

Professional Resources for the Integration of Medical School Executives - PRIME

RLA Fellow: Deneen K. Blow, MBA, Senior Director of Administration, RWJMS

Nominator: Phil Mesisca, MBA, CMPE, Executive Vice Dean, Finance & Administration, RWJMS

Project Champions: Rhonda Smith, PhD, Associate Dean, Faculty and Staff Affairs, RWJMS

Lee Leibowitz, MBA, Vice President of Academic Practices, RWJBH



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

Office of Organizational Leadership

Abstract:

- In 2013, global management consulting Egon Zehnder International surveyed executives worldwide and discovered that **integration efforts** of companies were **“failing to meet the needs of senior leaders”** as they transitioned to new roles. **“Integration”** includes an advanced level of support that leaders require when starting new positions (**beyond onboarding**).
- The objective of this project is to **evaluate** and subsequently **develop an integration program** for senior directors at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School (RWJMS). Our leaders require a formal **integration** as they, too, transition into their roles at 1) RWJMS and with our affiliates at 2) Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital (RWJUH) and 3) Robert Wood Johnson Barnabas Health (RWJBH). A key component of the program is to have current senior directors serve as **“ambassadors”** who will guide the new hire for one year.
- Implementing this program will help **ensure that the missions and goals of all three institutions are achieved**.

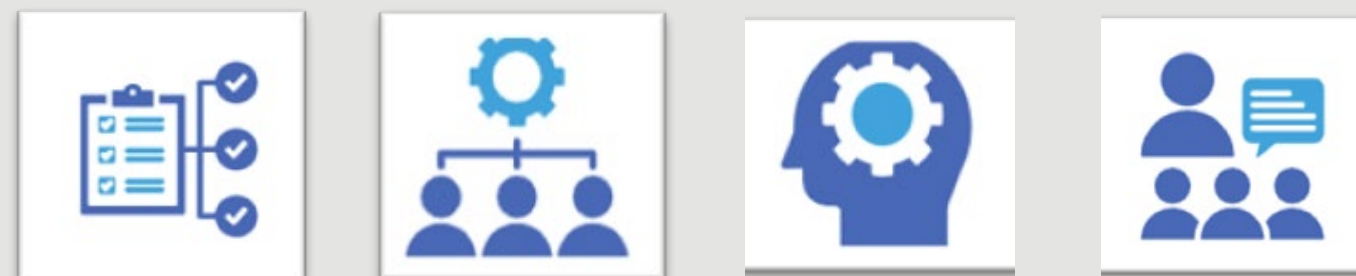
Primary Stakeholders:

- RWJMS Senior Directors of Administration
- RWJMS Dean’s Office leadership
- RWJMS Department Chairs
- RWJBH Leadership
- RWJUH Leadership



Key Steps/Activities:

1. **Distribute surveys** to senior directors and executive partners at RWJMS, RWJUH, and RWJBH
2. **Form Teams** with partners across the health system.
3. **Sessions to brainstorm**, led by the RWJMS Dean’s Office.
4. **Discuss & decide** what elements and resources are required for a successful program.
5. **Present data** from the above activities to various leadership for feedback to **create final program**.



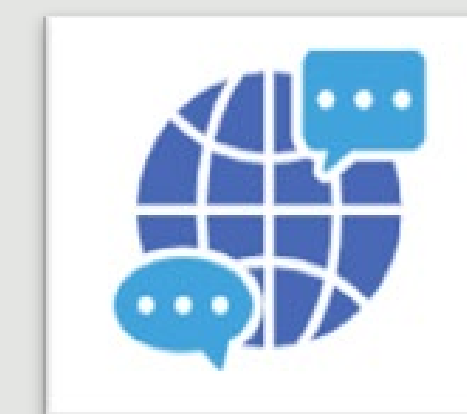
Effectiveness Measures:

- **Understanding missions** across the health system.
- **Improved key performance metrics** and financial results.
- **Less confusion, more networking, and knowledge-sharing** between colleagues and throughout our institutions.
- **Higher rates of job satisfaction** and improved morale for new senior directors and ambassador colleagues.
- New Hire, Wellness, and Engagement **Surveys**; Stay, and Exit **Interviews**.
- **PRIME pilot program implementation** and positive feedback!



Communication/Engagement:

- Proactively engage and communicate with key partners by email, Microsoft Teams groups/sub-groups, and virtual meetings to review documentation and report on progress, discuss questions and surveys for feedback, discuss elements of and resources for the program, and any other questions.



Current Status/Future Directions:

- As of **April 2025**, surveys are **completed** by senior directors and executive partners, and the data are **in review**. Next phases will include meetings to **create teams** and **develop the integration program**. We estimate **January 2026** for full **implementation** of **PRIME**, however, there will be an **abridged version** implemented for the **next senior director whose hire is scheduled for summer 2025**. In this dynamic program, we will **evaluate** annually, or as needed, for improvements and updates.

Proposed Timeline:

Months 1-2:

Review surveys, create team/sub-teams, collect further feedback, create ambassador selection criteria.

Months 3-5:

Teams collaborate on elements of program, consult with University offices, create milestone dates & timelines, select ambassadors.

Months 6-9:

Communicate first draft with partners, finalize elements, confirm/train ambassadors, create final program & materials, communicate final program with partners.

Implementing Pedagogy Training for Graduate Students in Political Science

RLA Fellow: Dr. Christine Cahill, Teaching Professor and Undergraduate Director

Project Champion: Dr. Beth Leech, Professor and Department Chair



Abstract:

The American Political Science Association’s Presidential Task Force report on Rethinking Political Science Education notes that graduate programs have done a poor job preparing their graduates to teach undergraduate courses, which is likely to be most of their future work. Tenure-track positions *decreased* by 9% and non-tenure track and contingent teaching positions *increased* by 13.5% from 2020 to 2022. I propose creating a 1.5 credit course in the Political Science program that introduces students to evidence-based pedagogical tools to use in higher-education classrooms. The course would survey best practices for engaging with diverse student groups, promoting student engagement, how to develop a course, and best practices for online teaching. Students will also have opportunities to peer review course syllabi and drafts of assessments for a course of their choosing. I also plan to include teaching demonstrations and/or teaching observations.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Rutgers Political Science Ph.D. students:** benefit by being better prepared for teaching positions on the academic job market.
- Political Science Graduate faculty:** will need to agree to a change in the graduate program curriculum.
- Political Science Undergraduate Program:** will benefit from having instructors using evidence-based teaching approaches in undergraduate courses.

Key Steps/Activities:

- Create a formal proposal to submit to the Political Science Graduate Program Committee
- If approved, create and submit a syllabus and assessments to the Graduate Program Curriculum Committee for review and approval
- Run the course as a pilot, get feedback from participants, make improvements for next time.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Course approval by Political Science Graduate Program Committee & Graduate Curriculum Committee
- Number of students enrolled in the pilot workshop and course
- Participant surveys/evaluations after workshops and/or a pedagogy course.
- Graduate student teaching evaluations(?)

Communication/Engagement:

- I will keep these key actors up to date on my progress at our biweekly meetings.
- I will meet with graduate students to garner interest in the program and ensure the curriculum matches graduate students’ needs.
- I will also work with the Director of the United Nation and Global Policy Studies Master’s Degree Program to include MA-level students

Proposed Timeline:

- Summer 2025:** Create proposal
- Fall 2025:** Seek approval from graduate program committee; submit to Graduate Program Curriculum Committee
- Spring 2026:** Pilot the program as a workshop(s)
- Spring 2027:** Initiate the course

Current Status/Future Directions:

- I am currently working on a project with colleagues in community colleges, liberal arts colleges, and R2 universities on large-scale survey project, in which current and recent graduates of Political Science PhD programs are asked about their experiences with pedagogy training and their feelings of preparedness to teach at these different types of institutions.
- I plan to use the findings of this project to help motivate this pedagogy training in the Political Science graduate program.

Empowering First-Generation Academics: A Peer Support Triad Program for Graduate Students and Postdocs

Dr. Itzamarie Chévere-Torres, Director Office for Postdoctoral Advancement

Project Champion: Aramis Gutierrez, Assistant Vice President for Educational Access and Success



Abstract:

First-generation graduate students and postdocs often face unique challenges in academia, including limited access to mentorship, networks, and guidance on career progression. While many institutions support first-generation undergraduates, graduate-level support remains limited. This project proposes the Peer Support Triad Program, designed to connect first-generation graduate students, postdocs, and faculty in mentoring triads. The program will create space for meaningful conversations, shared experiences, and mutual support, with a focus on belonging, advocacy, leadership, and academic career development. By offering structured peer mentoring and guidance, the program aims to increase participants' confidence, awareness of academic expectations, and preparedness for faculty careers. It also seeks to build community, raise visibility of first-generation experiences, and support greater retention and engagement across the academic pipeline. Ultimately, the Peer Support Triad Program will address a critical gap in support and help ensure first-generation scholars are better equipped to succeed and lead in higher education.

Primary Stakeholders:

Universitywide Stakeholders

- First-generation graduate students and postdocs
- Associate Vice President for Strategic and Emergent Academic Initiatives
- University Office of Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Administration
- Senior Director, Faculty Diversity, UEL

Campus Specific Stakeholders

- Deans, Graduate Schools
- Dean of Graduate Life (New Brunswick)
- Career Centers | RU1st Alliance
- Collaborative Center for Community Engagement (New Brunswick)
- Associate Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of Graduate Studies (Rutgers Health)

Key Steps/Activities:

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Create Taskforce and Develop Implementation Strategy
- Develop Communication Strategy
- Create Evaluation and Reporting Plan

Effectiveness Measures:

Short-Term Metrics	Long-Term Metrics	How We Measure Success
High Participation & Completion Rates	Greater Awareness of Faculty pathways	Qualtrics Surveys
Qualitative and Quantitative Feedback	Higher Institutional Awareness and Support for First-gen community	Interview & Focus Groups
Increased Interest in Academic Careers	Senior Leadership Support	Benchmarking and Comparative Analysis
		Tracking Platform or Dashboard

Communication/Engagement:

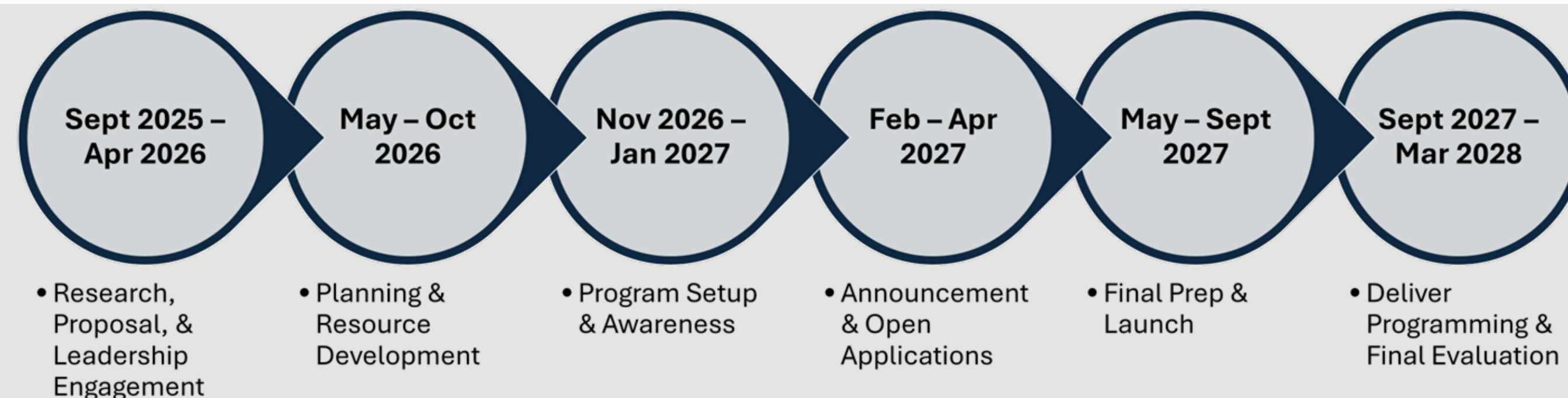
Launch & Recruitment Phase:

- Launch webpage with program info and sign-up; share via newsletters and networks
- Recruitment via direct email to eligible candidates

Engagement During the Program:

- Offer safe spaces, coffee hours, and a virtual hub for support
- Regular email updates and feedback check-ins
- Share progress with task force via meetings and emails

Proposed Timeline:



Current Status/Future Directions:

- Discuss first-gen grad support with Ghada Endick
- Plan to survey postdocs on first-gen status
- Review proposal draft before sharing
- National policies and Rutgers leadership change may affect plans

Research Administration Manual

Letitia Dean, Associate Director, Research and Sponsored Programs

Project Champion: Diane Ambrose, Assistant Vice President, Sponsored Programs, Policy, and Training

Abstract:

My aim is to bridge the gap between central offices and school-level administration functions involved with sponsored programs at Rutgers University. This initiative addresses the challenges faced by new or junior administrators and those infrequently involved in the process, who often feel lost due to the complexity and breadth of the university's sponsored programs operations.

The project proposes the development of a comprehensive Research Administration Manual that covers all aspects of research administration/sponsored programs activities, from pre-award to post-award and compliance processes. This manual will serve as a detailed guide, providing specific directions, roles, and best practices, and will link to current resources.

The intended outcomes include increased efficiency, satisfaction, and engagement across all units, with faculty, staff, and administrators having access to a searchable resource that reduces the time spent searching for assistance, locating knowledgeable personnel, and identifying responsible parties.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Department Administrators
- Business Administrators
Office for Research Units
- Research and Sponsored Programs (Pre-Award),
- Research Financial Services (Post-Award)
- Research Contract Services
- Compliance Units (IRB, IACUC, etc.)

Key Steps/Activities:

- Gain buy-in from Leadership
- Recruit and assemble Stakeholder Committee
- Draft preliminary outline
- Draft sections for pilot testing and review
- Gather feedback and update
- Post final product on live website
- Update as necessary – ongoing

Effectiveness Measures:

- Track feedback from Stakeholders
- Track feedback from Pilot releases
- Pre/Post surveys to measure number of calls/emails to OfR units
- Pre/Post reporting on number of hits on specific webpages.

Communication/Engagement:

- Regularly scheduled Stakeholder meetings
- Committee Teams folder/shared documents
- Webpage with dedicated e-mail for comments and suggestions.

Proposed Timeline:

Anticipated timeline is 12 months, milestones include

- Gain approval and recruit Stakeholder Committee
- Draft and Pilot Sections
- Ongoing feedback and edits until final product

Current Status/Future Directions:

- Current Status is “ideation” stage
- Next Steps include obtaining necessary approvals and stakeholder buy-in
- Goal is to create a resource to bridge the gap in knowledge between Central Offices and School Level Administration.

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR HISPANIC SCHOLARS AT RUTGERS-CAMDEN, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

RLA Fellow: Kandace Diedrick, Assistant Dean II of Undergraduate Programs

Project Champions: Dr. Monica Adya, RSBC Dean and Dr. Marsha Lowery, Vice Chancellor for Student Academic Success

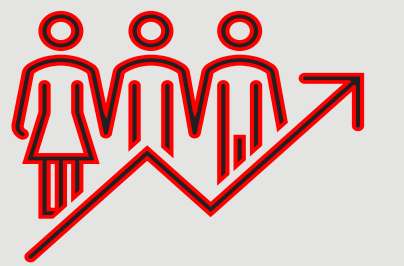
Abstract:

Rutgers University–Camden (RUC) is approaching Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) status, joining peers across New Jersey and the nation. While RUC has demonstrated a strong commitment to students of color, targeted strategies are needed in professional schools to support students’ professional development and increase their social capital. This is especially critical amid declining enrollment trends in higher education, including business schools. From Fall 2018 to Fall 2023, the Rutgers School of Business–Camden (RSBC) experienced a 32% drop in undergraduate enrollment. However, enrollment of Hispanic students declined by only 5%, with **Hispanic learners now representing approximately 23% of the undergraduate business student population**. In contrast, enrollment among Asian, Black/African American, and White/non-Hispanic students declined by 25%, 30%, and over 40%, respectively. *Given this context, this project suggests creation of a holistic plan that leverages existing resources while addressing specific professional development gaps for Hispanic business students.*

Primary Stakeholders:

Stakeholders that are integral to RSBC’s capacity to serve Hispanic learners and create an inclusive environment that fosters engagement and better professional outcomes include:

- RSBC Current Students and Alumni
- RSBC Leadership Team
- RUC Division of Student Academic Success
- RSBC UG Academic Services Office
- RSBC Student Empowerment, Engagement and Development Office



Key Activities:

- **Assess** the needs of Hispanic scholars at RSBC to identify gaps between current offerings and desired support via informal interviews.
- **Establish** a diverse task force of faculty, staff, students, and alumni to guide efforts, provide feedback, and help sustain initiatives.
- **Develop** a framework for annual strategic goal review and designate a central hub for ongoing support, collaboration, and targeted student success training.



