



The Academic Leadership Program at
Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences

ALP 
RBHS

2021 Fellow Project Proposals

ALP-RBHS Program

The Academic Leadership Program at RBHS (ALP-RBHS) provides a venue for faculty administrators to examine and further develop their leadership, management, and organizational competencies with attention to current biomedical and health sciences challenges and opportunities at the national and state level, and within Rutgers and RBHS. Developed in collaboration between the Rutgers Center for Organizational Leadership and RBHS leaders, faculty, and staff, the program delivers a blend of concepts, best practices, methods, and tools to enhance participants' leadership competencies and ability to advance their individual units and RBHS more broadly. As a result of participating in this interactive one-year program, Fellows will examine common leadership challenges, share strategies for addressing these challenges and realizing new opportunities, and enhance their understanding of useful strategies, techniques, and tools for enhancing leadership capacity. The program consists of a series of workshops and discussions co-facilitated by content experts from the Rutgers Center for Organizational Leadership and RBHS.

ALP-RBHS Fellows

The program is designed for Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS) faculty administrators (e.g., chairs, vice chairs, associate/assistant deans, institute and program directors, etc.) with less than two years of experience in the role, or established faculty administrators seeking to enhance their personal leadership capacity. The 2021 cohort is comprised of 23 Fellows and reflects an impressive range of leadership experience in clinical care, teaching, research, and service.

Project Proposals

To further integrate, apply, and develop leadership concepts and competencies, Fellows propose and conduct preliminary planning for a project designed to address a significant area of need in their department, school, or RBHS more broadly. The project proposal addresses a topic that extends beyond one's scope of core work responsibilities. Fellows are strongly encouraged to collaborate with others on this project in order to leverage resources, expertise, and individual strengths.

Fellows are provided with a proposal template to guide the project planning process, including these sections:

- Problem Statement
- Project Goals
- Strategy
- Key Steps/Activities
- Potential Challenges or Obstacles
- Effectiveness Measures
- Key Stakeholders
- Timeline
- Communication and Engagement
- Funding Considerations
- Proposed Steps for Implementation
- Leadership Competencies

Throughout the program, Fellows worked together to draft abstracts and project proposals that are presented to senior RBHS leaders at the final session in November. This booklet showcases short excerpts taken from the full proposals developed by the Fellows.

Congratulations

Congratulations to all of the ALP-RBHS Fellows on the impressive ideas and development reflected in these capstone projects. Your enthusiasm and thoughtful approach was evident throughout the process of developing these robust proposals.

We also want to recognize your completion of the ALP-RBHS program. It has been an absolute pleasure to get to know you and we are grateful for your many contributions throughout the year. By participating in the program, we hope you were able to take advantage of the opportunity to reflect on your leadership abilities and learn new concepts and skills that can be integrated into your practice. In many ways, the interprofessional cohort is the heart of this program, and we hope the connections and relationships you built will serve as an ongoing, supportive network of leaders across RBHS.

You now join a broader network of ALP-RBHS alumni. We will share future opportunities with you, and we invite you to participate in ongoing leadership development and networking initiatives sponsored by our offices. We wish you all the best and offer you our support as you continue your important work at RBHS.

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More Information

The Center for Organizational Leadership (OL) was founded in 1993 and reports to the Senior Vice President for University Strategy in collaboration with the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. As a hub for academic leadership development, consultation, and research, our signature offerings aim to improve individual and collective leadership capacity, support university strategy initiatives, and cultivate a culture of leadership development across the institution.

The RBHS Office of Faculty Affairs works with the leadership, faculty, and administers across RBHS to support the goal of being recognized as one of the best academic health centers in the country. The office supports schools and units in matters relating to recruitment, appointment, promotion, and retention of faculty and works to improve the RBHS experience for all members of the community.

For more information about the ALP-RBHS program, please contact Sara Spear, Senior Program Administrator, at sara.spear@rutgers.edu.

Pathways to Success: A Career Resource Toolkit for Faculty at Rutgers School of Public Health (SPH)

Overview

The RBHS promotion and tenure guidelines identify research and scholarship as key benchmarks for faculty career advancements. Developing new knowledge, pursuing a sustained line of scientific inquiry through support through extramural funding, and dissemination in the form of publications are foundational for faculty career success at RBHS. We have observed that the time and effort allocations of early career faculty are frequently not in line with these RBHS promotion and tenure guidelines. For example, many new tenure-track faculty devote considerable effort to service at the expense of scholarly activities that are the benchmarks of success. Other early stage faculty have a vision of how they would like their careers to unfold but are unaware of RBHS resources that can support that career development and struggle to create the network of collaborators and infrastructure to advance their careers. This may be particularly true of faculty from under-represented minority (URM) groups or who come from non-traditional backgrounds. Rutgers (and RBHS, specifically) has a strong career development infrastructure, so we see this not as a lack of resources but as a need to: (1) improve early career faculty awareness of Rutgers resources; (2) develop a support structure to encourage their use of these resources.

