



**TJCSGA Region 2**

**Chapter of the Year: Richland College**

**2020 Vision,  
2020 Vision of Richland,  
2020 Vision of Leaders:  
The Imprint We Left**

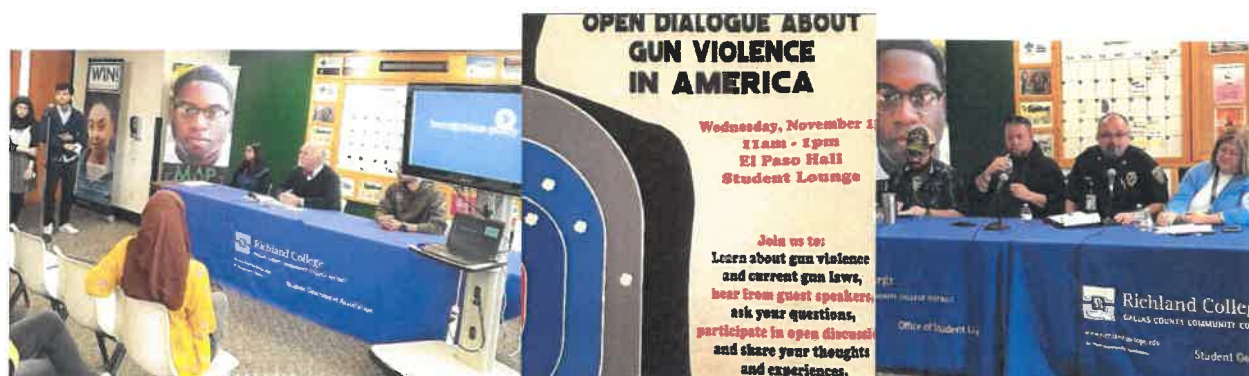
## **Introduction**

Our group's mission is a universal one amongst Student Governments. A virtuous yet ambitious mission which does not differ from any other SGA. What makes us different is in all we accomplish. We acted as a bridge for our students to the school administrators in events such as the District-wide Roundtable. We have brought varying community and professional voices to the students at our casual Town Hall meetings. The gaps we filled in with creating these spaces shows our strength in transparency and accessibility. Accessibility by transparency and responsiveness being our prioritized values. Those values lead us in how we will brainstorm for projects/events and then further plan to manifest those ideas. We also sharpened our focus on our group's identity basis in leadership service with events such as volunteering and help services like Food Truck Tuesdays, Food Pantry, and events like Voter Awareness run smoothly. Also ensuring we examined meticulous data among other feedback from each past and current event or initiative to figure out a clearer and effective positive impact for our student body. This data shows to be most valuable for our student activities addressing Food Shortages which is elaborated on in that segment of this paper. Our events and overall work are growing to be more cohesive and clearly tying back to our mission. We consistently strived to be as responsive as possible to our student's concerns this year.

## **Town Hall Meetings**

The base idea behind the town hall meetings is a simple one. We have an issue that we feel is pertinent and needs to be addressed for the student body. So we bring in panelists, people

we feel are qualified or have stories relevant to the topics of conversation. We arrange a presentation that sets the stage for the meeting, where we ask the panelists some prepared questions in front of an audience and then open the floor to the audience members to ask any questions they have. The simplicity belies its effectiveness since we handled hard topics. Equal Rights: what does it mean? Why is it important? Whose rights are we talking about? Gun Violence in America: Why does it happen? What can we do about it? Who are the perpetrators and the victims? Is the government responsible? Voter Registration: Why is it important to vote? Why is it important to vote for local elections? Hard questions were asked, questions that didn't have a simple answer. The panelists handled it with grace and panache, answering questions to their best of their abilities while remaining as objective as possible. The students sat there, rapt. One by one the asked questions that were important to them, some brought up stories about their siblings and family while others used themselves as examples, to ask their questions.