Effectiveness Measures:

- Increased participation in “**Impactful Initiatives**,” such as job shadowing, mentorship, conferences and networking, will serve as key engagement indicators.
- Surveys, focus groups, and participation data will support continuous refinement and alignment with strategic goals.
- Improved faculty involvement with population (i.e. via conferences, panels, external engagement events).
- Expansion of programs for student-alumni connections.



Communication & Engagement:

- Share annual departmental goals with the Associate Dean, Dean, and relevant units such as DICE, SAS & SGA.
- Communicate program updates and recommendations internally and engage with external partners via RSBC Newsletters, social media and webpages.
- Collaborate with campus partners on mentorship and professional development, aligning with shared goals.
- Ensure transparency and engagement through consistent communication with stakeholders.



Proposed Timeline:

- **Spring 2025:** Conduct informal interviews with alumni, current students and staff; reference existing CSI data.
- **Fall 2025:** Form a cross-functional working group to guide strategy, provide feedback, and formulate action plan.
- **Fall 2025:** Use the group’s input to shape program development and ensure alignment with student needs.
- **Spring 2026:** Pilot programming, share findings with broader campus community, establish AY 26-27 goals.



Future Goal: Garner Ongoing Support & Increase External Partnerships

- Institutional Research – to support data-driven decisions throughout the iterative process of continuous improvement.
- Enlisting support from Hispanic-Owned Businesses and **Corporate Partners** to create pathways for shadowing, mentorship and internship opportunities for students while forging greater collaboration between local economic drivers and RSBC leadership, faculty and staff.
- Potential external partners may include Hispanic Chambers of Commerce, MBA Associations, Conferences focused on HSI development and/or Hispanic Business Students’ Success.



ESTABLISHING SENATE COMMUNICATION: FACILITATING A WORKING GROUP TO INITIATE A COMMUNICATION PLATFORM FOR CONSTITUENTS ACROSS ALL CAMPUSES

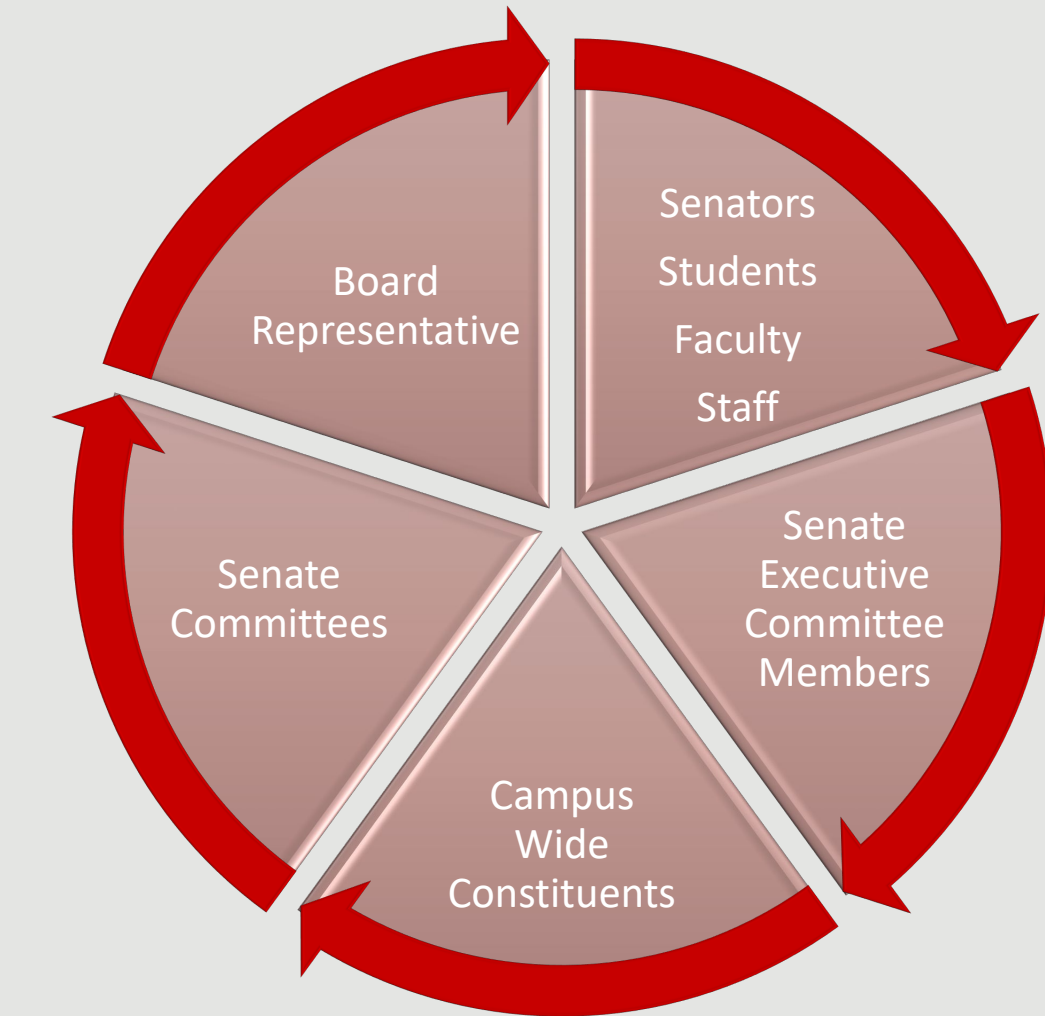


RLA Fellow: Malica T Dock, Assistant Reliance Director, Human Research Protection Program (IRB)
 Project Champion: Adrienne Simonds PT, PhD, Assistant Professor, School of Health Professions



Abstract: The Rutgers University Senate includes representatives from students, faculty, staff, and administrators across its campuses, yet it does not have a consistent and accessible method for sharing updates with their respective constituencies. Communication from the Senate is not being shared campus-wide, and many updates are not communicated by all senators, leaving constituents unaware of important developments. Without a centralized system, information on Senate discussions, committee activities, and policy decisions is often shared inconsistently or not at all. This gap weakens transparency and limits engagement within the university community. To address this, the proposed project will design and implement a streamlined communication platform tailored to the needs of Senate members and their constituents. The platform will also include an open forum feature, allowing senators and constituents to engage in two-way communication, ask questions, and provide feedback. The proposed project can foster greater awareness, participation, and connection across the Rutgers community.

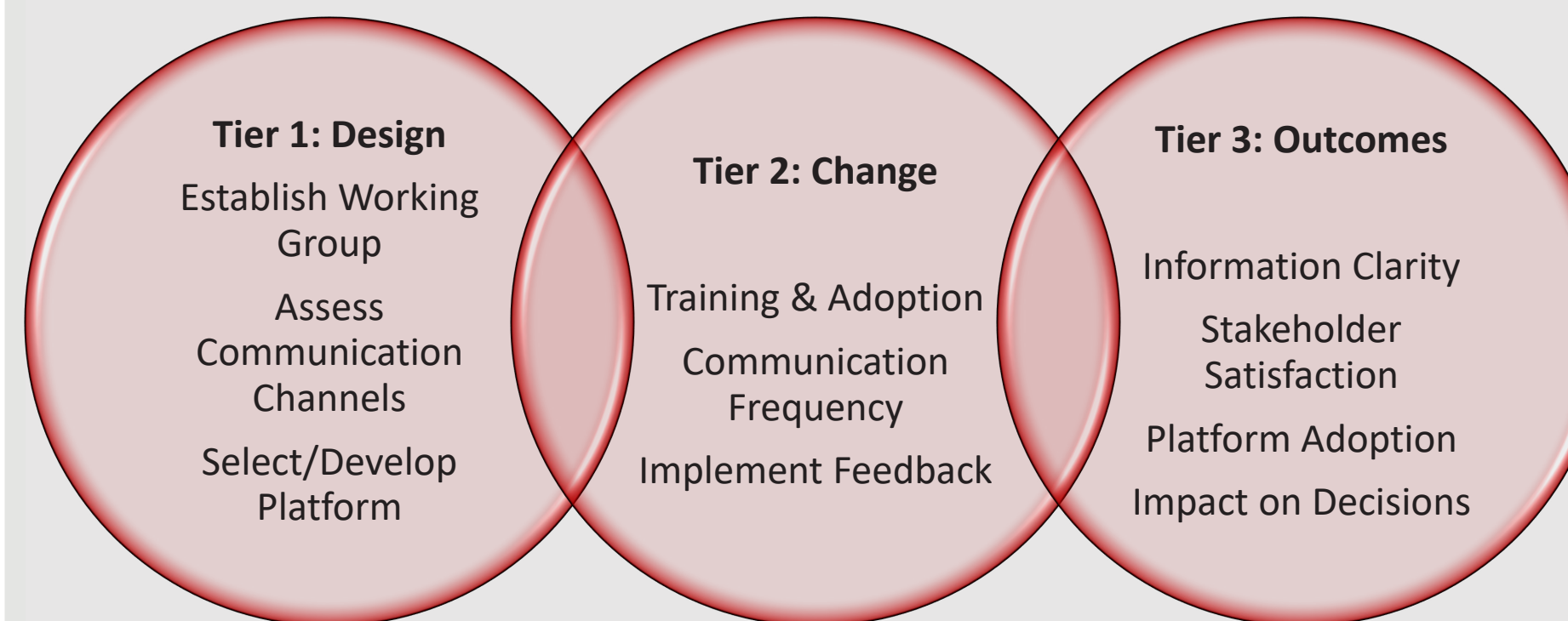
Primary Stakeholders:



Key Steps/Activities:

- Initiate outreach to staff, student, and faculty senators to gather their perspectives
- Review current forms of communication with campus constituents
- Establish a Working group or Ad-hoc committee
- Propose a charge to amend the official bylaws of the Senate

Effectiveness Measures:



Communication/Engagement:

The communication strategy aims to ensure clarity, collaboration, and transparency throughout the Rutgers University Senate project.

The key efforts include:

- **Initial Communication Plan:** Email announcements, public records, committee meeting minutes, and a shared Microsoft Teams channel will be used to update senators and stakeholders.
- **Engagement Strategy:** Outreach includes direct contact with stakeholders like the University President, Senate Executive Committee, and student government leaders to build buy-in and understanding.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Surveys and informal check-ins will gather input and measure communication effectiveness.
- **Ongoing Engagement:** Regular updates with the Senate. This approach promotes inclusive, two-way communication while encouraging active participation and ownership among key university figures.

Proposed Timeline:



Future Directions:

- Engage Senators to form a working group
- Partner with Senate and Champions
- Pilot the platform(s) with stakeholders
- Achieve amendment of Senate bylaws and communication guidelines

EVALUATING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN THE HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCES, AND THE ARTS



Katy Gray, Assistant Dean, Douglass Residential College
Leslie Danehy, Associate Dean, Douglass Residential College

Abstract:

Douglass Residential College offers programs for undergraduate students outside of STEM and data shows a demand for such programs, yet our STEM programs garner greater student participation. Enroute to building intentional strategies for our programming, it will help to learn how our peer institutions frame experiential learning outside of STEM. I propose an examination of experiential learning at BIG10 institutions and a selection of women’s colleges. An experiential learning working group will address this question through exploratory research with the goal of creating a report and strategic recommendations for programming. The term experiential has become a well-established descriptor of learning opportunities outside of traditional college classrooms. Knowing more about how the term experiential learning is being used and the kinds of programs being offered will help my team evaluate how our existing programming is consistent with and/or diverges from current trends among our peers.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Project collaborators: the experiential learning working group.
- Douglass Discovery Program collaborators across Rutgers: Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers Honors College, and the Institute for Women’s Leadership.
- Douglass Residential College students.
- Office of Douglass Discovery.
- The curriculum team at Douglass Residential College.

Key Steps/Activities:

- Create a working group to conduct this research.
- Confer with experiential learning colleagues in different units of the university who collaborate with the Douglass Discovery Office on programming and other offices who are potential partners: Douglass Honors College, ARESTY Office, IWL.
- Develop a report that can be delivered to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs at Douglass & the Dean’s Office.

Effectiveness Measures:

- A comprehensive report for internal use by the Douglass Discovery Team, Douglass Residential College Leadership, as well as the Douglass Residential College office of Advancement.
- The report should include concrete strategic recommendations for DRC’s experiential learning programs outside of STEM, as well as clear pathways to implementing these recommendations.
- The report should include concrete strategies for external communications about our programs and their value for undergraduate students.

Communication/Engagement:

- Regularly scheduled meetings to review and assign tasks will be essential to the advancement of the project and to keeping the team accountable to one another.
- A digital working space on a platform such as Teams will serve as a secondary space to keep communication open among the team will be a shared.
- The working group will also solicit meetings with undergraduate experiential learning units at Rutgers, as well as with our key stakeholders to discuss findings and invite feedback.

Proposed Timeline:

- Start: July 1, 2025 – Completion: January 15, 2026.
- Key milestones: assigning and completing research and submitting our report to leadership.

Current Status/Future Directions:

- The Douglass Discovery team has already begun early stages of coordinating the project and assessing which peer institutions on which to focus.
- The next stage will be dividing tasks according to the team members’ varied strengths.

SHP STAFF COUNCIL

Jesus Gualario – Manager, Administrative Services
Cindy Merlino – Director of Administration



Abstract:

This project proposes the creation of a Staff Council within Rutgers' School of Health Professions (SHP) to strengthen communication, foster professional growth, and enhance workplace culture. The Council will serve as a collaborative platform where staff can share ideas, address workplace concerns, and support one another's development. Initiatives include anonymous suggestion channels, Microsoft Teams group discussions, and bi-monthly training sessions on essential professional skills. The Staff Council will promote engagement, encourage open dialogue, and offer staff opportunities to expand their knowledge and strengthen their connection to the SHP community. Ultimately, this project aims to empower staff, improve collaboration across departments, and contribute to a positive and dynamic work environment aligned with SHP's strategic priorities.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Staff Members (General Body)
- Executive Leadership / Administration
- Human Resources / Employee Engagement
- Middle Management / Department Heads
- Faculty Governance Bodies

Key Steps/Activities:

- Conduct a launch survey to assess staff interest, preferred communication methods, and key concerns
- Form a leadership team representing multiple departments and campuses; co-develop mission, bylaws and shared goals
- Create functional committees (Staff Development, Workplace Culture & Wellness, Community Engagement)
- Host kick-off event to introduce the council and energize participation
- Develop a structured calendar for council meetings, training sessions and engagement activities

Effectiveness Measures:

- Increased participation in council-led events and trainings
- Growth in Teams channel activity, suggestion box submissions, and overall staff input
- Improvement in quarterly pulse survey results on morale, communication and inclusivity
- Documented policy or process changes that result from council feedback
- Quarter-over-quarter comparison of recurring concerns (fewer repeated issues = progress)
- Positive changes in employee satisfaction surveys

Communication/Engagement:

- Launch a branded communications campaign with a logo, council name and intro video or flyer
- Use Microsoft Teams for updates, committee spaces and informal chat threads
- Create rotating spotlight features ("Staff Voices", Council Corner") in a monthly email newsletter
- Share meeting minutes and decision highlights in accessible formats (Teams, intranet)
- Host "Coffee & Chat" sessions – informal virtual or in-person meetups with council reps
- Design feedback loops like quick polls, live Q&As, or "You Said, We Did" updates in council website

Proposed Timeline:

- **Months 1 – 4:** Plan, recruit council members, draft mission and bylaws.
- **Months 5 – 12:** Launch activities, host trainings, gather feedback and assess progress.

