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## 'Today Show,' Morales features U.'s finest

### Rutgers alumna travels to New Brunswick to interview eight politically savvy students on NBC's news program

**By: Cait Callahan / Acting Assignments Editor**

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A group of eight politically active University students appeared on NBC's "The Today Show" yesterday to prove to the nation that America's youth are not as apathetic about the state of the world as many people think.

In an effort to highlight the University's political science program, the Office of Media Relations reached out to a wide range of media outlets throughout the nation and the world.

Patricia Lamiell, a public relations specialist for the office e-mailed "The Today Show" asking specifically for national correspondent Natalie Morales.

"Natalie's been out here before because she is an alumna, and we e-mailed her asking if she would be interested in coming back out to her alma mater," Lamiell said. "We said [she could] come and interview our students about the election and the campaign, and her producer actually got back to us saying that she was interested and that's how it all unfolded."

Shortly after NBC's response, word was sent out to the Eagleton Institute of Politics and the student-run organization RU Voting?, a branch of Eagleton's Youth Political Participation Program. The e-mail asked for any students interested in appearing on "The Today Show" to discuss the 2008 political campaigns to respond right away. University spokesman Greg Trevor said about 25 to 30 students responded, but "The Today Show" held firm to their request for only eight students.

Lamiell said the segment was meant to be a conversation between Morales and the eight students, and therefore only a small number of students would do.

"A group of students were identified, and that list of students was provided to the producer working on the segment of the Today show," Trevor said. "Ultimately, the decision as to who was to appear on the program was made by 'The Today Show.' They chose the students that they felt would be most representative of students at the University."

One such student was the Eagleton Institute's Undergraduate Associate, Joseph Shure, a Rutgers College junior.

"Most of all, it was exciting [and] flattering I think that they came all the way down to New Brunswick to talk to us," Shure said about the experience of being selected.

Shure, along with many other students, received the e-mail from Eagleton Administrative Assistant Randi Chmielewski asking for students to apply. Trevor said students were contacted through the institute because it has undergraduate and graduate interns as well as both YPPP and RU Voting?, the umbrella group for about a dozen politically active group on campus.

YPPP intern Malissa Pansa-ad, a Rutgers College junior, said she applied to appear on the show immediately after receiving the e-mail.

"I've always looked up to Natalie Morales," Pansa-ad said. "I knew that she was this great correspondent since 2006, and I'd watched her on 'The Today Show' religiously."

The broadcast began with a clear picture of Murray Hall on the College Avenue campus before cutting to a shot of the eight students seated in a lecture hall at the Institute for Marine and Coastal Sciences on Cook campus.

Morales asked the group for their opinions on the importance of the youth vote, the economy, immigration, health care and the War in Iraq.

"I think that this war, and the decisions that are made and the results of it will echo for generations," said Kathryn Lavelle, a School of Arts and Sciences student.

Morales also asked each student which candidate they supported and why. Responses to this question varied greatly. Out of the eight students, five said they were Democrats, two Republicans and one was Independent.

Nadia Brown, a graduate assistant at the Center for Race and Ethnicity, said she is still undecided about who to vote for on Super Tuesday.

"What initially drew me to Hillary was her health care plan, but Barack is so inspiring with change so at this point I'm still teetering," Brown said.

Other students said they supported Sen. John McCain and Sen. Mitt Romney.

"Where they stand united is in their belief that their vote, more than ever, will make a difference,"

Morales said during the broadcast.

"We can have our voices heard and we can make changes in Washington that can directly affect our lives," said Pamela Yuen, a Douglass College junior.

Shure echoed Yuen's statements and said it is urgent for the youth to get out to the polls and vote.

"A lot of young people think that politicians don't listen to us enough, and if that's going to change, we have to force them to listen to us ... one great way to do that is by voting," he said.

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