Crystal Vassilatatos, School of Arts & Sciences '11.

NJPIRG Student Chapters Accomplishments

40 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 have involved students of NJPIRG Student Chapters over the past 40 years.

A Selection of NJPIRG Student Chapters Accomplishments

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1974: NJPIRG Consumer Guide and Report: Food in NJ and Where to Shop | 1987: Won lawsuit requiring nozzles on gas pumps to reduce hydrocarbon emissions |
| 1980: Clean Water Enforcement Study | 1989: Set standards for the most number of Clean Water Lawsuits in the country |
| 1980: A Students’ Primer on Tenant’s Rights Report | 1990: Clean Water Enforcement Act, which requires penalties for water polluters |
| 1980: Insurance Redlining in NJ Report | 1991: Pollution Prevention Act, for companies to reduce their use of toxic chemicals |
| 1982-
1992: NJPIRG filed suits against 60 of the states most egregious water polluters. All were required to clean up and pay penalties. | 1992: NJPIRG and a coalition of over 100 groups register 5,000 Rutgers students to vote |
| 1984: Founding member of the National Student Campaign for Voter Registration, registered 500 Rutgers Students | 1994: NJPIRG Student Chapters wins polling places in River Dorms on College Ave Campus |
| 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 | |

- 1994:** NJPIRG Law & Policy Center created NJ Community Water Watch, an Americorps program that since its inception has involved over 31,890 volunteers. The program has educated over 100,000 K-12 children, organized over 400 cleanups removing over 1 million pounds of trash from NJ waterways, monitored over 50 different rivers and streams, and established over 100 community groups as water watch stewardship groups.
- 1995:** NJPIRG Student Chapters is part of a coalition that delivers 1.2 million petition signatures to Congress, helping to 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 hazard standards.
- 2004:** The Student PIRG's 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 3,000 Rutgers students and 5,000 students state-wide to vote
- 2006:** In response to Hurricane Katrina, NJPIRG Student Chapters and students across the country raised thousands of dollars and sent 70 volunteers to the Gulf Coast to help with rebuilding efforts
- 2006:** Fundraised 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

- 2007:** NJPIRG Student Chapters Campus Climate Change campaign: runs the Dorm Challenge between 12 dorms in New Brunswick; hosts a showing of an Inconvenient Truth to an audience of 300 students and Congressman Pallone; and enters Rutgers and wins MTV's "Break the Addiction Challenge," a national contest, winning \$10,000 for a "green campus-center make-over."
- 2007:** NJPIRG Student Chapters hosts cleanup of Raritan River with over 400 students from fraternities and sororities to kick off the IFC's Service Week
- 2008:** RU Voting Coalition formed with Eagleton Institute of Politics and registers students to vote in Presidential primaries. NJPIRG Student Chapters runs "What's Your Plan?" to ask presidential candidates during the primaries their plans on issues that matter to young people.
- 2008:** RU Voting Coalition registers close to 6,000 students and reminds 28,000 students to vote in Presidential Election
- 2009:** Hunger & Homeless campaign organizes National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness East Coast Conference
- 2009:** Started the Energy Service Corps program
- 2009:** NJPIRG Community Water Watch organizes 5th Annual Raritan-Wide River Cleanup with over 1,400 volunteers from 23 communities along the river
- 2010:** NJPIRG partners with the City of New Brunswick and over 150 students from the Greek community for a city-wide clean-up.
- 2011:** 10,000 kids educated statewide by NJPIRG's Energy Service Corps program.
- 2012:** NJPIRG works with national coalition to stop student loan interest rates from doubling and attends the signing ceremony with President Obama. This will save student borrowers an average of \$1,000.
- 2012:** NJPIRG registers over 6,200 students to vote and reminds 15,00 students to vote in Presidential Election

Funding and Structure

Rutgers students formed the New Jersey Public Interest Research Group (NJPIRG) Student Chapters 36 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. The board elects an Executive Committee comprised of five students who work closely with the staff to manage the organization.

The principal 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 Organizing Director, hired by and responsible to the Executive Director, manages NJPIRG Student Chapters on a day to day basis. NJPIRG Student Chapters employs a staff of issue experts, campus program staff, and administrators. The staff brings technical expertise and credentials while providing the stability to undertake large projects.

NJPIRG Student Chapters is affiliated with NJPIRG Law & Policy Center, a tax-exempt research and education foundation, and the 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 Execu-

tive 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. For 15 years for example, NJPIRG received an Americorps grant to run the Water Watch program and Energy Service Corps program. These joint ventures allowed for the placement of full time Americorps members with NJPIRG Student Chapters. Other joint projects include public health, federal student aid, affordable textbooks, and other environmental and consumer 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 the Alternate Procedure II Negative Check-off fee, which appears on the term bill. The fee is assessed at 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 Rutgers University Policy 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 2013 and projects the same funding levels in the next three years.

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, 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 the 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

Justin Habler

Rutgers – New Brunswick
School of Arts and Sciences
Class of 2014

Christi Capazzo

Rutgers – New Brunswick
School of Arts and Sciences
Class of 2015

Matthew Prado

Rutgers – Newark
Newark College of Arts and Sciences
Class of 2016

Phineas Lezuabah

Rutgers – New Brunswick
School of Arts and Sciences
Class of 2016

Tatiana Bereznikova

Rutgers – New Brunswick
Rutgers Business School
Class of 2016

Voting Units

New Brunswick

School of Arts and Sciences
School of Environmental and
Biological Sciences
Edward J. Bloustein School of
Planning and Public Policy
Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy
Mason Gross School of Arts
Business School
School of Communication and
Information
School of Engineering
School of Management and Labor
Relations
School of Social Work
School of Nursing
Graduate School
Graduate School of Applied and
Professional Technology
Graduate School of Education

Newark

College of Arts and Sciences
University College
College of Nursing
Graduate School
Business School
School of Criminal Justice
School of Law
School of Public Affairs and
Administration

Camden

College of Arts and Sciences
University College
Graduate School
School of Law
School of Nursing



NJPIRG Student Chapters

New Jersey Public Interest Research Group Student Chapters

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