Current Status/Future Directions:

- Leadership team has been selected, and the council's draft bylaws are complete.
- Next steps include launching the anonymous suggestion boxes, creating Teams channels for open communication, and holding the first official Staff Council meeting.
- Future goals on rolling out bi-monthly professional development trainings, gathering staff feedback and refining council activities to strengthen workplace culture.

Pediatric Clinician Researcher Track at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School: A Pilot Project

Daniel B. Horton, MD, MSCE, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Epidemiology, and
Manuel E. Jimenez, MD, MS, Associate Professor of Pediatrics & Family Medicine and Community Health
Project Champion: Brian L. Strom, MD, MPH, Chancellor

Abstract:

The national pool of physician-scientists is small and shrinking, and emerging pediatric physician-scientists may lack sufficient opportunities for meaningful engagement with research during training. The Pediatric Clinician Researcher Track pilot will implement a newly designed curriculum to support emerging physician-scientists in RWJMS Department of Pediatrics residency and fellowship training programs, leveraging existing resources and similar programs within RWJMS and elsewhere. Expected outcomes include enhanced satisfaction, competence, and confidence among participating scholars, improved career prospects as physician-scientists, and greater efficiencies in resource utilization. Key stakeholders include program scholars, department leaders, training program directors, faculty, and staff. Guided by a steering committee including department leaders, we will implement this pilot program in the 2025-2026 academic year. Success will be measured through participant surveys, interviews, and tracking of research productivity.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Pediatric resident and fellow scholars
- Pediatrics department chair
- Chiefs of divisions with fellowship programs
- Residency program director
- Fellowship program directors
- Pediatric faculty
- Biostatistical staff (SPH/RUBIES)
- RBHS Chancellor (project champion)

Key Steps/Activities:

- Creation of steering committee
- Approval of budget
- Finalization of curriculum
- Pilot implementation in Academic Year 2025-2026

Effectiveness Measures:

- Short-term (end of academic year 2025-2026)
 - Surveys of participating scholars
 - Key informant interviews with relevant stakeholders
- Medium- to long-term (2027-2030)
 - Surveys of participating scholars
 - Publicly available databases (e.g., NIH Reporter, PubMed) to document scholars' productivity

Communication/Engagement:

- Participation benchmarks for scholars and steering committee members will promote engagement
- Meetings and electronic communication will keep key stakeholders informed of our progress
 - Steering committee meetings twice yearly
 - Quarterly emails with program updates, including participation and progress reports
- Surveys and interviews will elicit feedback from scholars and other stakeholders

Proposed Timeline:

- April-May 2025: Finalize budget, curriculum
- May-June 2025: Convene steering committee
- July 2025: Launch pilot
- Spring 2026: Conduct surveys/interviews, plan year 2 of program

Current Status/Future Directions:

- Work with department leaders and stakeholders to finalize budget and curriculum
- Launch Pediatric Clinician Researcher Track pilot in July 2025
- Assess pilot effectiveness and revise program based on input
- Develop sustainability plan

Tracking Impact of Core Facilities on Research Activities at Rutgers

Matthew Keller, Assistant Director Business Operations and Animal Facilities
Project Champion: Jeetendra Eswaraka, Vice President for Universitywide Core Services

Abstract:

Core facilities provide Rutgers researchers with essential access to subsidized technologies, expertise, and services. However, their value is often evaluated based on revenue, which may not fully capture their contribution to research success. This project proposes the development of an automated system to link core facility usage with funded research projects and resulting publications. By integrating data from existing workflows—such as grant submissions, financial accounts, and publication tracking—the project will allow stakeholders to better qualify the return on investment (ROI) of core services. This standardized, data-driven approach will inform funding decisions, support advocacy for core facility sustainability, and enhance visibility of core contributions. A pilot program and collaborative stakeholder engagement will shape the system’s development and deployment, ultimately fostering long-term institutional support for core facilities.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Faculty researchers
- Graduate and undergraduate students
- Office for Research / Universitywide Core Services
- Chancellor Unit research administrators
- IT and data integration specialists
- Post-award/grants administration staff

Key Steps/Activities:

- Identify and map data pathways for automated linkage between grants, expenditures, and publications
- Form cross-functional project team (IT, research admin, core leadership, etc.)
- Develop proof-of-concept using a core facility
- Create performance metric guidelines and dashboard visualizations
- Conduct pilot testing and refine based on stakeholder feedback
- Roll out full implementation with standardized reporting framework

Effectiveness Measures:

- Successful data linkage between project funding, core usage, and publications
- Number of core-supported publications identified annually
- Development of standardized KPI dashboards for core evaluation
- Adoption of new metrics by leadership in funding decisions
- Inclusion of core usage metrics in core director performance reviews

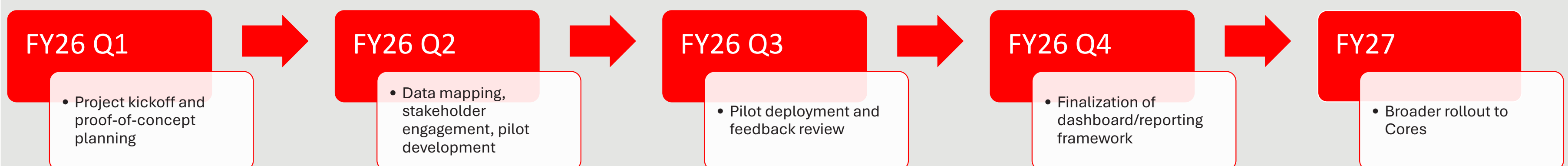
Communication/Engagement:

- Regular project team meetings with stakeholder representation
- Updates and presentations to Office for Research and Unit leadership
- Feedback with core directors during pilot phase
- Documentation and training materials for users of new dashboards
- Institution-wide communication of final implementation and access to reports

Current Status/Future Directions:

- Proposal developed with input from university peers for initial stakeholder buy-in and resource allocation
- Next steps: scope proof-of-concept and assign project team
- Long-term goal: standardize core evaluation across Rutgers and improve sustainability
- Future potential: integrate additional and expanded performance models

Proposed Timeline:



Change Management for University Employees Experiencing Departmental Restructuring

Krista Klein, Associate Dean, Rutgers-New Brunswick Honors College
Peggy Swarbrick, Director, ScarletWell



Abstract:

The primary goal of this project is to implement a needs assessment to identify the ways in which the university can best serve employees experiencing departmental restructuring. This assessment would address the larger problem of a lack of preparedness, training, and support for staff undergoing professional changes which may also affect their wellness. By implementing a needs assessment, the University can better understand what employees are looking for in a training or workshop, what resources are needed, and what format might work best. This needs assessment would take place in partnership with the Rutgers University-New Brunswick ScarletWell initiative and would involve faculty and staff from many collaborative departments on campus.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Faculty and staff who are currently experiencing a restructuring and are already engaged in ScarletWell support.
- These individuals would define success as being heard by the university and knowing the university is considering their needs.
- They would also define success as conceptualizing concrete strategies for addressing their current experiences.

Key Steps/Activities:

- Research existing resources related to departmental restructuring and survey employees
- Identify stakeholders to participate in the study
- Create a committee to support the creation and implementation of the feasibility study, including creating questions and scheduling groups
- Compile report and present findings from survey and focus groups to inform implementation

Proposed Timeline:

- 1+ Month: Research, survey, and identify stakeholders
- Monthly: Committee Meetings to plan key steps and activities
- 2+ Months: Schedule focus group(s) with immediate and primary stakeholders to collect needs information

Effectiveness Measures:

As a needs assessment, this project will produce relevant data and information to determine whether this proposal will be successful in reaching its desired outcomes. Effectiveness measures include qualitative data collected from focus groups involving stakeholders, as well as data collected from survey findings.

Current Status/Future Directions:

- Plan is to identify existing resources related to departmental restructuring at the university
- Determine whether the feasibility study is needed
- Consider existing resources to initiate and implement feasibility study

Communication/Engagement:

- Creating a committee using the previously mentioned stakeholders will be important in promoting two-way communication and providing a sense of investment and intentionality in the planning process.
- The committee will meet monthly to share updates and input on the results of the needs assessment.
- The project will also produce a report that can be shared via email on a listserv including stakeholders and others who may be interested in learning more.
- When the committee meets, an addendum of new data can be provided as updated communication.

2026 Celebration of Rutgers University-Camden Research Scholarship.

RLA Fellow: Regina Koury, Associate University Librarian-Camden

Project Champions: Dr. Sandra Richtermeyer, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost, RU-C; Caroline Muglia, Associate Vice President for Campus Libraries.



Abstract:

Rutgers Libraries in New Brunswick and RBHS have historically celebrated the scholarly accomplishments of their researchers and creators each year, with both an in-person event and a digital exhibit. Rutgers Library in Camden/Robeson Library hasn't hosted a Celebration of Scholarship since 2017, due to changes in library leadership and the COVID-19 pandemic. It seems that 2026 would present an opportune moment to revive the event, as it marks Rutgers-Camden's centennial anniversary and provides ample time to initiate the planning process if we start now.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Robeson library Events & Exhibits Committee subcommittee.
- Central library's infrastructure support team members in IT, Finance and Communications.
- RU-Camden researchers
- RU-C Office of Academic Affairs and Provost; Marketing, and Communications and Events Office
- Everyone at RU who will be interested in the event and those who will benefit from it.

Key Steps/Activities:

- Selecting event committee members.
- Creating a clear charge with responsibilities, timeline and outcomes for the committee to guide them through planning.
- Holding weekly meetings with set deliverables and updates to library team outside of planning committee for feedback.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Feedback on how well planning committee planned and executed event.
- Number of researchers who participated in the celebration event would indicate strong interest and engagement.
- Building new and reaffirming existing partnerships can be a sign of the effectiveness of the event and learning about outcomes that resulted from the event, such as new research ideas inspired by the celebration.

Communication/Engagement:

- Sharing regular updates through emails, highlighting key deadlines and achievements. Social media will be used to post updates.

Proposed Timeline:

- Spring 2025 -the planning committee will be nominated.
- Summer 2025 – planning begins.
- Fall of 2025 – Spring 2026 - the web portal will be open for scholarship submissions and marketing team will help with promoting upcoming event.
- Fall of 2026 - the event will take place and will be assessed for effectiveness.

Current Status/Future Directions:

- Current status: The planning of the event has been approved, and the Central infrastructure team was given heads up on proposed timing of the event.
- Future directions: finalize committee nominations and schedule times to meet.

Increasing Undergraduate Research Participation for Chemistry Majors

Fina Liotta, PhD, Associate Teaching Professor & Undergraduate Coordinator, Department of Chemistry

Sponsor: Frieder Jaekle, PhD, Distinguished Professor & Chair, Department of Chemistry

Abstract:

The research experience is a critical component of a well-rounded undergraduate chemistry education and a characteristic of our chemistry department's culture. Undergraduate research is integral to promoting professional development, enabling students to build foundational skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and technical expertise. Our undergraduate Chemistry Majors often do not access available research opportunities because of limited guidance and support, which leads to missed opportunities for growth and career exploration.

Addressing this gap through a formal Research Mentorship Program will better integrate undergraduates into the department's research culture, fostering an environment where students feel supported and engaged in their learning journey. This project will establish a formal mentorship program that connects undergraduates with graduate student mentors through shared research interests. In supporting this mentorship program, the Chemistry Department would help undergraduates acquire valuable research skills, and graduate students would gain leadership and mentoring skills essential to many professional and academic roles.

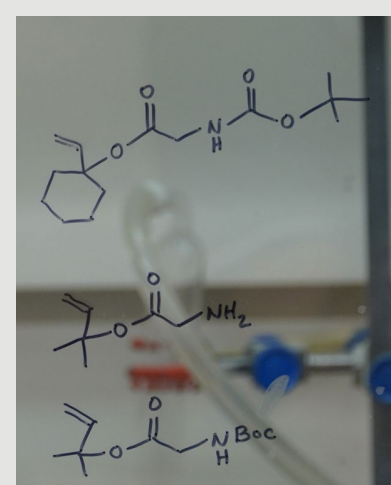
Primary Stakeholders:

- Undergraduate Students
Gain critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and technical research knowledge
- Graduate Students
Develop leadership, mentoring, and teaching skills
- Faculty and Chem Department
Increased research productivity
- Office of Undergraduate Research
Internal funding contributor
- Rutgers-Newark P3 Collaboratory
Facilitates Mentoring Matters workshops and sessions



Key Steps

- Define the Research Mentoring Program objectives and goals
- Secure undergraduate research funding
- Recruit undergrad researchers and grad mentors, followed by mentor-mentee pairing based on research interests
- Provide mentorship training and mentee orientation
- Pilot the mentoring program
- Evaluate and assess the success and effectiveness of the program
- Present findings to primary stakeholders

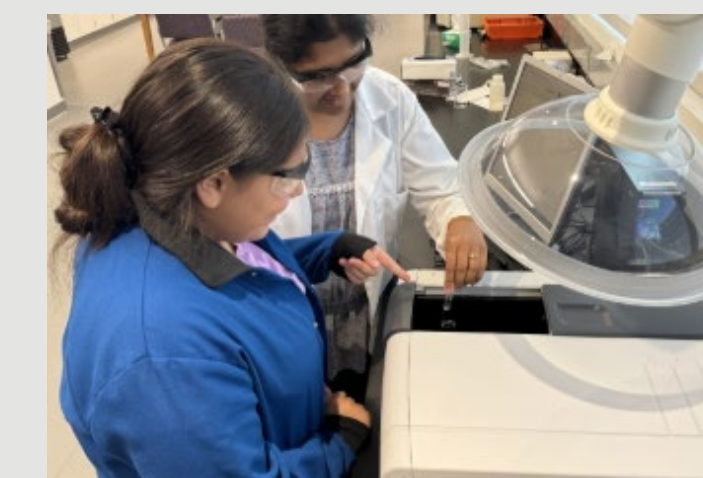


Effectiveness Measures:

- Participation: Number of Chem Majors involved in research before and after program implementation
- Research engagement: Measure contributions to scientific knowledge, e.g., the number of projects completed, presentations, and publications
- Participant feedback: Satisfaction of mentees, and input from mentors and faculty on program impact and effectiveness
- Analysis: Evaluate program success, and identify strengths and areas of improvement
- Track post-program academic and professional placement of Chemistry Majors

Communication/Engagement:

- Communicate with stakeholders and the broader community through a dedicated undergraduate research webpage highlighting program details, application information, and program research projects
- Share progress reports with the department faculty and the Office of Undergraduate Research via department meetings and newsletters



Current Status/Future Directions:

- The project is in the design phase and has been approved by the department faculty. The pilot phase is set to begin in Spring 2026, followed by evaluation and expansion at the end of first year.



