

Collecting Stories of Our “Lost Year”

Jessica G. Hamilton, Rowan College of South Jersey – Gloucester Campus, jhamil10@rcsj.edu

Project Title: *Stories of Our “Lost Year”: Reflecting on the Pandemic and Social Challenges*

RCSJ At-A-Glance

- Community College awarding Associate Degrees & certificates
- 2 campuses: Gloucester & Cumberland
- Fall 2020 IPEDs data: 9,020 students, 960 employees

Project Team

- 1 Librarian from each campus, Director of Center for Counseling & Wellness, 1 faculty, 1 adjunct, 1 staff
- Help from Innovation & Tech, art faculty, InnovationStudio (county library maker space), art gallery coordinator, Communications & Marketing Dept.

Methods

- Categories: pandemic, social issues, the pandemic/ social justice/ election cycle, moving forward
- Wufoo form on RCSJ Portal (September only) and at rcsj.edu/tellyourstory – permissions & prompts
- 3 paper form drop boxes
- Publicity: all-campus email, social media, QR code posters, instructor outreach
- Pull quotes, whole stories, and images for display

Goals

- Collect anonymous stories from RCSJ students, staff, and faculty of the all-virtual era of the COVID-19 pandemic, March 2020-September 2021
- Share stories with library & art gallery displays and online libguides.rcsj.edu/lostyearstories
- Create a collection for our archives
- Raise the library’s profile on campus
- Partner with other campus departments, with particular attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and mental health
- Gather and interpret data (?) - TBD
- *Provide the opportunity for our campus community to reflect, heal, and move forward, and to share stories and learn from each other*

Results

- 34 stories collected: 27 students, 4 staff, 3 faculty (only 1 hard copy)
- Diverse voices/ common themes
- Intangibles (collaboration, healing, sharing, empathizing)
- Success? Failure?
- Referrals to C&W office - none

Reference

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2020/11/02/collecting-coronavirus-stories/>