Project Goals

Recognizing that there are multiple faculty “tracks” with different criteria for excellence and promotion, we envision creating a toolkit of resources that will serve as a “Pathway to Success” for faculty on each of the major tracks: tenure-track, teaching, research, clinical, professional practice. While some resources (e.g. writing accountability groups) may be relevant to all tracks, other resources may be more relevant to some groups than others (e.g. grantsmanship resources most relevant to tenure-track faculty). At present, although some lists of resources exist (such as the NJ ACTS website), these lists are fragmented. For instance, resources on teaching excellence (e.g. through CTAAR) are housed separately from resources on early career research (e.g. through NJ ACTS) and general career development resources that transcend career tracks and experience levels (e.g., through Rutgers Office for Faculty Development). We envision the Pathways to Success toolkit as a “one stop shop” that will help faculty new to Rutgers to navigate this complex and often siloed institution. While we plan to start this program at the School of Public Health (RUSPH), the Pathways to Success toolkit will be shared with other RBHS Schools to be adapted for their faculty needs.

Communication and Engagement

We will keep SPH faculty and leadership abreast of our progress and changes by providing updates during the monthly school-wide faculty meetings, annual school-wide research retreats, monthly departmental meetings, and the SPH Office of Faculty Affairs monthly social event for faculty. To promote two-way communication, we will invite faculty to test the toolkit and provide feedback on content, usability, accessibility, and experience. We will also include a feedback tab in the toolkit where users can offer candid input anonymously.

Once the toolkit is live and we have data (qualitative and/or quantitative) to suggest that it is helping our RUSPH faculty succeed, we will set up additional meetings with key RBHS and Rutgers-wide stakeholders (outside of SPH) to discuss how other schools (or Rutgers/RBHS as a whole) might be able to adapt what we have developed for more widespread use.

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Building Bounce Back: A Resilience Toolkit for RBHS Students

Overview

The impact of COVID-19 on education and society as a whole highlighted underlying themes of trauma, anxiety, and the need for a curriculum to address healing. Wellness has been a focus across health profession education. However, traditional student wellness programs are often responsive and reactive to issues and crises, rather than being proactive and focused on skill building. Strategies and tools to build resilience within students, the healthcare community, and overall society are essential in “building bounce back.” Within the health related professions, part of professional development needs to address resilience within oneself as well as how we role model/reflect these skills for patients and the community overall. As resources expand in building the knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA) underlying resilience, RBHS is in a unique position to provide a resilience toolkit, which can be used across health care profession students.

We propose to develop a RBHS resiliency curriculum with key tools and modules that can be implemented across the health profession schools as a foundation for cultivating a culture of resilience. By introducing and reinforcing KSAs of resiliency for students, they can continue to develop competency and master skills to apply to their own lives as well as correlate that with what is suggested for patients. Students can continue to master these skills as they mature throughout their professional careers.

Connection to Strategic Priorities

Creating a culture of resilience at RBHS is directly linked to the RBHS Strategic Plan in multiple areas, including the theme of “Improving the Health and Wellness of Individuals and Populations” as well as the strategic priority to “Transform the Student Experience.” Resilience is at the core of both student wellness as well as wellness of the community/society. Further, RBHS’ mission to address health disparities must include addressing trauma faced by local communities with resilience as one of the major tools.

Campus Resources

Creating a repository of the multitude of resources from both within and beyond the university will allow various health professional programs to be more aware of available resources. Examples of Rutgers initiatives that can be advanced through our project:

- University Behavioral Health Care offers a series of short videos available for asynchronous training entitled 90 Seconds of Resiliency.
- The Comprehensive Services on Aging (COPSA) through University Behavioral Health Care has developed a series of Self Care Booklets that can be modified for the health profession student population.
- Student Wellness provides counseling and other resources to support health profession students of all disciplines. Student Wellness also provides annual orientation to new students. Those orientation sessions and offerings throughout the year can be modified to focus on development of resiliency skills.
- Student Wellness and Robert Wood Johnson Medical School have developed a non-credit elective course entitled “Mind Body Medicine.”
- New Jersey Medical School has prioritized faculty vitality and is expanding its assessment and support of a culture of resilience and well-being.