Proposed Timelines:

- Spring 2025, Design program and create webpage; Summer 2025, Recruit and train grad mentors
- Fall 2025, Recruit undergrad mentees, orientation, and mentor-mentee pairing
- Spring 2026, Pilot Research Mentoring Program

Work Study-The Study of Work



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Zoe Makropoulos, MHRM- Assistant Director, Rutgers Future Scholars

FWS Coordinators: Gina Kandil (NB), Melanie Moretti (CMD), Urvi Khandar (NWK)

Bill Kelly- Assistant Director Student Employment Enrichment Program (SEE), RU-CES

Abstract:

As we are seeking more ways to identify, support and prepare our first-gen, low-income population at Rutgers University (Pell eligible population) it does not necessarily mean we have to recreate the wheel. Rather we just need to give it some new air! This proposal aims to reinvigorating the purpose of Federal Work Study at Rutgers University in relation to the student's use and growth as a result of the program. Work study as a resource to Pell eligible students is one that often is missed and/or wasted as a passive opportunity. The students in these positions are statistically the ones most in need of career advising and mentoring. With the hours allocated to work study it is often a missed chance for them to become further aligned with their studies, future career goals and gaining transferable skillsets for their professional futures. Tying the existing structures of our FWS programs to stronger data gathering and existing resources within university career services and learning systems will cross-support many fundamental initiatives at Rutgers University.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Work Study Students (Pell Eligible Population)
- Federal Work Study (FWS) Administrators
- Work Study Managers
- Career Services (CS) Staff

Key Steps/Activities:

- Collect baseline data points from each FWS Coordinator and establish monthly touch base
- Establish pre/post surveys for both students and managers via Qualtrics
- Gradual implementation of activities/dept partnerships (orientation of FWS, Canvas modules, Handshake system use, designated workshops)
- Comparison of data points per each new introduction and end of AY for improvements

Effectiveness Measures:

- Short-term increase in # of students opting-in to FWS assignments
- Long-term increase in # of students returning to FWS program
- Engagement/attendance # of rolled out activities (workshops, networking, Canvas modules)
- Student Experience survey results
- Manager Experience survey results
- Indirect Monitoring of GPA, Retention and Grad Rates of eligible students in FWS vs not FWS

Communication/Engagement:

- Establish routine Zoom calls with cross-campus FWS and Career Service administrators partnering (goal: feedback, best practices, streamlining); create Teams channel for consistent updates
- Canvas page establishment for communication and collaboration with FWS students
- Possible use of Teams for broader FWS manager communication of best practices/feedback
- Streamlining FWS enrollment through systems inventory of Financial Aid portal, Handshake, etc.

Proposed Timeline:

- Summer 2025 review FWS portal experience for improvements (notice/application)
- Fall 2025 establish and administer baseline survey
- Spring 2026 roll out of some CS related activities and additional survey administered

Current Status/Future Directions:

- Established current program norms, concerns, strengths and improvement areas
- Draft calendar of communication and implementation along with established liaisons from each dept.
- Prioritize most immediately available adjustments and construct feedback surveys for distribution
- Build upon on-going feedback with each implementation for streamlining/improvements
- Use anticipated data outcome points of growth to strengthen FWS program (funding, support, etc.)

Supporting NTT Leadership and Networking Opportunities at Rutgers

Jo Messina, JD, Associate Teaching Professor, Dept. of English WP and Asst. Director of Business & Technical Writing
Dr. Victoria Banyard, Distinguished Professor, School of Social Work, and former head of the Center for Faculty Success

Abstract:

Several opportunities for NTTs to explore, and participate in, leadership, mentoring, and networking activities and programs exist at Rutgers-New Brunswick, but many NTTs are unaware of these opportunities. NTTs often feel marginalized and limited in what they are able to achieve in their programs and departments, and at the university as a whole. The lack of a sense of belonging and being valued is problematic for NTTs at the university who may be able to contribute useful skills, talents, and ideas. Most NTTs are unaware of the leadership, mentoring, and networking opportunities and resources available at the university and are unsure of how to pursue leadership positions or develop relationships with other NTT faculty at the university. This project involves the planning and execution of a professional development event for NTTs sponsored by the Center for Faculty Success at Rutgers-New Brunswick, which will focus on the development of a stronger NTT community at Rutgers.

Primary Stakeholders:

- The Center for Faculty Success
- Rutgers NTTs
- Corinne Castro (I-LEAD, Inclusive Leadership Academy, OASIS)
- Crystal Akers (U-SOAR Mutual Mentoring Network)
- Jenny Yang (NTT-Faculty Affinity Network)
- Nela Navarro (RCN Faculty Mentoring Program)
- Marla Blunt-Carter (Community Activism and Leadership)

Key Steps/Activities:

- Update the Center for Faculty Success web site
- Advertise the NTT Faculty PD event
- Secure speakers
- Collect registrations
- Book the venue
- Request room setup for informational session and guided networking activities
- Order refreshments
- Plan guided networking activities
- Send reminders about the event

Effectiveness Measures:

- Obtain feedback from NTTs who attend the professional development event on April 17th
- Gather feedback from the scheduled speakers for the event
- Speak individually with the speakers before and after the event
- Solicit feedback via email from NTT attendees
- Send follow up questions or communications if necessary

Communication/Engagement:

- Consistently communicate with the project champion and key stakeholders via phone and email
- Engage in two-way communication with Hazelene Johnson at the Center for Faculty Success
- Communicate with NTTs who are interested in attending the event
- Promote the event via email, phone, and in-person communications

Proposed Timeline:

- Proposed this NTT PD event to the project champion in the fall
- Began planning and promoting the event throughout the fall and spring semesters
- The event is scheduled to take place on April 17, 2025

Current Status/Future Directions:

- Venue has been booked and confirmed
- Refreshments have been ordered
- Approximately 80 NTTs have registered for the event
- Speakers have been confirmed
- If this PD event is successful, perhaps it can be held again in future years.



The CDGD: The Clinic for Developmental Genetic Disorders

Jennifer Gladys Mulle, MHS, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, RWJMS
Arnold Rabson, MD, Director, Child Health Institute of New Jersey

Abstract:

Rare genetic disorders (RGDs) are individually rare but collectively impact at least 2.4% of the general population, or a minimum of 8.3 million people in the US and 233,000 people in the state of New Jersey. In individuals, RGDs are often diagnosed in young children presenting a key opportunity for comprehensive evaluation and early intervention, which can maximize positive outcomes. Unfortunately this window of opportunity is often missed, for multifactorial reasons: community pediatricians may not be aware of the recommended standard of care for a specific RGD; when appropriate referrals are made, there are often long wait times for specialist appointments; specialists may provide conflicting recommendations, creating confusion and further delaying interventions. The presence of multiple comorbid conditions in a single individual increases the complexity of the clinical picture. Thus the existing paradigm for clinical care of RGDs creates the following problems: 1) incomplete evaluation of associated somatic, neurodevelopmental, and psychiatric conditions; 2) delay in diagnosis of conditions with known interventions; 3) lost opportunity to maximize the benefit of interventions and increase positive outcomes; 4) a substantially increased burden on parents and/or caregivers. I propose to create a new multidisciplinary clinic focused on rare genetic disorders.

Primary Stakeholders:

- The rare disease community, including patients and their caregivers
- Rutgers Department of Pediatrics
- The Dean of RWJMS
- The RBHS Chancellor
- The CHINJ chancellor
- The clinical care team

Key Steps/Activities:

- Meet with Pediatrics Chair and additional stakeholders to identify needs
- Hire a clinic navigator
- Develop the clinic protocol
- Identify space for the clinic
- Decision: pilot the clinic focusing on a rare disease, the 3q29 deletion

Effectiveness Measures:

- Quality of life/family stress questionnaire, administered prior to clinic visit and 6 months after
- Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale to assess functioning of the rare disease patient, administered prior to clinic visit and 6 months after
- A custom, tailored questionnaire about the clinic itself, focusing on the family experience and the perceived value of the clinic

Communication/Engagement:

- Send emails about the clinic to our 3q29 registry population
- Communicate with the 3q29 foundation about the clinic
- Post clinic details on the 3q29 Facebook site
- Submit a manuscript summarizing clinic details and outcomes to a peer-reviewed journal
- Present clinic details to Pediatric Grand Rounds

Proposed Timeline:

- Hire Navigator: Summer 2025
- Develop clinic protocol and process: In collaboration with navigator and clinical team: Fall 2025
- Pilot of clinic process: Invite 2 families to test process; philanthropy funds will cover clinic visit and travel: late Fall 2025
- Iterate and refine process: Winter 2025
- **Formal launch of clinic: January 2026**

Current Status/Future Directions:

- Have met with key stakeholders
- Identified a funding source for personnel
- Developed a navigator job description
- Identified clinical team
- Identified clinic space

Abstract:

There is a lack of clinical researchers who are independent NIH-funded principal investigators (PIs) or Multiple PIs (MPI), especially those who are clinically active board-certified general surgeons or surgeon subspecialists. Permanent knowledge about disease prevention and optimal clinical care in the field of surgery is lacking. If prompt structure and process interventions are not implemented, there will be an extinction of the surgeon-scientist and rigorous, impactful surgical science in our lifetime. The ultimate losers will be our patients and the public, suffering from surgical diseases which could be better treated and possibly even prevented, for example, like the public health crisis of gun violence. Surgeons nationwide are having a hard time securing extramural funding and barriers identified include: (1) excessive clinical demands and pressure to generate clinical revenue; (2) challenging funding environment; and (3) insufficient protected time for career development. On average only two critical care surgeons are funded on a K award annually in the US.

Authentic recommitment from surgeon leaders with intentional and ambitious actions from institutions, corporations, funders, and society is essential to reap the benefits of surgeon-scientists toward prevention and treatment of surgical disease. The design of a RU program to develop skilled surgeon-scientists capable of asking and answering novel clinical research questions who are federally funded for their valuable time offers a solution to a global deficit of surgeon-scientists and burden of surgical disease.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Patients with surgical emergencies and trauma victims of violence in the State of New Jersey, served by surgeons in the Rutgers Health-RWJBarnabas Health Group.
- RU and its academic innovation of education and training of future clinical researchers that will diversify its federal grant portfolio, Rutgers School of Medicine (RSOM) and its ability to recruit and retain clinical researchers as academic leaders, and the same for the Department(s) of Surgery and Acute Care Surgery (ACS) Division(s).
- Leadership of RU Office for Research, Rutgers Health Graduate Medical Education Program, i.e., Designated Institutional Officer, research training leadership from Rutgers Health (Drs. Brian Strom and Bishr Omary), those in the RSOM (Dean Dr. Amy Murtha) and surgical department chairs (Drs. Leonard Lee and Daniel Jones) and ACS chiefs (Drs. Mayur Narayan and Ziad Zifri), and those who are in research leadership for all three (dry more than wet lab leadership to begin).

Key Steps/Activities:

- Identify a qualified internal candidate as a model for a successful pilot program starting FY 2025; and future Director.
- Design of a visual roadmap of the path of this internal candidate (i.e., tenure track, K12 and K23 to Loan Repayment Program to R)
- Design of the new faculty position (e.g., the description of the position itself and the financial structure), and design of a training program of the subsequent new faculty position hires (i.e., a paradigm for these hires to get from their K to R funding).
- Creation of a task force including stakeholders now and over the next three years to hire the qualified internal candidate and support the development of the training program.

Effectiveness Measures:

- A formal posting for this position with public dissemination
- A search committee and Committee Chair which has been formed and appointed, respectively
- A national search process which has officially begun
- An offer letter has been issued

Communication/Engagement:

- Final versions of the job description and designs above, and dollars committed (i.e., a diversified contribution and cost share match outside the Schools, Depts. and Divisions).
- Several presentations will occur to share the job description, training, and financial model with data on financial sustainability for the Department(s) of Surgery and ACS Division(s), with the goal of quelling concerns about absorption of costs.
- A crafting of a communication plan to be reviewed and agreed upon by RU, Rutgers Health, RSOM for the development of the above internal faculty surgeon that could be the first recruit, while also conducting a national search for the first recruit.
- Present pilot program in which this internal faculty serves as the model hire, for decision to move forward in recruiting the first candidate.
- Rutgers Health Graduate Medical Education Program will also be involved for identifying potential internal training candidates for this training program to be led by the new hire.

Proposed Timeline:

- Job posting prior to June 30, 2025
- Recruiting the first candidate 3rd/4th quarter 2025.

Current Status/Future Directions:

- A formal posting for this position with public dissemination.
- A search committee and Committee Chair which has been formed and appointed, respectively.

ESTABLISHING AN UNDERGRADUATE MINOR IN RACE, GENDER, AND LABOR

Danielle Phillips-Cunningham, PhD

Paul Voos, Undergraduate Director (Labor Studies & Employment Relations);

Sheri Davis (Executive Director, Center for Innovation in Worker Organization)



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Abstract:

Scholars across academic disciplines have produced a well-established body of literature demonstrating that racial, class, and gender disparities are foundational to the United States economy. For over four centuries, systemic inequalities have impacted people’s overall quality of life by determining their access to living wages; healthcare; workplace protections; labor union representation; and safe housing, food, and water. Acquiring knowledge about these systems will equip students with tools for effectively addressing the complex problems and needs of the diverse workforce in their future careers. However, there is no program of study about race, gender, and labor at Rutgers University. The goal of this project is to propose a race, gender, and labor undergraduate minor program in the School of Management and Labor Relations and in partnership with Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS), a discipline dedicated to the study of race, class, and gender.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Undergraduate Students Across Rutgers University’s campuses
- Undergraduate Program in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
- Undergraduate Program in Labor Studies and Employment Relations

Key Steps/Activities:

- Propose making “Women Taking the Lead: Race, Gender, and Labor” a permanent course to faculty in SMLR. It will be a required course for the minor.
- Select required and elective courses for the proposed minor while in consultation with the undergraduate directors in WGSS and SMLR and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in SMLR.
- Write letter of intent and present it to SMLR faculty and WGSS chair and undergraduate director.
- If approved, write full proposal for proposed minor.
- Present proposal to SMLR faculty for a vote.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Set “healthy” realistic goals for student enrollment for the first five years of the minor program.
- Document student enrollment during the first five years of the program.

Communication/Engagement:

- Deliver in-person presentations about the minor in Labor Studies and Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies courses.
- Advertise the minor program on social media pages for SMLR and WGSS and in Rutgers’ catalogue.
- Work with undergraduate directors on creating promotional materials for the minor.
- Communicate regularly with undergraduate directors in SMLR and WGSS and associate dean in SMLR. Ask them for feedback during the proposal process.

Proposed Timeline:

- Fall 2025: Propose course and present letter of intent to SMLR and WGSS colleagues.
- Spring 2026: Complete course proposal process. Present full minor proposal to colleagues for a vote.

Current Status/Future Directions:

- I have already met with undergraduate directors and associate dean. Everyone is on board. WGSS has identified courses they would like included in the proposed program.
- Undergraduate director in Labor Studies is supportive of my timeline and has recommended specific courses for the minor program.
- Future: Developing minor into a pipeline for SMLR’s graduate programs

The Chancellor Unit Bridge (CUB)

Donnell Pierre: Associate Director of Advising

Kyle D Warren, PhD: Senior Vice Dean – School of Nursing / Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs – Rutgers Health

Abstract:

Newark is a city that is continually on the rise. A special part of this ever-developing city's vibrancy is the presence of Rutgers University. With advances in education, medical science and community service our institution continues to leave an indelible positive imprint on the community of Essex County. With a shared purpose our Chancellor Units, Rutgers Health (RBHS) and Rutgers University Newark (RU-N), provide an abundant range of resources such as health clinics, food drives, and youth programs, just to name a few.

When it comes to community service and building within our chancellor units, our staff councils have done outstanding work. The question is, how can this impact be enhanced? The answer is an increase in unity! Imagine if all the staff councils within Rutgers Health shared the valuable information and talent that they each possess. Next, imagine if all these staff councils were represented by a singular staff network, which represented all of Rutgers Health. Finally, imagine in the years to come that an aspirational staff council representing all of Rutgers Health collaborated in great synergy with the Rutgers Newark Staff Council. With this level of collaboration, the possibilities for a greater impact are prodigious. With this tremendous window of opportunity in mind, I present to you The Chancellor Unit Bridge (CUB).