### **Food Shortage**

Many college students love to joke about their college experience. These jokes can range from questioning the quality of a class that they are taking to self-deprecating humor about being too broke to even afford food. For some students, the latter part is not just a joke, it is an unfortunate reality. Some students have gone eight hours to over half a day without even eating.

Prolong periods of hunger does not only affect a student's personal wellbeing, it can also impede their academic performance.

In order to alleviate this problem, Richland College SGA has continued its partnership with the North Texas Food Bank (NTFB). With their assistance, we were able to help provide for the Richland community via the Mobile Food Truck and our own Richland College Food Pantry. The Food Truck is a vehicle that visits campus twice a month to hand out a variety of fresh produce, all free of charge. A different variety of produce is given out during each visit, including spinach, mangos, apples, potatoes, avocados and cabbages. From the start of Fall 2019



to Spring 2020, the Food Truck has served about 5372 households, which equals to about 20,289 individual members in the community.

Since the Food Truck only comes around twice a month from 11:00 am to 1:00pm, some students unfortunately miss out on the event due to a conflict in schedule. Fortunately, with the help of the NTFB, we remedied this situation by opening up the RLC Food Pantry on campus. The Food Pantry is open Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Unlike last year, where students could only come twice a month to get food, our food pantry has expanded its hours so that students are now able to come in once a week. With this, we can continue to serve and assist

students who are going through a food shortage. Not only does the Food Pantry stock food items for students to eat, it also stocks personal hygiene products such as soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste and deodorant. For our female students, the food pantry also stocks feminine hygiene products like tampons and pads. Throughout the school year, we estimate that we have served around 800 individuals through the Food Pantry.

### **Voter Awareness**

One of the many endeavors our chapter elected to pursue was to increase the general awareness surrounding elections around the campus. We recognized the fact that the average student, especially if they're a member of younger age groups, has limited participation in each election. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the voter turnout among the age group 18-29 was 35.6% of the eligible voter population. This is a massive increase from the previous midterm's (2014) turnout of 19.9%, but it is still the lowest of any voting age group. Our chapter understands the colossal impact voting has on democracy, and we committed ourselves to raise



voting awareness among those attending our campus. Therefore, we resolved that we would coordinate a yearlong campaign to register people to vote, getting the word out to as large magnitude as we could manage during the timeline of the movement. It's one thing to talk about increasing the number of young voters at our college, it was a whole other matter to actually go out and do it.

We got the idea to start this campaign shortly after our event last spring featuring Alicia Keys, Liza Koshy, and America Ferrera. It was a beautiful thing to be present in an atmosphere such as the one they created that day. Within the span of a couple of short hours, one of our breezeways transformed from the typical day to day space it exists as into a full-fledged rally location. The energy present was electric – with determination to change flooding the air. Over (real number) people were registered to vote on campus through that event, and over the course of the past year, we've added a further (number) people to that number. We understand that elections are determined by which group gets out and votes, but an ideal world is one that maximizes its community involvement in democratic practices. We made use of voter registration tables placed strategically around our campus throughout the year, and we also made use of any audiences gathered for other campus-wide events to get the word out.

This aspect of our campaign was also aided by several officers, including our president and vice president, when following an executive board meeting last summer, they became volunteer deputy registrars (VDRs). At the meeting being referred to, two current VDRs gave us a short presentation on the process of gaining the credential. The outcome of this, having officers who were qualified and credentialed to register people to vote, had tremendous value to the success of our campaign. At any event hosted by us or other clubs and organizations, we were able to promote registering to vote and register people on the spot. Too often it is that we as humans hear something that sounds to us like a delightful idea for a later date, only to forget about its hours or minutes later never to be acted on again. We predicted this would happen with registering to vote as well, with people putting it off indefinitely – and we reacted by gaining the ability to register people on the spot.