Offering common, adaptable, and interdisciplinary resources further champions resilience as a core value within the Rutgers culture. Our project aims to connect, amplify, and manifest the message of resilience as a valued component of health professions education at RBHS.

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Creating Resources to Enhance Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Advancement for LGBTQ++ Students, Staff and Faculty at RBHS

Background

Sexual and gender minority (LGBTQ+) persons, and particularly LGBTQ+ persons of color, are underrepresented in clinical practice and health related academic settings. The lack of LGBTQ+ health professionals have significant implications for public health education, research and clinical practice working to address LGBTQ+ health in the United States (US). Reduction of LGBTQ+ health inequities is a major focus of the US healthcare agenda as outlined in Healthy People 2020. According to Healthy People 2020, LGBTQ+ persons experience significant disparities in behavioral and physical health, as well as in access to care. For example, LGBTQ+ youth are 2 to 3 times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual, cisgender counterparts; lesbians are less likely to receive preventive healthcare services including routine screening for cancer and other chronic and preventable diseases; gay men—especially gay men of color—are at a higher risk of HIV and other STDs, and LGBTQ+ persons have among the highest rates of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use in the US. Although the cause of these disparities is multifactorial, it is widely accepted that LGBTQ+ health disparities are directly “linked to societal stigma, discrimination, and denial of human rights.”

This project seeks to leverage the unique interprofessional structure of RBHS to promote LGBTQ+ health. The project supports the RBHS strategic plan goal of developing innovative scholarship, research, clinical practice, teaching and leadership through promotion of an intersectional understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within academic disciplines.

Project Strategy

To achieve the intertwined goals of increasing leadership competency, increasing visibility and continuing to develop our educational programs, this project will:

- Create an educational intervention to present to RBHS leadership with best practices to create an LGBTQ+ inclusive and welcoming environment with the goal of recruiting and retaining world renowned LGBTQ+ scholars and clinicians and first-rate students to Rutgers.
- Identify resources, including staffing, space, format, to design and establish an ALP-LGBTQ+ program for faculty and staff, to increase their leadership skill to be prepared to become leaders in their own right.
- Establish a group of supporters who will raise awareness of the LGBTQ+ public health concentration and facilitate fundraising within RBHS and Rutgers, including internal and external supporters: including (but not limited to) a network of community organizations and individuals that will raise awareness of, and support for, the LGBTQ+ concentration through networking, fundraising, and providing community based educational experiences.
- Identify financial resources that can be used to establish scholarships for underrepresented LGBTQ+ students, particularly those of color, to reduce barriers to obtaining higher level training in public health.

Sustainability

This program is designed to be both sustainable and scalable. The modules will be created to have both synchronous and asynchronous content allowing for dynamic instruction and flexible content to meet the needs of administrators, staff, and faculty. In the first year, we will target RBHS leadership and then plan on spreading the module content to school/department leadership, faculty, and staff across RBHS.

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Clinical Professional Informatics Certificate

Overview

The Clinical Professional Informatics Certificate program emphasizes the use of informatics concepts, techniques, and implementations for applications in clinical settings. It is a practice-based credential in the field of health informatics with a focus on the application of the available data that may be used to support consultative and executive decisions in the field of health care.

Project Rationale

Over the last decade data analytics has emerged to be the most significant undertaking in healthcare towards promoting better clinical and public health outcomes and decreasing costs. With the widespread adoption of Electronic Health Records and other digital tools a large amount of data, both structured and unstructured, need to be processed and analyzed for making useful inferences and predictions and improve health outcomes. Examples of such applications include disease prediction, risk stratification for insurance, genomic research into cancer prevention and therapy, mobile technology apps, point of care decision support all of which require advanced knowledge of not only healthcare but also the ability to collect, process, safeguard and analyze the data towards the intended outcomes and applications.

Advanced training in informatics, like this Professional Certificate program, provides students with the ability to use technology to solve complex problems, monitor large-scale databases, and improve decision-making processes and solve problems. Specifically the Clinical Professional Informatics Certificate Curriculum is designed to equip the student with the necessary knowledge and skills to design and implement effective and efficient ways of collecting, processing, safe-guarding and analyzing such data. Graduates of the program will be able to communicate and collaborate effectively with other health personnel, computer scientists, engineers, health researchers, policy makers, as well as patients and consumers alike. This curriculum provides future and current clinical professionals with the knowledge, skills, and competencies for the adoption of best practices in informatics applications in their own fields of expertise, education, or practice.