Effectiveness Measures:

The CUB committee members were effectively assembled:

- **Amber Williams:** Newark Staff Council President
- **Lieutenant Jamie Hendrix:** RU-N Police Department / Newark Staff Council Vice President
- **Mitchell Marcus:** SON Staff Council President
- **Dani Scarmozzio:** School of Nursing Staff Council Vice President
- **Jesus Gualario:** School of Health Professions
- **Melissa Hartland:** Newark Staff Council
- **Alicia Boone:** School of Nursing Staff Council
- **Liezza M. Roldan:** SON Office of the Vice Dean



Primary Stakeholders:

- Rutgers Newark Staff Council
- School of Nursing Staff Council
- Rutgers Newark Police Department
- Rutgers School of Health Professions

Key Steps/Activities:

- **11/18/25** SON received Cram the Cruiser Award: The School of Nursing wins the Newark Staff Council Cram Cruiser Award for service to Newark Public Schools
- **2/5/25** Infant & Toddler Center Donation Drive: SON donated over 1000 items to the Infant & Toddler Center at Barringer High School in Newark, New Jersey.
- **3/18 & 3/20** Staff Karaoke and Fun Friday Eve

Communication/Engagement:

To keep others informed of CUB progress we will use the Rutgers Newark Staff Council Newsletter. Our committee meetings will be used to promote two-way communication, recommendations and information regarding changes. All collaborations have been mentioned in the weekly updates of the Dean of the School of Nursing

Proposed Timeline:

- The committee should be in full swing by Summer 2025

Current Status/Future Directions:

- The long-term aspirational aim of the CUB is to eventually establish and expand the overall Rutgers Health network/council of professionals that will collaborate effectively with the RU-N Staff Council.



Creating a Culture of Belonging for Nursing Majors

Donnell Pierre - Associate Director of Advising

Project Champion - Dr. Timothy Eatman – Dean of HLLC

Abstract:

The Rutgers School of Nursing (SON) Advising center has a tremendous opportunity to increase a culture of belonging for its Newark first-year nursing scholars. After the challenges of the pandemic, the Advising Center was tasked to service first- and second-year scholars with only two advisers for a short period of time. In addition to a high student to adviser ratio, nursing scholars in the Newark program were not required to physically enter the SON building (Ackerson Hall) for advising, and all their prerequisite courses take place in the halls across the street from the Ackerson Hall. Due to these factors, first-year nursing majors may not maximize their potential to connect with each other as peers. The primary goal of this RLA project is to increase a culture of belonging for first-year nursing majors. This goal will be achieved through a series of freshmen class meetings which contain “**Real Talk**” discussions. Real Talk discussions will consist of honest cohort building conversation regarding the first-year experience. These in-person advising center class meetings will increase the student presence in Ackerson Hall. Desired outcomes will include an increase in the following components of a sense of belonging: social acceptance, comfort with engagement and perceived support. These desired outcomes will be the direct result of the Real Talk portion of the freshmen class meetings.

Primary Stakeholders:

- SON Advising Center
- SON Student Engagement
- SON Office of Academic Success
- SON EOF Program



Key Steps/Activities:

- Select a group of Sophomore student leaders to facilitate the Real Talk panel discussion
- Coordinate with staff members from the Office of Academic Success, Student Engagement, SON-EOF program to form a SON resource panel.
- Coordinate with faculty to discuss their role in engaging and presenting to the freshmen during Real Talk.

Effectiveness Measures:

- A post-assessment on 28 Newark freshmen

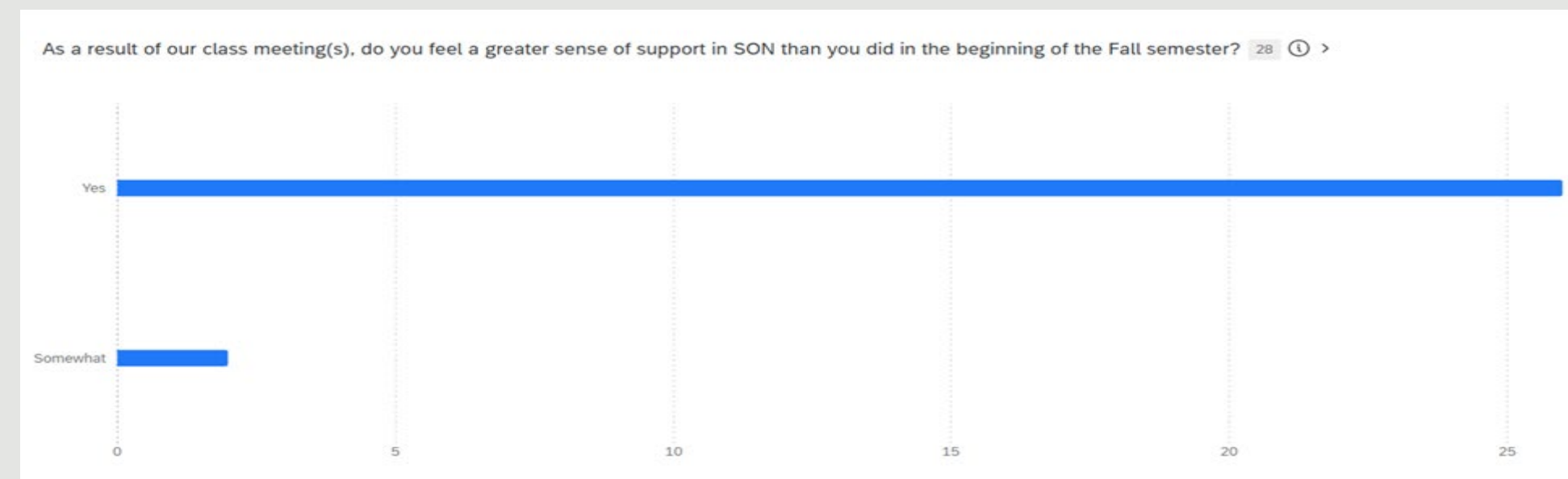
Greater Sense of the following

Belonging: 79% yes 21% somewhat

Social Acceptance: 74% yes 22% somewhat %4 No

Engagement: 82% Yes 18% Somewhat

Sense of Support: 97% Yes 3% Somewhat



Communication/Engagement:

- This information can be shared in our monthly SON retention committee meetings. Our retention meetings are attended by the representatives of each department in our Traditional 4-year Nursing Program. During these meetings we will have the opportunity to engage in two-way communication about the ongoing dynamics of this project.



Proposed Timeline:

- 90% freshmen attendance by mid-semester Fall 2025
- Scheduling all Real Talk programming by July for Fall 2025
- Adding one virtual meeting to the schedule by midterms

Current Status/Future Directions: (Phase 2)

- Collaboration with the Honors Living Learning Community for Cohosted Events
- The Ackerson Hour: First- & Second-Year Student Mixer Collaboration with the HLLC in the Atrium of Ackerson Hall
- Student Engagement Newark Peer Mentoring Program being fully staffed by Sophomore Scholars from the Newark Campus



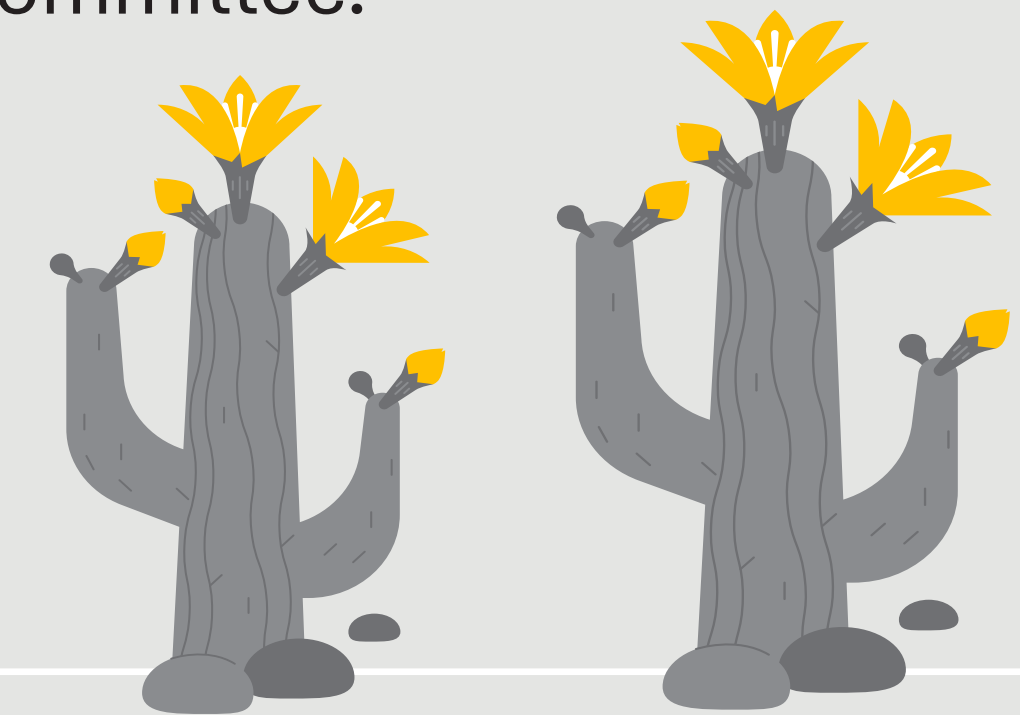
Abstract:

At Rutgers University Libraries (RUL), professional development or career guidance for librarians focuses on navigating reappointment, tenure, and promotion processes. Librarians contemplating next steps, facing career challenges, or with questions outside of tenure/promotion may feel at a loss, which can hinder the ability to identify steps to assist with problem solving.

The Libraries have a Faculty Mentoring Program Committee focused on promotion and tenure. Recently, RUL has recognized the need to expand programming to other areas across a career span, for example, to include information on leadership development. My proposed project will supplement this expanded programming by offering both a resource list (that highlights titles available through RUL) and planning for information sessions (such as panels) about how to grow in your career and navigate issues and challenges.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Rutgers University Libraries Faculty
- The Rutgers Libraries Faculty Mentoring Program Committee.



Key Steps/Activities:

- Create a LibGuide (resource guide) providing resources related to career development and navigating work and work/life issues.
- Create programming such as panel discussions around topics such as leadership development and moving into leadership/management.
- Discussion of career guidance as part of Faculty Mentoring Program Committee agenda.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Statistics on views for LibGuide.
- Participation—buy in and contributions from colleagues to LibGuide and programming along with attendance/engagements at events such as panels.
- Requests for feedback as part of assessment and to identify potential topics to include.

Communication/Engagement:

- Email updates and discussion items for RUL Faculty Mentoring Program Committee.
- Email updates regarding resource guide and programming to RUL faculty.
- Requests for feedback to RUL faculty/anonymous form for candid responses.

Proposed Timeline:

- Resource guide work started 2024-2025.
- Summer/Fall 2025 seek feedback and input on LibGuide from Faculty Mentoring Committee.
- Fall 2025—launch guide. Propose first program on leadership programs.
- Spring 2026—solicit feedback, formulate next steps.

Current Status/Future Directions:

- Proposal has been discussed with Faculty Mentoring Program Committee and VP for University Libraries/University Librarian.
- Although the preliminary focus is on faculty issues, as RUL has a significant number of staff, there may be opportunities to include library staff as the audience where the resources/programming could be of use to them.

Building a Stronger Community through Targeted Support: A Needs Assessment to Strengthen Peer Engagement within the Pathways Pre- Nursing Program

RLA Fellow: Nadia Rago-Iddrisu, Department Administrator
Project Champion: Jane Ferrick, Director of Office of Academic Success



Abstract:

This project, Building a Stronger Community through Targeted Support: A Needs Assessment to Strengthen Peer Engagement within the Pathways Pre-Nursing Program, seeks to identify and address the challenges faced by students in the School of Nursing-Newark Pathways Pre-Nursing Program. By conducting a comprehensive needs assessment, the project aims to understand student experiences, academic struggles, and barriers to peer engagement. Key areas of focus include the failure rates in foundational nursing courses and the lack of structured opportunities for student interaction outside the classroom. Using survey data and stakeholder input, the project will inform targeted interventions, such as academic support initiatives and peer mentorship programs. The ultimate goal is to foster a sense of belonging, improve academic performance, and enhance student retention. Findings and recommendations from this study will guide future efforts to build a more connected and supportive community within the Pathways program.

Primary Stakeholders:

- **Pathways to Nursing Students:** Both Traditional and Second-Degree tracks. As the primary beneficiaries, they will provide the data for the needs assessment
- **Pathways Program Faculty and Staff:** Faculty members teaching courses, academic advisors, and program administrators play a critical role in implementing changes informed by the needs assessment findings.
- **Nursing Program Faculty and Administrators:** They benefit from better-prepared students transitioning from pre-nursing to nursing
- **Alumni of the Pathways Program:** Graduates of the Pathways program who have successfully transitioned into nursing programs or careers. They can provide insights into what worked and what didn't, and they could serve as mentors or advocates for current students.

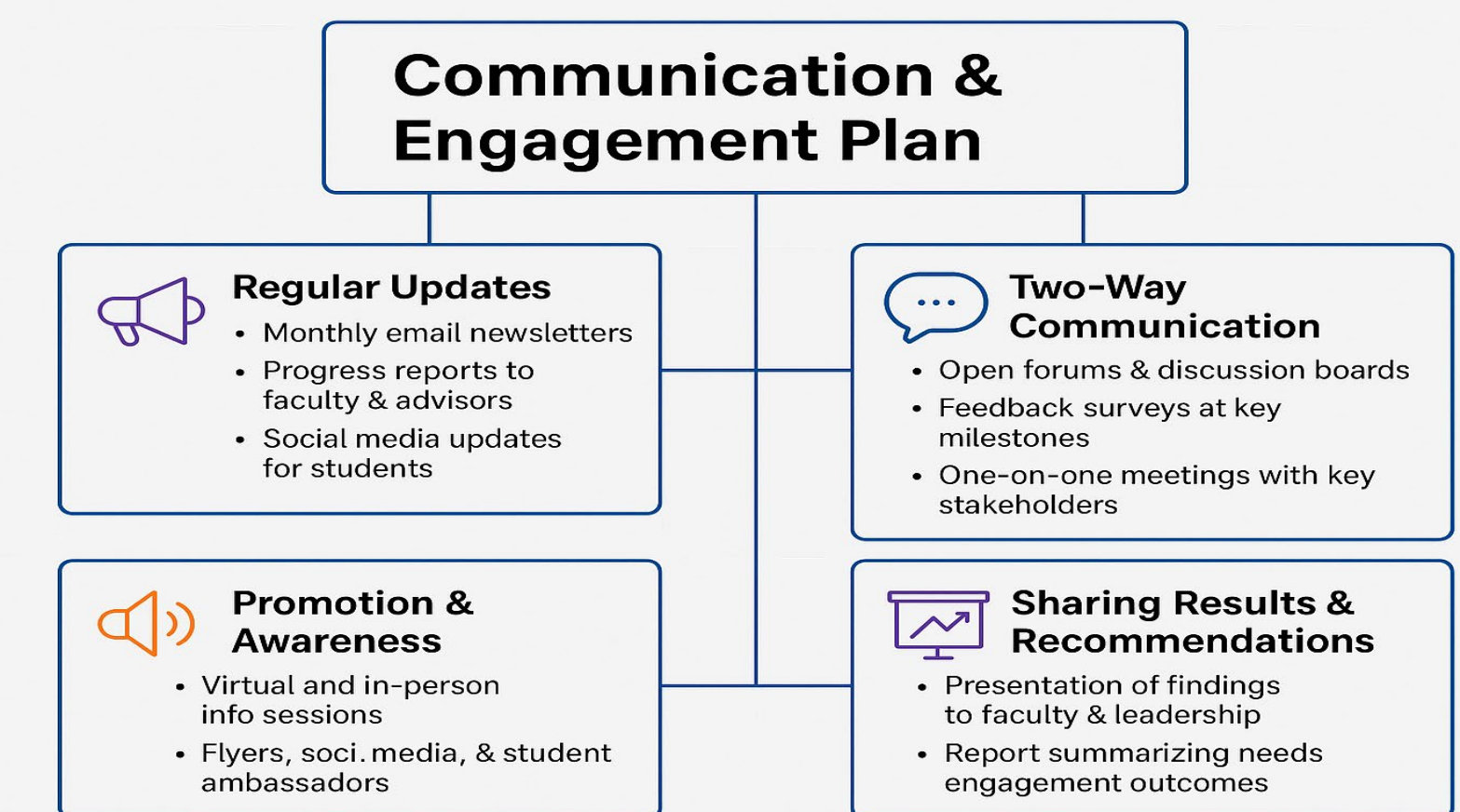
Key Steps/Activities:

- Design the Needs Assessment
- Conduct Data Collection
- Analyze and Interpret the Data
- Develop Recommendations and an Action Plan
- Engage Stakeholders
- Pilot Key Initiatives
- Implement Full-Scale Programs
- Monitor and Evaluate Progress

Effectiveness Measures:

- Increased Student Engagement and Sense of Community: Higher participation in Pathways-sponsored events, study groups, and peer mentoring programs
- Improved Academic Performance and Retention: Reduction in failure rates for critical courses
- Stronger Institutional Support and Stakeholder Involvement: Increased faculty and staff engagement in mentorship, tutoring, and advising for Pathways students.
- Next Steps: Measuring and Adjusting Over Time. By tracking these success indicators, I'll be able to justify program enhancements, and refine initiatives to better support Pathways students.

