Civic Scholar Senior Project | Class of 2021

Virtual Brain Awareness Week Seminar 2021

Violet Kimble C’21, Senior Civic Scholar

Suzy Ott C’23, Civic Scholar
After doing letter mailing and text-banking for the recent election, I was made aware of college students' desire to help change the government but a lack of understanding of how. Therefore, I decided to center my activist campaign on getting college students engaged in issue advocacy. I decided to center my project around the social issue of mental health by using issue advocacy.

My objectives for this project were to have college students learn about current mental health policy concerning H.R. 721 and engage in a workshop on how to engage in issue advocacy.

I gave a Ted Talk about mental health policy and issue advocacy. I also ran a workshop that educated college students on mental health research and how to convey to lawmakers that mental health is important. Increasing policy advocacy in college students conveys the message that we can change the world and politics doesn't stop on election day. My event served as a call to action to get the audience involved in issue advocacy year-round. I did meet my goal by getting a proclamation signed by the governor to bring awareness to Brain Awareness Week and getting college students engaged in issue advocacy by emailing their representatives to support H.R. 721. For the workshop, attendees left positive reviews expressing that they felt motivated to engage in issue advocacy due to my project.
Provided speakers

- Drew Counseling Center: Michelle Taylor a Drew staff counselor gave a 10 minute presentation on mental health
- Drew Civic Scholars: Suzy Ott gave a 10 minute presentation on how she participated in issue advocacy during the last election

Advertised the event to organization members

- Drew Peer Mentorship Program for BIPOC Students
- Drew Student Athlete Advisory Committee
- Drew Pre Health Society
- Drew Psychology Club

Provided event guidance and support

- NAMI: had resources on mental health policy
- Society of Neuroscience through the DANA foundation: had resource on Brain Awareness Week and brain advocacy

Between the Ted Talk and the workshop, I was able to promote issue advocacy and mental health policy to 100 people. My impact is sustained as workshop attendees gained access to a road map to issue advocacy where I gave them the tools to empower themselves to create their own issue advocacy project.
I practiced my event planning, time management, and coordination skills.

**Senior Civic Scholar Project**

Virtual Brain Awareness Week Seminar 2021

- Designed and facilitated a project on mental health policy and issue advocacy for 100 college attendees
- Collaborated with community and campus partners to develop a workshop on how to engage in issue and brain advocacy
- Wrote an article about the importance of HR 721 to encourage increased support
- Got a proclamation that March 2021 in NJ is Brain Awareness Month to bring awareness to brain advocacy