

# RUTGERS CLIMATE ACTION INITIATIVE – CLIMATE CHAMPIONS

Felix Arauz, Richard Brodsky, Damali Campbell, Aron Schwartz

Sponsor: Angela Oberg, Associate Director Office of Climate Action



**RUTGERS**  
Center for Organizational  
Leadership

## Abstract:

In June of 2021, the Rutgers Task Force on Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience released the Rutgers Climate Action Plan to University President Jonathan Holloway. This comprehensive set of goals, planned policies, procedures and strategies will act as a roadmap to take the University to carbon neutrality by 2040 and help build a culture of sustainability. Under the guidance of the project Sponsor, Angela Oberg, Associate Director at the Office of Climate Action, this initiative would pursue the communication plan for the Climate Action Champion Initiative. The goal of the Climate Action Champion Initiative is to create a framework for a university wide organization that will assist the Office of Climate Action in the distribution and implementation of the Climate Action Plan on a micro- (intradepartmental), medium (interdepartmental/within a campus), and macro- (University wide) scale.

## Primary Stakeholders:

- Rutgers University
- Participating Univ Departments
- Angela Oberg, Associate Director Office of Climate Action
- Project Champions
- Project Ambassadors

## Key Steps/Activities:

Key activities would include generating a communication structure and platform, use of social media, creating a recruitment plan and the implementation of an idea/initiative bucket. In order to grow and expand the initiatives we are creating a recruitment plan that will expand the Champion initiative and create a two-level approach to the membership and initiative participation. The Champion idea will grow to create Ambassadors and Champion roles in order to target different communication audiences.

## Effectiveness Measures:

An Increase in the ease of communication and knowledge transfer for our sponsor would be the first metric effectiveness measure of use. Supporting data for this metric would be the number of feedback questions or suggestions the Champions and Ambassadors will bring back to the sponsor. Over time, user collaboration and involvement would help measure the interest and success of the climate change goals and tasks.

## Communication/Engagement:

The Champion program will use existing communication organization and platform for extensive outreach University wide. In the very process of performing its daily activities, the program itself will continue to engage the community at large, self-promote, and communicate the success of the individual projects. Challenges with engagement may arise with employee, faculty and student turnover and on-boarding. However, these challenges will be easily addressed with continued aggressive recruitment and engagement through social media and campus presence as well as use of embedded community members.

## Proposed Timeline:

The initial rollout would be at the beginning of the academic cycle in early autumn as the engagement from returning students, faculty and staff is high. Recruitment phase will require a longer period due to initiation of the communications network, and onboarding of such a large volume of new members.

## Current Status/Future Directions:

Once implemented, Ambassadors will start an outreach program to recruit Champions, increase engagement and excitement in this new initiative. The Ambassadors and Office of Climate Action can then set future schedules for longer-term projects based upon the progress and completion. We recognize that implementation of activities will look different in different areas of the University. Eventually, a “steady state” phase will be reached where small climate projects are regularly launched by Ambassadors and Champions, and larger projects are timed and launched by the Office of Climate Action. The projection for this “steady state” phase is likely to begin at the one-year mark. when a new student recruitment phase begins.