Communication/Engagement:



Proposed Timeline:



Current Status/Future Directions:

- Problem Identified
- Needs Assessment Designed
- Administer the Needs Assessment Survey
- Evaluate Success & Plan for Sustainability

Current Status

Limited peer engagement and support in the Pathways program

Future Direction

Enhanced opportunities for student interaction and community building

Empowering Global Voices

A DEIB-Focused Initiative for the Well-being, Engagement, and Leadership of Foreign-Born Women Faculty and Staff at Rutgers-SAS

Doaa Rashed, Ph.D. Teaching Professor & Director, Language Engagement Project

Zaire Dinzey, Ph.D., Vice Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion & Thomas Stephens, Ph.D., Director of the Language Center (TLC)

Abstract:

Empowering Global Voices celebrates the rich contributions of foreign-born women scholars and seeks to amplify their voices within the academic community. Through the development of a culturally responsive needs assessment tool, this project lays the foundation for initiatives that promote well-being, cultivate leadership, and strengthen community engagement. By centering the strengths and experiences of foreign-born faculty and staff, the project advances Rutgers-SAS's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and fosters a more vibrant, supportive, and globally connected academic environment.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Foreign-born women faculty and staff
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) offices
- University administration and leadership
- Students
- The broader academic community

Key Steps/Activities:

- To develop a Needs Assessment Survey/ Questionnaire

For the broader project:

- Invite colleagues to participate in data analysis of survey results
- Develop programming activities in response to findings from the survey/questionnaire
- Develop Success metrics for the whole project
- Pilot and assess results of some of those programming activities to ensure their effectiveness

Effectiveness Measures:

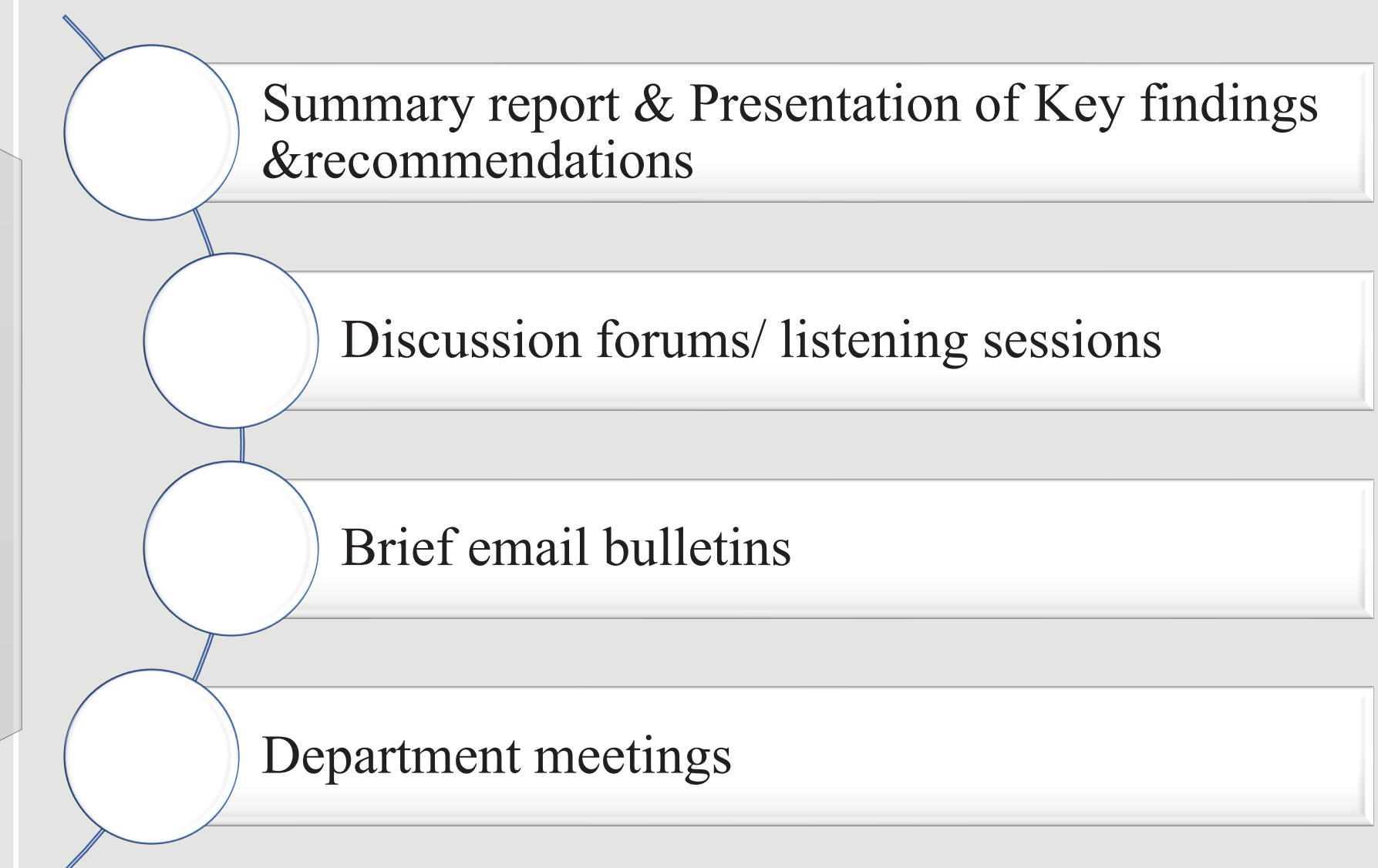
The completion and quality of the survey, ensuring it is inclusive, culturally responsive, and aligned with the project's goals;

The reach and engagement of the target population, as reflected in response; and

The richness and usability of the data collected, evaluated by the extent to which responses provide clear insights into areas such as well-being, leadership development needs, and sense of community.

Participant feedback on the clarity and relevance of the survey, as well as the identification of patterns or themes that inform future programming.

Communication/Engagement:



Current Status/Future Directions:

- A full project proposal was submitted for funding from the SAS-DEI Office.
- We received funding for one aspect of the project to be completed in the next academic year.

Proposed Timeline:

- **Survey Design:** IRB, Pilot survey, Launch survey
- **Data Analysis:** Summary report, Share findings stakeholders
- **Future Programming:** Share results with broader campus, community

Rutgers Pre-College Task Force

Aaron Reevey, Associate Director Rutgers Future Scholars
Marco Dinovelli, Associate Vice Chancellor



Abstract:

Thousands of students take part in one of Rutgers University many pre-college programs across all three of Rutgers campuses. With the creation of a University wide Pre-College Task Force this will allow current programs to share best practices, challenges, strengths, success, and data to help inform programming across all three of the Rutgers campuses. Ultimately, a key goal of this group would be to facilitate a conversation of what would need to happen to create a conditional acceptance to Rutgers University for students in their sophomore year of high school who have participated in pre-college programs connected to Rutgers University for 5 years or more. This conversation would include a look at the current admissions criteria, data, work ethic of applicants, and identify key stakeholders to include in the conversation. In addition, this conversation would continue to guide campus practices in student recruitment, student services, financial aid, merit and tuition.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Pre-College Program Directors
- Pre-College Students
- Admissions
- Enrollment Management



Key Steps/Activities:

September 2025: Meet with leadership in enrollment management and admissions.

November 2025: The creation of a Rutgers Pre-College Taskforce that meets bi-monthly to discuss challenges our students face and share best practices and updates.

February 2026: Meeting between pre-college taskforce and key stakeholders

January 2027: Rutgers Pre-College Symposium

Effectiveness Measures:

- Hosting the first Rutgers Pre-College Task Force Meeting
- identifying key university personnel from pre-college programs, enrollment management and admissions to be included in the conversation
- Data collection. What percentage of students from Rutgers pre-college programs get accepted to Rutgers?
- Develop conditional admissions criteria for students in pre-college programs to uphold.

Communication/Engagement:

- Bi-monthly meetings with pre-college program directors
- Meeting agendas
- Data collection and updates yearly
- Opportunities outside of the pre-college task force to network and create opportunities for synergy.
- Tapping into shared resources at the University level.



Current Status/Future Directions:

- It takes a village to get our young people to and through.
- Taking advantage of opportunities at the university to bring people together with shared interests and responsibilities.

Artificial Intelligence in Maternal-Fetal Medicine Consortium: Reducing Maternal & Infant Mortality in NJ Through AI-Enabled Research Solutions

Fellow: Amy Rockman, Director of Artificial Intelligence Center of Excellence
Champion: Dr. Amy P. Murtha, MD, Dean of Robert Wood Johnson Medical School



Abstract:

New Jersey ranks among the highest-risk U.S. states for maternal and infant mortality, with strikingly disparate impacts across the states' diverse population. Most deaths are considered preventable and linked to complex, multifactorial causes. This capstone activates the formation of an interdisciplinary consortium to reduce maternal and infant mortality through the development of targeted artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled solutions. By bringing together experts in maternal-fetal medicine, computer science, and public health, the group will identify key drivers, define high-impact research questions, and conduct AI-based projects using multimodal data to enhance diagnostics, prediction, and decision support. The project will culminate in a grant summary, laying the groundwork for a broader research initiative aimed at advancing maternal and infant health outcomes statewide.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Maternal-Fetal Medicine and Other Relevant Medical Specialists
- AI & Data Science Experts
- Public Health Leaders
- Health System Administrators
- Patients & Community Advocates
- Government & Policymakers
- Foundations & Funders

Key Steps/Activities:

- **Establish team** of interdisciplinary leadership
- **Conduct review** of maternal and infant outcomes data
- **Align emerging AI capabilities with clinical priorities**
- **Engage stakeholders** through outreach / consultation
- **Define high-impact research aims** and a pilot focus
- **Secure aligned funding** with pilot project proposal
- Launch pilot and **implement monitoring strategies**
- **Develop sustained communication** with stakeholders
- **Expand** initiatives and partnerships to scale projects and strengthen long-term support

Effectiveness Measures:

Research & Innovation Advancement

- Focused AI pilot use cases; Fundable research concept developed, and funding secured
- Promising AI performance metrics obtained

Impact Potential & Outcome Measurement

- Identified outcomes expected to improve with research advancement, including MMR/IMR impact
- Continued monitoring of outcomes

Consortium Functioning

- Sustained interdisciplinary collaboration
- Continued stakeholder engagement and alignment

Communication/Engagement:

Connect: Initiate discussions, ideation sessions, and regular interdisciplinary team meetings

Listen: Gather stakeholder input, consult subject matter experts, and facilitate focus groups

Share: Disseminate updates, maintain shared workspaces, develop manuscripts/publications

Refine: Incorporate feedback, adjust strategy

Amplify: Present outcomes, engage broader communities, and brief funders and partners

...Repeat: Repeat communication loop

Proposed Timeline (Current Status / Future Directions):

Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	Mar-Apr 2025	May 2025	June-July 2025	Aug-Sep 2025	October 2025 - Onward
Expert Team Assembled	Met with Stakeholders and National Perinatal Research Consortium	Reviewed AI in MFM Landscape & Baseline Data	Finalized Research Aims	Identified Funding Opportunities	Submitted Initial Grant Proposal	Start AI Adaptation & Validation	Expand Partnerships and Scale Projects	Begin Real-World Validation; Submit Larger Grant Proposals	Refine Algorithms, Develop CDSS; Monitor Metrics, Understand Impact, Publish and Share

We are here

UNDERSTANDING RESEARCH THROUGH AN UNDERGRADUATE LENS

Julie Roncinske, Assistant Dean for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Camden–Office of the Dean
Project Champion: Dr. Thomas Risch, Vice Chancellor of Research, Rutgers–Camden



<p>Abstract: On the Rutgers–Camden campus, undergraduate research is a cornerstone of our mission. Undergraduate research can be defined as a scholarly or creative pursuit that a student engages in either independently or in conjunction with a faculty mentor, outside of the traditional classroom experience. The impact of participating in undergraduate research on a student’s trajectory cannot be denied. Unfortunately, many undergraduate students either face challenges that make it difficult for them to commit to the hours needed for research or have trouble seeing themselves as researchers. Consequently, students often miss out on the many benefits undergraduate research provides. My project proposes to survey undergraduate students to better understand the barriers they are facing and what their expectation of research – and a researcher – is. I believe the survey would give us valuable insight into our students’ challenges and anxieties and allow us to develop effective measures to address these problems.</p>	<p>Primary Stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undergraduate students• Faculty• Staff• Members of the administration	
<p>Key Steps/Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create the survey• Completion of survey• Analyze survey• Develop solutions• Implement solutions	<p>Effectiveness Measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor if the number of student researchers in the annual Celebration of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (CURCA), a flagship event for our campus, increases.• Track the increase of research components added into undergraduate classes.• Observe if faculty/student research mentorships increases.	<p>Communication/Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Email updates, informing primary stakeholders of progress on the project.• In-person and/or virtual town halls, where discussion and feedback are welcomed.
<p>Proposed Timeline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summer 2025: Create survey• Fall 2025: Completion of survey• Winter 2026: Analyze survey responses• Spring 2026: Develop solutions• Summer 2026: Prepare to implement solutions for Fall 2026	<p>Current Status/Future Directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fresh off the success of April 2025’s CURCA, initiate a social media campaign showcasing and celebrating undergraduate research, to reinforce its importance and transformative power.• In Summer 2025, invite primary stakeholders to begin collaborating on the survey.	