Effectiveness Measures

The state of health of the program and its growth over the years will be determined based on well-tested and accepted metrics such as application numbers, enrollment rate, retention rates, graduation statistics as also others such as collaborations, grants arising from the program's onset and run. Trends on the above are determined and presented regularly by the Admissions Office and discussed with the Department Chair and the Program Director for strategic planning, changes in direction and such. Most of the above metrics can be generated using the Admissions pertinent software (e.g., Banner, Salesforce's CRM) utilized by the School of Health Professions.

Certificate Requirements

The program curriculum will have a core component consisting of informatics-essential courses (with choices to suit clinical professionals with different interests and qualifications/experience), followed by a Capstone Project that is intended to be performed at the professional unit associated with the Clinical Professional student. The principal goal of the Capstone Project is that the Clinical Professional student participant should demonstrate, through their written Capstone Project Report an ability to plan, conduct, and present an investigation into the application of informatics in their clinical domain of expertise.

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Perceived Barriers to Promotion as Identified by Instructors and Assistant Professors Across RBHS: A Needs Assessment

Overview

Junior faculty at RBHS have access to a wealth of resources to help them navigate the complex world of academia, including the promotion process. However, identifying and utilizing those resources is not always straightforward, and may account for a lack of understanding and frustration with progression through the promotion pathway. Rutgers undergraduate faculty development needs have some overlap with RBHS faculty development needs, but there are critical differences which ought to be accounted for in creating resources for health care professionals. As faculty wellness and vitality are connected to job satisfaction, these gaps may have an impact on faculty retention and result in excess faculty turnover. The goal of this project is to crystallize and galvanize resources to successfully connect the dots between individual faculty needs, existing resources, and creation of new resources.

Project Goals

Our target goals for data collection include the launch of a faculty survey, a response rate of at least 60%, and the facilitation of four to six focus groups that build upon the themes and findings generated from the survey. We hope to identify consistent themes from the survey and focus groups to explore possible interventions to address concerns of junior faculty.

Supporting Evidence

Academic advancement enhances a faculty member's sense of inclusion, alignment of personal values with organizational values, and institutional support, all shown to be strong predictors of faculty vitality (Pololi et al, 2015) and retention (Corrice, Fox and Bunton, 2011). The pressing need to support the promotion process for junior faculty has been a longstanding challenge in the world of academia and is well documented in national and local surveys. In a 2020 study by Freeman and colleagues, only 63% of universities issued specific/detailed expectations that would provide faculty members with required years of service, types of publications, and/or a specific number or range of productivity for promotion.

In the spring of 2019, the Office of the Provost at Rutgers University-New Brunswick partnered with the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education to engage in an inaugural survey of full-time tenured, tenure track, and non-tenure track faculty. The survey assessed faculty views on a range of important areas critical to faculty support including university policies, practices, and working environment. Out of the 779 faculty (out of 2,105, response rate=37%) who answered the survey, 70% believed that the process and criteria for tenure and promotion is clear. However, due to the low response rate, it is unclear if the local COACHE survey accurately reflects the true feelings of RBHS faculty. Although such needs for faculty who teach undergraduate students overlap with needs of faculty who teach graduate students in health care, there are other issues that are different and particularly challenging for faculty in academic medicine regarding the promotion process.

Faculty who teach students in the health professions have the simultaneous pressure of maintaining clinical productivity while demonstrating research and/or teaching excellence. The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) collects such data nationally, and in 2019, 60% of faculty at cohort school reported that they were satisfied with their knowledge regarding promotion and tenure at their institution, as compared to 44% of faculty at RWJMS. In a follow up faculty survey at RWJMS, faculty members (n=163) in all mission areas were asked to rate the level of clarity in promotion criteria using a scale of 1-5, with 1 being completely unclear and 5 being completely clear. Faculty reported mean scores of 2.75 in the clinical area, 2.86 in the administrative area, 2.98 in the research area and 2.98 in the education area. Although no comparable survey was identified for NJMS faculty, we suspect results would be similar due to the common mission areas and state resources of both institutions. Both COACHE and AAMC emphasize the importance of identifying institution-specific factors and we hope that our local study could help drill down the most important ways to provide clarity and guidance regarding the promotion and tenure process for our junior faculty.