### **DCCCD Round Table Event**

Richland College SGA Chapter along with other sister chapters got together and had a round table meeting with the DCCCD officials on the bases of the DCCCD colleges merging as



one college. Richland college officers implemented a process where all the major organizations like Student Government Association, Phi Theta Kappa and other organizations have easy access with the DCCCD Board of Directors and to have better unity. At the event we raised many pros and cons where and how the merging of the college will be effective and the measures that can be taken toward the merging. Richland college SGA shared the new method we implemented on how we would be able to effectively run SGA when we merge as one college. Student leaders from all seven campuses got the opportunity to share their views and ideas on the new method we addressed.

### **SGA ADDRESS**

We started incorporating a "State of SGA " Address as a general assembly meeting highlighting what we have done and providing data on what we have done in last year. This also mirrors what is done in the US Federal Government. At our SGA Address, the officers updated the student body of what we have been doing for the past school year. All the officers had a topic which encompasses SGA's efforts. This was an awesome experience for the officers and the student body. The Richland Student Media group filmed and live-streamed it so that information can be accessible to anyone. The officers gave the student a brief update on the

2019-2020 school year. We update them on the resolutions changes students proposed for the college. Some of the students went to Community College Day to represent the community college students at Austin, Texas. This is a biannual occurrence where community colleges all over Texas go to Austin to speak with the senators and representatives about issues concerning community college. We also covered the past year's TJCSGA State Convention held in Addison so students and staff could learn what TJCSGA is about. They had fun and experienced SGA on a state-level scale. In conclusion, we updated the student body of the upcoming events and also announced to them about crucial changes such as the tuition increase and our Districts "one-college" merger.



### **OPEN MIC**

This is one of our most popular events. It started as a simple stress relief event before the final exams of Fall 2018 and students loved it so much that they asked for it to be a recurring event. Open Mic allows students to express themselves artistically. Our chapter provides them with any instrument that they are going to need and reserve a time for them on stage so they can read a poem, sing to the song they love, play an instrument, or just to have fun with friends and classmates. This event has enhanced students' experience on campus and has brought together



those who otherwise would have not had a chance to share their passions together. Another benefit of this event is that it allows us to create awareness of programs our college provides for students. An example being the free DART (Dallas Area Rapid Transit) pass students get from our community college district, which we are promoting so we can reduce the footprint we generate in our environment as well as bridging the possible question and gap of transportation issues to school.



### **Conclusion**

Improving our own communities, making legislation more accessible and less intimidating for young people is one of our immediate goals as Student Government Association among other things. Accessibility became clear to us as the most important value. Whether it was us student leaders reaching out to students or to others for the benefit of students, we wanted bridges between our students and those representatives- political or educational- making decisions for the students. Since naturally, students should be invited to those conversations and be heard. We were able to aid in making the amazing power of knowledge something readily available to as many people as possible. We take immense pride that our

efforts to elevate student narratives has empowered many. We want to encourage teamwork and create open lines of communications between students, staff, administrators, and community members. We look forward to not only building bridges but providing enough information for students to understand how to cross those bridges. Our students must be thanked for completely reciprocating our energy. We were reminded of our goals and kept focused when we are able to hear feedback and stories of many students. Our goal can feel too ambitious but we found clarity in making sure to evaluate our work via student feedback and statistics. We do not feel overwhelmed because we have a reliable team and advisor to carry out phenomenal efforts to create the best SGA chapter. Lastly, we have created bridges that center on being responsive in what we have done such as Food shortage and Voter awareness projects yet we learned that alone is not enough. Serving the student bodies and bringing their narratives out to the community and administrative (political and educational levels) is solid and noble but action is needed. The accessibility we value works best when viewed as a conversation. This is one that we must bring in as many different student narratives and ideas to keep the conversation most relevant and continued. A continuing conversation is needed so we can do the humongous work cut out for us. We need to be on the same page to work to better our chapter, school, and the community. And for the path we paved so far, we are on a clear way to good wholesome change for all.