Strengthening Capacity and Building Community: A Professional Development Initiative for Staff at the School of Public Health

Michelle Ruidiaz-Santiago, Executive Assistant, Department of Health Behavior, Society & Policy, School of Public Health
Project Champion: K Maynard, Director of Staff and Faculty Affairs, School of Public Health, Rutgers Health



Abstract:

Over the past seven years, the School of Public Health (SPH) has experienced significant growth, including the expansion of our Newark and New Brunswick/Piscataway campuses. This expansion, along with the physical separation of our campuses, has created challenges in communication, collaboration, and community building among staff. The shift to remote work has further isolated staff members, exacerbating feelings of disconnection and hindering the development of cohesive relationships across departments. As a result, there is a need for a structured professional development program to address these challenges, promote collaboration, and foster a sense of community and shared purpose among the staff. The goals of this project include: (Phase 1) developing a **Peer Mentoring Program for Staff**: Pairing senior staff with junior colleagues to encourage knowledge sharing, professional networking, and continuous learning; and (Phase 2) create **Skills Development Pathways for Staff**, creating tailored development plans that enhance leadership, communication, and technology skills, based on individual needs identified in Phase 1. *This proposal will focus on Phase 1.*

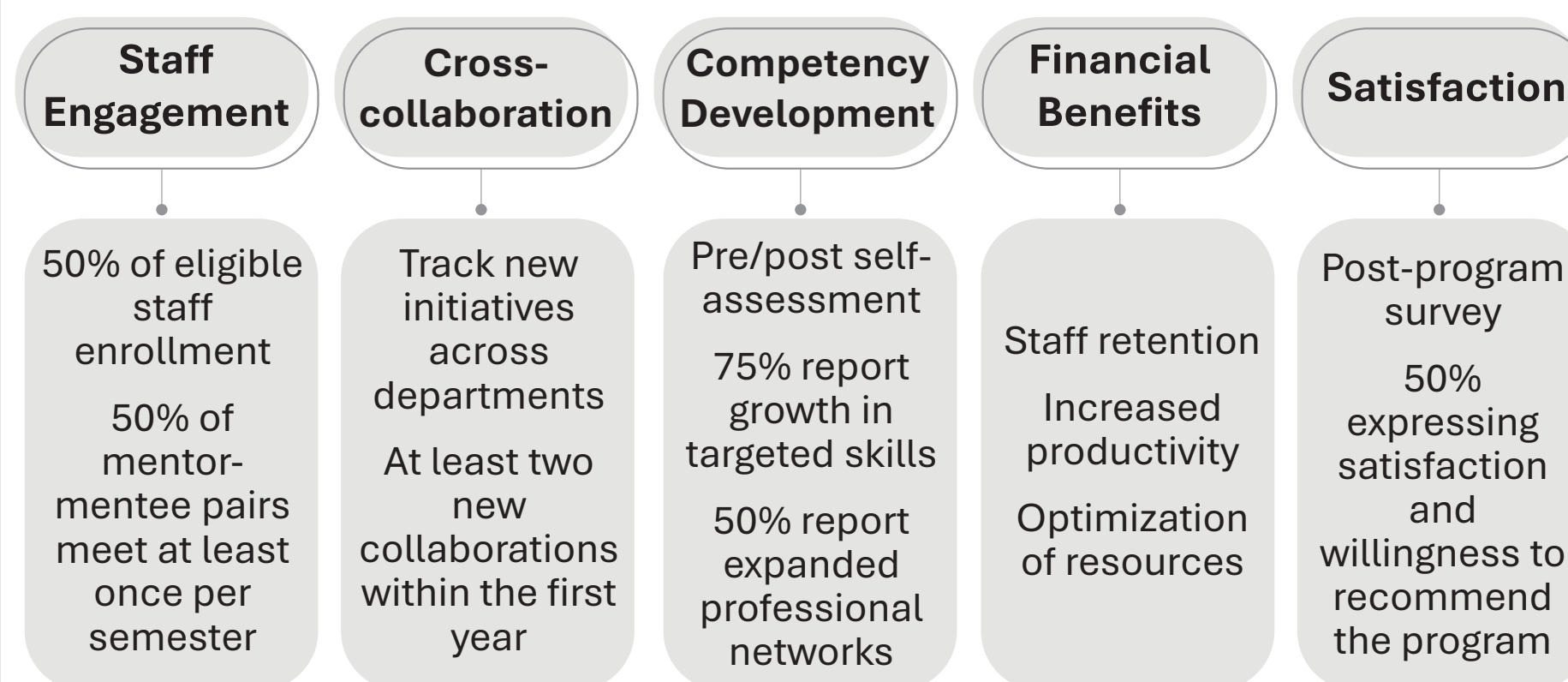
Primary Stakeholders:

- SPH support staff, including administrative and academic staff that will directly benefit from mentoring and professional development opportunities
- SPH Leadership
- SPH faculty engaging with staff
- SPH current and future students
- Greater Rutgers community engaging in collaborations with SPH faculty and staff

Key Steps/Activities:

- Final analysis of needs assessment conducted by SPH Staff and Faculty Affairs, and presentation of the results to the stakeholders, including SPH leadership and staff.
- Development of mentoring guidelines and a mentoring tool to define mentor and mentees' goals and expectations.
- Creation of a staff committee to coordinate the mentoring and professional development programs, to include a representative from the SPH Leadership, and at least one representative from each subunit at SPH.
- Development of a mixed-methods survey to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of the program.

Effectiveness Measures:



The long-term sustainability and success of the program will depend on leadership support, participant retention, and resource allocation, ensuring that the program remains a valuable and impactful component of staff development at SPH.

Communication/Engagement:

- Progress updates will be shared at least once per semester.
- A Canvas page will be created to serve as a centralized resource where staff can access information on timelines, mentorship guidelines, training schedules, and program updates.
- Additional channels for input will be created through open forums (e.g., a yearly staff retreat) and periodical surveys where staff can share their experiences and provide feedback about the program.
- A staff committee will be created to represent different departments and units within the school.

Proposed Timeline:



Current Status/Future Directions:

- The SPH Office of Staff and Faculty Affairs is in the process of finalizing the SPH staff needs assessment. Once the data collection stage is completed and the results are analyzed, the staff will be presented with alternatives for development, including the initiatives developed in this proposal, that they will rank based on their professional priorities.
- Based initial feedback, we anticipate that this proposal will be well-received by SPH staff. It will be submitted to the SPH Leadership for approval in June 2025, for potential implementation during the 2025-26 academic year.
- During the final program evaluation, we will measure the program effectiveness and refine the mentorship structure in preparation for Phase 2 (Skill Development Pathways), planned for September 2026.

LEADING FROM THE MIDDLE: EMPOWERING DEPARTMENT CHAIRS AT RUTGERS

Nuria Sagarra, Prof and Chair, Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Project Champion, Juli Wade, SAS Executive Dean, RU-NB

Abstract:

Over the 35 years of a typical tenure-track academic career, there is a 60% chance that mid-career faculty will serve as Department Chair (Dettmar, 2022). However, most leadership programs center on early- or senior-career faculty, and the few leadership resources for Department Chairs are limited to:

1. Leadership workshops; books for higher education leaders (e.g., Gigliotti, forthcoming; Ruben et al., 2021),
2. HR training on practical issues such as managing budgets, processing appointments, and promotions.
3. How-to-chair-a-department books, written by Department Chairs of liberal arts colleges (e.g., Buller, 2012) and small universities (e.g., Chu, 2006), unfamiliar with the needs of large public universities like Rutgers.

This project aims to make Rutgers-NB Department Chairs more efficient leaders through a handbook and specialized workshops. Rutgers-NB has a *Departmental Mentoring Handbook* (Lerner, 2022) and offers workshops at the Department Leaders Program, but both lack the insight of Department Chairs. By uniting the knowledge of seasoned leadership professionals and the in-the-trenches expertise of faculty who have served as Department Chairs, this project may help the 212 Department Chairs at Rutgers-NB, as well as those in other Big Ten universities, become more effective leaders and grow professionally and personally.

Primary Stakeholders:

•Direct:

Department Chairs.

•Indirect:

Executive Deans

Area Deans

Undergraduate/Graduate Program Directors

TT and NTT faculty

Lecturers

Staff

Undergraduate and graduate students.

Leadership professionals (e.g., CFS, OOL).

Key Steps/Activities:

- Gather BTAA data about leadership programs for Department Chairs.
- Interview Rutgers-NB Executive Deans, Area Deans, and two Dept Chairs per area.
- Share the findings with CFS and OOL professionals.
- Write a handbook for Dept. Chairs of Big Ten univ.
- Offer workshops led by Dept Chairs for Dept Chairs.

Effectiveness Measures:

- **Quantitative:** BTAA data, interviews with Deans and Department Chairs, and assessment of user satisfaction.
- **Qualitative:** Feedback from reviewers of the Handbook for Department Chairs and from the Department Chairs participating in the interactive workshops.

Communication/Engagement:

- Interview questions will be created with feedback from leadership professionals.
- BTAA and interview data will be shared with both Rutgers-NB academic administrators and the higher education community (article sent to *The Chronicle of Higher Education*).
- Deans will be encouraged to inform Department Chairs of the handbook and the workshops.

Proposed Timeline:

- Year 1 - gather data and complete interviews.
- Year 2 – share findings (Rutgers + the community).
- Year 3 – offer workshop recommendations to DLP.

Current Status/Future Directions:

- I already interviewed Executive Dean Juli Wade.
- A similar study can be conducted in collaboration with Department Chairs and leadership professionals at other Big Ten universities, to expand the results to other large public universities.

Micro- and nanoplastics: organizing a small group to tackle a big problem

Phoebe Stapleton, Associate Professor, Dept of Pharmacology and Toxicology, EMSOP

Drs. Helmut Zarbl, Debra Laskin, and Emily Barrett



Abstract:

New Jersey is in a unique position. Nearly 10% of all Superfund sites, or areas requiring waste remediation, are located in the state, but it has never held a Superfund grant. These grants provide funds to identify and assess practical solutions to protect human and community health. With the formation of a strong working group, Rutgers University is in the unique position to target this opportunity.

Micro- and nanoplastics (MNP) have recently been identified as a burgeoning environmental and human health concern by the WHO, EPA, and NIEHS. The goal for this RLA project was to organize a working group of scientists at Rutgers and community members in the area of MNP research to identify our strengths in this area. Rutgers is a large institution, with duplicates of departments and instrumentation. Conversations between scientists of similar interests are not always easy or common between departments, schools, or campuses. Providing a space for conversation and organization of a working group will provide collaborative opportunities and an understanding of cores/facilities between campuses.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Community Members
- Rutgers Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute (EOHHSI) scientists
- Rutgers Center for Environmental Exposure and Disease (CEED) scientists
- Policy Makers
- Funding Agencies

Key Steps/Activities:

- Rutgers scientists contacted
- Two community engagement groups contacted [Groundwork Elizabeth and Beyond Plastic of Monmouth Beach]
- Meetings with individual community groups to identify common concerns
- Discussion of possible collaborative projects
- Collaborative grant applications submitted for pilot funding

Effectiveness Measures:

- Identification of common environmental concerns between community and Rutgers scientists
- Multiple meetings with community members
- Collaborative pilot grant applications submitted
- Successful data collection
- Successful data analysis
- Dissemination of results
- Submission of large Superfund proposal

Communication/Engagement:

- Rutgers scientists engaged in monthly meetings
- Community members engaged
- Quarterly email and Zoom meetings
- Formal meetings with community members and support
- Organization of group data collection and analyses
- Flyer and presentation will be developed with community members to disseminate findings

Proposed Timeline:

- Anticipated timeline of 18 months to include:
 - Planning of collaborative 2025 and 2026 summer student projects
 - Coordinated data collection and assessment with community partners
 - Dissemination of information to community partners

Current Status/Future Directions:

- Rutgers faculty meetings are occurring on a bi-weekly basis
- Quarterly updates with community partners
- Because of fiscal uncertainties, planned summer 2025 collaborative projects are being reorganized for 2026
- Data collection, data analysis, dissemination of results being planned
- Organization and submission of Superfund proposal (*as available); if not, reframe for other collaborative opportunities

Leveraging Collaborations at the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy to Foster Inclusive Excellence

RLA Fellow: Melissa Vargas, Ed.M., Associate Director/EOF Manager

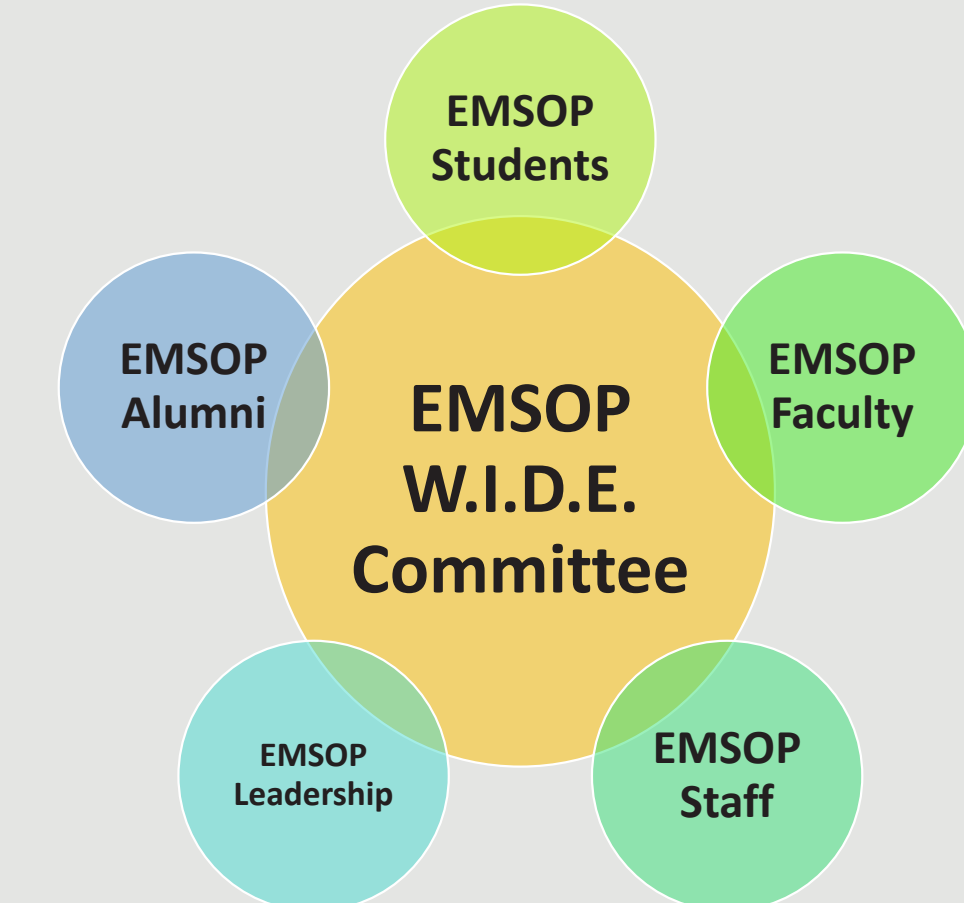
Project Champion: Nancy Cintron, M.S.W., Associate Dean for DEI and Student Affairs & EOF Director



Abstract:

Students enrolled at the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy (EMSOP) have often disclosed challenges navigating the academic, social, and professional aspects of pursuing a pharmacy career. Students have also reported challenges in identifying with pharmacy career pathways due to perceived lack of diversity. Students from underserved communities (e.g., first-generation, low-income, and minoritized groups), can positively benefit from participation in spaces that intentionally cultivate a sense of belonging and inclusion. The proposed action is to organize and implement **Cultivating Connections: An EMSOP Student Forum** in collaboration with members of the W.I.D.E (Wellness, Inclusion, Diversity, and Engagement) Committee. The aim of this initiative is to foster a culture of inclusion by allowing students to freely engage in dialogue on topics such as manifestations of racism in their personal lives, higher education experiences, and in healthcare. The space will also facilitate discussion of concepts such as exclusion, privilege, colorblindness, and structural inequality.

Primary Stakeholders:



Key Steps/Activities:

- Create and spearhead a W.I.D.E. project **subcommittee**
- Identify faculty/staff/administrative **panelists**
- Check the EMSOP academic/exam and Pharmacy Governing Council events schedules for event **date**
- Create and circulate a **flyer** to EMSOP Community
- Design and distribute a post-event **survey** to gain feedback from event participants
- Analyze the **data** collected to guide strategic planning for the next inclusion initiative at EMSOP

Effectiveness Measures:



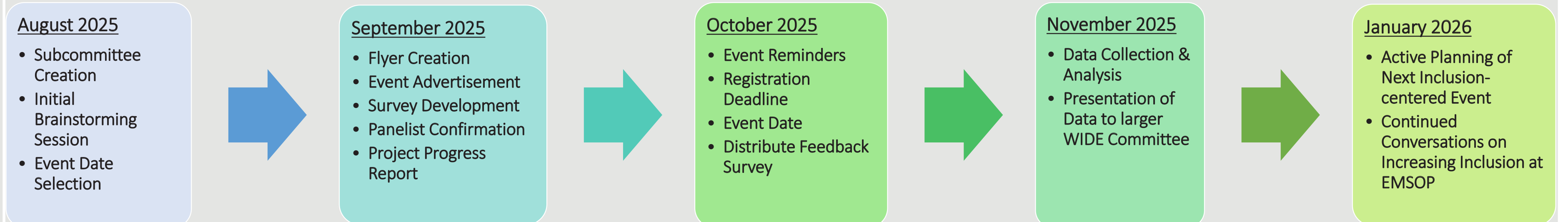
Communication/Engagement:

- **Modalities:** Zoom, Email, In-Person, Phone Calls
- **Tools:** Google Calendar, Google Docs, project progress reports
- **Frequency:** Periodic check-in meetings to measure project progress
- **Content:** Brainstorming, feedback, progress reporting, event advertising strategy, data analysis, ongoing strategic planning conversations

Current Status/Future Directions:

- **Current Status:** Project is in ideation stage.
- **Long Term Goals:** Increased EMSOP community **engagement** with inclusion-centered initiatives, increased sense of **belonging**, increased **sensitivity** and **awareness** of inclusion issues, and increased **buy-in** among stakeholders.