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RU PRePARED (Policy and Response Planning, for Analysis, Recovery, Escalation and De-escalation)

Overview

Rutgers has played an important role on the national stage since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. While the history of our response continues to unfold, there is a significant risk of failing to adequately document and study our response to the crisis. There is an imperative to both preserve critical aspects of institutional memory to inform the response to future health emergencies and to prepare for these inevitable future challenges. This project will lead to the creation of a university-wide, multidisciplinary leadership working group consisting of the individuals who can facilitate the ultimate objective of enabling things to move at the needed pace across all operating units of the institution.

Project Goals

Our primary goal will be to capture, record, assess, and build upon the lessons learned in our university-wide Covid response, and especially with respect to the Emergency Support Function (ESF) #8 (Public Health and Medical Services) to inform the establishment of institutional capacity to rapidly and effectively respond to disasters in real time, and to provide a thoughtful, actionable roadmap to guide post-crisis wind down.

The RU PRePARED working group would be charged with producing and maintaining the following deliverables: 1) Facilitate a series of papers/publications on all significant aspects of the RU Covid-19 Emergency Response experience, 2) Pandemic response plans, analogous to NJDOH and CDC plans, specific to anticipated threat(s), and in the long-term to 3) Produce an annual "Threats Assessment Review" summarizing anticipated threats being planned for, as well as the current state of readiness.

Impact at State-Level

This project may support the development of strategic activities in education, research, scholarship, and service that RBHS may play at the state level in the event of future pandemics and other emergencies. For example, the current pandemic has underscored the limits and scalability of NJDOH capacities in its core functions during such a widespread and persistent disaster. The potential role of Rutgers, and especially RBHS, faculty, staff and students in supporting state-level activities has been clearly demonstrated in the rapid development and training of over 2,000 contact tracers that have been deployed around the state. Future models, such as the development of a 'Public Health Reserve Corps' that can be activated and funded by the state to provide emergency support services to the NJDOH and other agencies require rapidly scalable capacities in particular areas of expertise represented by members of the Rutgers community (e.g., epidemiology, data science, health communications, etc.). In addition, Rutgers may be the logical site to provide for the establishment of a Public Health Institute to support the department of health, similar to the model followed in New York and many other states and as recommended by the World Health Organization. While outside the immediate scope of the work we are proposing here, our project would be carried out within the context of such a long-term vision.

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RBHS Center for Simulation, Patient Safety, & Healthcare Quality

Overview

Simulation has become an important part of the healthcare profession's efforts to increase patient safety and quality. Currently, many schools within RBHS have separate "Simulation Centers" with varying resources, staff and capacity, including some that are just being developed. This results in continued duplication as well as waste. Furthermore, healthcare delivery takes place in an inter-professional and multi-disciplinary manner. Separate centers do not promote collaboration, mutual respect and understanding in a manner that would optimize patient care.

Since simulation is used in all phases of learning how to be a health care professional, from students, post-graduate professionals, residents and fellows, and mature clinicians of all disciplines who wish to learn new skills, or enhance old ones, we propose the development of a unified RBHS Simulation Center.

Primary Project Goals

We recognize the practical and financial challenges of developing a unified Simulation Center. Therefore, we propose the following tiered goals:

- Coordinate simulation and related inter-professional activities: via using existing virtual and augmented reality (AR) platforms, and establish a virtual RBHS Center for Simulation, Patient Safety and Healthcare Quality
- Promote formal collaboration between different RBHS schools under the aegis of the above center
- Develop a hub and spoke model for regional simulation centers with central coordination and oversight by the RBHS Center for Simulation, Patient Safety and HealthCare Quality to make RBHS a leader in inter-professional education and patient safety.

Interprofessional Simulation

Locally, our competitor institutions have stronger multi-disciplinary simulation centers [see full proposal for examples]. For Rutgers Health and RBHS to attract high quality students, staff and faculty, while also training healthcare professionals using current teaching methods and technology, RBHS needs to commit to transforming our approach to simulation and recognize its role in improving healthcare quality and safety. A physical center that is shared amongst different schools, hospitals and most importantly disciplines will demonstrate the emphasis on and value of interprofessional education and multi-disciplinary simulation.

Expected Outcomes

- Cost-savings due to regional consolidation resulting in a reduced financial and staffing burden on individual RBHS schools
- Improved inter-professional training to enhance patient safety and healthcare quality
- Increased desirability for prospective trainees and faculty via the provision of innovative and cutting-edge educational resources
- Potential revenue source, as other organizations may wish to use our center to train their learners, trainees and mature clinicians

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