Proposed Timeline:



Fostering Inclusive Teaching Practices in the School of Health Professions: Understanding and Supporting Faculty Needs

Kristen Victorino, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Associate Professor, Speech-Language Pathology Program

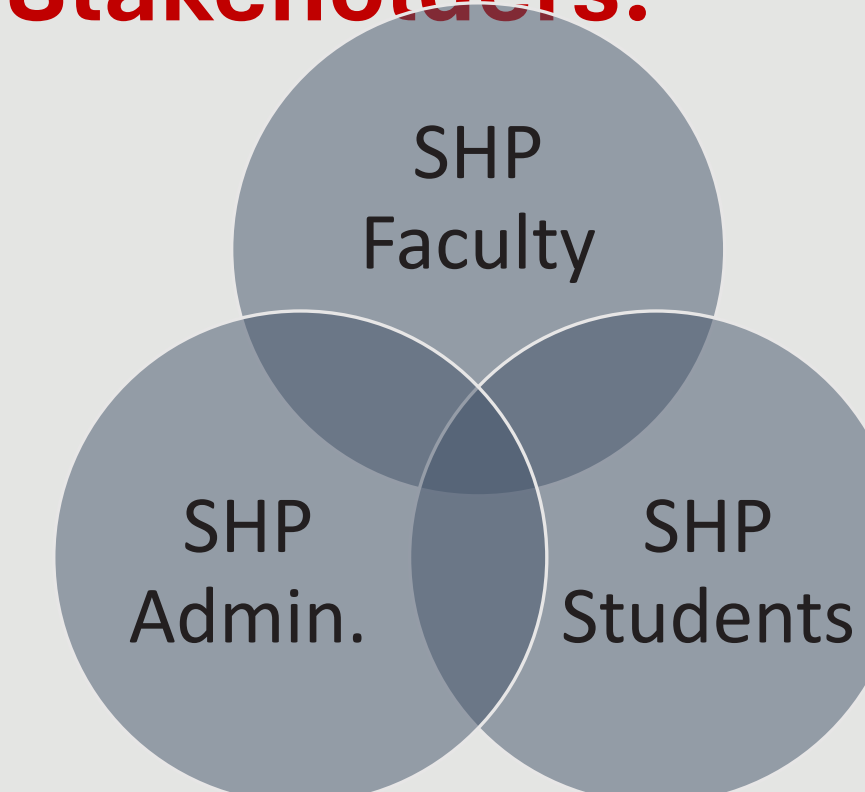
Project Champions: Tracie Addy, Ph.D., Director, Rutgers-NB Institute for Teaching, Innovation, & Inclusive Pedagogy
& Karen Shapiro, Ph.D., SHP Vice Dean & Chief Academic Officer



Abstract:

Graduate students in the Rutgers School of Health Professions (SHP) are diverse in many ways, including race, ethnicity, language background, age, gender, and disability status. They come from a range of undergraduate institutions with varied academic majors, resulting in inconsistent levels of preparation within cohorts. Many students struggle to keep up with a rigorous traditional health science curriculum. While there is research on inclusive teaching practices that could improve student outcomes, SHP faculty are not generally trained in the scholarship of teaching and learning or pedagogy, and currently have limited access to resources to assist with developing their teaching practices. Additionally, SHP faculty, who teach in the clinical health professions, may have unique experiences and needs. This project proposes a systematic needs assessment, including a survey of SHP faculty that will examine their experiences and perceptions, and a review of resources currently available through Rutgers Health and Rutgers University at large. Findings will subsequently shape plans for resource development for SHP faculty and will ultimately benefit student success.

Primary Stakeholders:



Key Steps/Activities:



Effectiveness Measures:

The proposal will be effective when:

- Current resources have been identified and itemized
- A survey is successfully developed, and its dissemination has been approved by SHP administration
- A survey response rate of >30% is achieved
- Actionable data have been retrieved from the needs assessment

Communication/Engagement:

- SHP Dean's office (Dr. Shapiro) will be copied on relevant communications (e.g., contact with Methods and Statistical Support Team)
- The purpose of the survey will be communicated to faculty to promote engagement
- Summary updates will be shared when benchmarks have been achieved, including any data collected/analyzed
- Communication about any subsequent plans or products will be coordinated through the Dean's office

Proposed Timeline:

- Review of current resources: Summer 2025
- Survey development: Fall 2025
- Dissemination of survey: Early 2026
- Analysis & sharing of survey results: Spring 2026
- Creation of new SHP resources: Summer 2026/Fall 2026

Current Status/Future Directions:

- The project is still in the conceptual stages. The SHP Dean's office has indicated preliminary support.
- Discussions have included the potential for development of a faculty webinar on inclusive teaching practices, to be included in the SHP new faculty onboarding series (available to all faculty).
- In Spring 2025, a new "Classroom Inclusivity Series" was launched, which may make some of these efforts redundant. That program will be included in our analysis to consider whether it meets the needs of SHP faculty.
- Some aspects of this project could yield results of interest outside of Rutgers, e.g., in interprofessional health science or SoTL publications.

New Ventures Business Mentorship Program



Kate Woodside, Senior Program Coordinator, New Ventures, Office for Research
Champion: Dan Benderly, Associate Director, New Ventures



Abstract:

New Ventures (NV) offers guidance and modest gap funding to coach RU innovators to commercialize their invention. One thing needed to build a successful start-up is an experienced business leader to either mentor the existing “team” of innovators or to join the team as the business lead/executive. Developing a “bench” of leaders to coach teams in the business skills needed would increase the capacity of the NV unit. This roster of mentors could also be tapped to join the start-up. This proposal creates a framework to launch a pilot phase with which the NV staff can identify, recruit, match, and regularly engage with these volunteer experts. The goal of this pilot phase is to evaluate this program’s effectiveness, value, and the NV unit’s ability to sustain this effort, given limited resources. If so, this pilot would then provide a roadmap to implement this program more broadly within the NV unit.

Primary Stakeholders:

- NSF-funded I-Corps regional & national program teams 
- Office for Research units
- RU unit implementing pilot phase
- Business mentors & their companies
- Venture Capital firms & angel investors
- New Jersey & the people of New Jersey 
- Future customers & beneficiaries of the innovation

Key Steps/Activities:

- ✓ Initial approvals & pilot unit chosen
- ✓ Research other mentor programs to hear best practices, pain points, etc. (ongoing)
- Initiate discussions with internal stakeholder units in the Office for Research
- Identify mentor “archetypes” & value proposition
- ✓ Evaluate databases available
- Finalize operational details of the program
- Reiterate, refine & simplify program to ensure best chance of success & continuance, given current resource constraints
- Final Approvals!

Effectiveness Measures:

Short-term

- Approval to initiate pilot phase
- # of business mentors enrolled in pilot phase

Long term effectiveness measures

- # mentored teams that receive seed funding or grants (“start-up” phase) vs those that go it “alone”
- # mentors that continue with their teams & enter the start-up phase (as an outside advisor or CEO)
- Mentor retention & satisfaction with the program

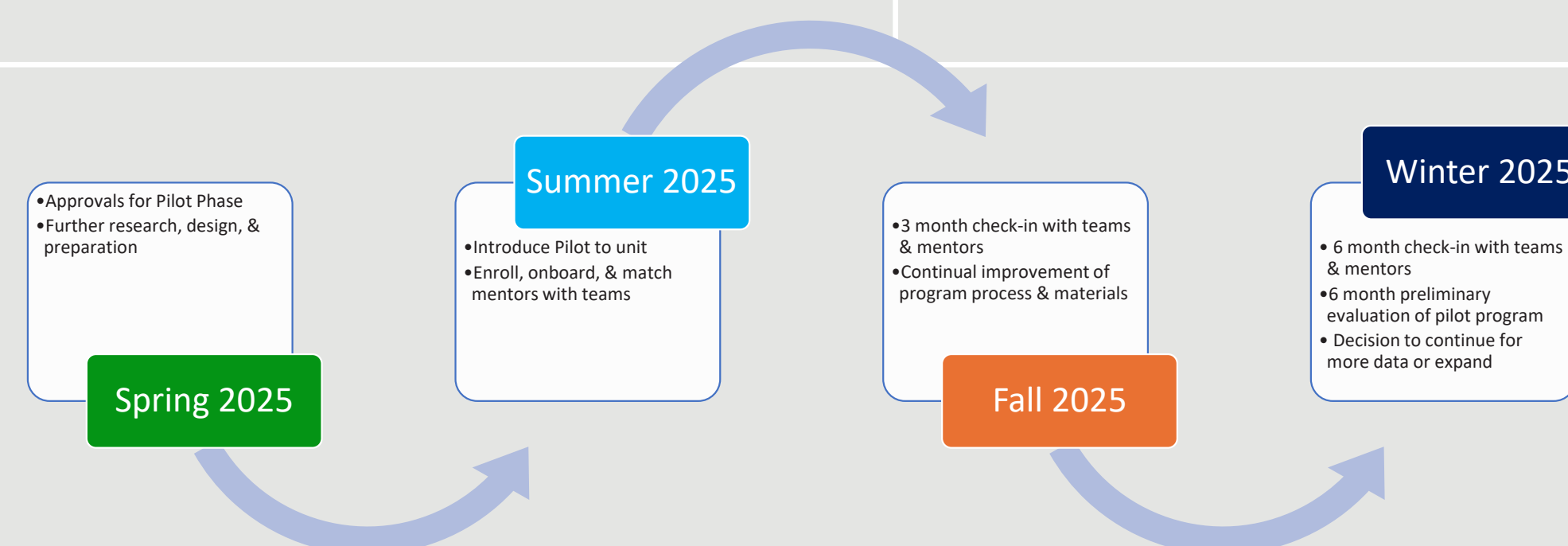
Communication/Engagement:

- Create materials and a communications plan to inform key stakeholders
- Meeting with the Innovation Ventures team to further refine, troubleshoot, and get buy-in for the pilot
- Meet with other involved OfR units (IT, Marketing) to receive feedback
- Regular weekly meetings prior to the launch of the pilot
- Materials to promote & engage the potential mentors

Current Status

- RU pilot unit has been identified
- Initial research on existing programs at other institutions
- Initial research on technology needed to capture mentor information & engage

Timeline:



One-Stop-Shop for Faculty Scholarship Data

Julia Zappi, Senior Data Analyst

Michael E. Zwick, Ph.D., Senior Vice President for Research



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Office of Organizational Leadership

Abstract:

In order for faculty to submit for Tenure and Promotion, apply for grants and update websites to promote their work, they need to enter or submit the same information in multiple places across different units at the university. This can be burdensome to faculty and can be difficult to ensure that all data is up to date and accurate. Faculty themselves identified this as an issue in charge S-2110 to the Senate where they requested a “one-stop-shop Research Information Management System that enables researchers to constantly update information on research accomplishments across all platforms.” I’m proposing that I generate a value proposition statement for units across the university for why they should adopt ORCID – a free, unique, persistent identifier for faculty that is already being mandated by federal agencies when submitting grants and publications – as a one-stop source of truth for all scholarship information, where the data can then be extracted and used for different purposes.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Office for Research
- Rutgers Libraries
- Office of Institutional Research and Decision Support
- University Academic Affairs
- Rutgers Faculty

Key Steps/Activities:

- Develop tailored questions for each stakeholder group.
- Schedule and conduct meetings with each stakeholder group, gathering information using the prepared questions.
- Analyze the collected data to understand the university's current scholarly data practices.
- Craft compelling value proposition statements for each of the stakeholder groups and present them.

Effectiveness Measures:

- Track the number of stakeholders agreeing to and attending meetings.
- Assess the quality of gathered information (technical requirements, pain points, processes).
- Evaluate stakeholder engagement through feedback.
- Evaluate the clarity and persuasiveness of value propositions, measured by stakeholder buy-in for the overall project implementation.

Communication/Engagement:

- Use scheduled meetings as the primary channel for keeping stakeholders informed.
- Supplement meetings with follow-up emails containing next steps and project updates.
- Maintain a shared folder with resources and a space for stakeholders to make comments and edit drafts of the value proposition statements.
- Present value propositions and key findings to each stakeholder group.

Proposed Timeline:

- Information Gathering (Months 1-3): Identify stakeholders, develop questions, conduct meetings
- Value Proposition Development (Months 3-4): Compile/analyze data, draft value propositions
- Presentation of Value Proposition (Months 4-6): Schedule and deliver value proposition presentations

Current Status/Future Directions:

- Current Status: The project is currently in the initial planning phase and has not yet commenced.
- Future Directions: The ultimate goal of this project is to secure stakeholder buy-in and commitment for the broader, long-term project of implementing ORCID as a university-wide solution for collecting and sharing faculty data.

Enrollment Management of Accounting Majors

Li Zhang, Associate Professor of AIS Department

Courtney McAnuff, Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Office of Organizational Leadership

Abstract:

The percentage of accounting majors to the overall Rutgers Business School undergraduate students has decreased significantly over the last decade. Although it is consistent with the national trend, the lower enrollment of accounting majors creates several issues to class scheduling, including cancellation of classes and unavailability of important electives for students who want to learn more. The lower enrollment of undergraduate students also negatively affected the enrollment of graduate programs. On the other hand, there is strong demand for accounting students in the job market. The disconnect between education and employment has hurt students' interests by not guiding them to the majors that could lead to a financially stable career path. Prospective students benefit from more information on potential career opportunities and make more informed decisions.

Primary Stakeholders:

- Prospective students
- University enrollment management office
- RBS undergraduate offices
- AIS faculty members

Key Steps/Activities:

- Work with the university enrollment management offices to increase the yield rate and awareness of accounting career success.
- More presence on Rutgers campuses: Including working with student organizations, running bus ads, collaborating with the veterans' office, and hosting information booth on Rutgers Day.
- Collaborate with future scholars' office to present possible accounting career paths to students.
- Host Accounting success story series to all RBS students.

Effectiveness Measures:

- The success could be measured by the year-to-year Accounting major growth on the New Brunswick and Newark campuses.
- Further analysis by comparing the growth with the growth in other business majors or Accounting major growth in other universities.
- Student surveys could be administered to track their experience during the admission process and their awareness of accounting career success.

Communication/Engagement:

- Present the proposal at the departmental faculty meeting to gain feedback and support from other faculty members.
- Communicate with various stakeholders frequently to improve the feasibility and effectiveness of the project during the implementation.

Proposed Timeline:

- Open-ended without a completion date because enrollment management is essential to the ongoing development of the department and RBS.
- A few activities are scheduled in the upcoming months.

Current Status/Future Directions:

- RBS-NB Open House; Beta Alpha Psi ("BAP") Annual Banquet; Information booth on Rutgers Day in April. Presentation about accounting career at RBS summer camp in July.
- Discuss with RBS Dean's office and Rutgers Future Scholars Office in May.
- Work with AIS faculty members to have more presence in high schools, community colleges, and Rutgers campuses.