

New Brunswick Strategic Planning Proposal

Proposal Title: Health, Wellness, and Science in Community Campus Summit

Proposal Initiator: Department of Communication

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Primary Strategic Priority/Foundational Element/Integrating Theme Addressed (Select one)

- Envision Tomorrow's University
- Build Faculty Excellence
- Transform the Student Experience
- Enhance Our Public Prominence
- Strong Core of Sciences and Humanities
- Inclusive, Diverse, and Cohesive Culture
- Effective and Efficient Infrastructure and Staff
- Financial Resources Sufficient to Fund Our Aspirations
- Robust Shared Governance, Academic Freedom, and Effective Communication
- Cultures, Diversity, and Inequality—Local and Global
- Improving the Health and Wellness of Individuals and Populations
- Creating a Sustainable World through Innovation, Engineering, and Technology
- Educating Involved Citizens and Effective Leaders for a Dynamic World
- Creative Expression and the Human Experience
- Measuring Progress and Defining Success

Proposal Abstract (brief summary of the proposal – 250-word limit):

With the new strategic plan and major additions of the medical school and other health-related units at Rutgers, opportunities for powerful and innovative interdisciplinary partnerships related to health, wellness, and science have been greatly enhanced. A challenge in enabling these partnerships is the size of the current network of faculty and units and the diversity of interests and foci of research and pedagogy. There are currently few mechanisms that promote networking and exploration of collaborative cross-disciplinary partnerships.

We propose an annual two-day summit of health, wellness, and science-related Rutgers faculty to learn about existing initiatives, projects, programs, and interests across the New Brunswick campus. Participants would experience a showcase of Rutgers community-related health, wellness, and science initiatives. The Summit would also include opportunities for networking and fomenting possible partnerships across units. As a follow-on activity, we would launch the online “partnership incubator” to facilitate, track and celebrate the formation of partnerships for funded research, pedagogical activity, and service and community projects.

A further long-term vision for this annual summit is the inclusion of external stakeholders such as community leaders, funding agencies, and regional press. Future summits would involve workshops

for community health leaders/facilitators; spokespersons of health-related organizations; science journalists; health policy makers and staffers.

The event and the follow-on activity will be convened and designed by Department of Communication faculty whose expertise includes communication design, communication networks, facilitation, collaboration, and community health communication. We have begun already to identify partners and potential co-sponsors of these initiatives and will involve multiple disciplinary units in the design of these events and tools should we receive approval.

Full Proposal Description (5-page limit)

"Discovery increasingly requires the expertise of individuals with different perspectives—from different disciplines and often from different nations—working together to accommodate the extraordinary complexity of today's science and engineer challenges." (National Science Foundation, 2006)

"Translational sciences comprise the process of turning observations in the laboratory and clinic into effective interventions that improve the health of individuals and the public — from diagnostics and therapeutics to medical procedures and behavioral changes" (NIH, <http://www.ncats.nih.gov/about/about.html>)

"There is a growing recognition of the importance of interdisciplinary teams in addressing contemporary societal and scientific challenges" (Lungeanu, Huang, & Contractor, 2013, p. 59). Research has demonstrated that team collaboration across interdisciplinary boundaries yields publications with a higher intellectual impact than single researchers do (Wuchty, Jones, & Uzzi, 2007). It is also critical to collaborate in order to maximize impact of our scholarship in the real-world outcomes for communities and individuals. The strength of our combined knowledge, methods, expertise will doubtlessly make our work more relevant in the world. We also know that team assembly can be a daunting logistic and technical task (Lungeanu, Huang, & Contractor, 2013).

We are proposing to invest in creating an interdisciplinary communication infrastructure that is essential to connecting people, programs, ideas, and resources around the mission of improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and populations. The first part of our proposal, a two-day campus summit, would provide important stimulus and opportunities to overcome some challenges of interdisciplinary team assembly. While typical team formation is promoted by existing familiarity (e.g., citation of partner's work; proximity), the strongest teams are more likely formed where there is diversity of perspective, methods, and new knowledge represented by team members. To build strong teams, individuals must build trust incrementally over the course of routine interactions that support mutual learning and knowledge creation. The second part of our proposal involves the creation of an online platform to stimulate and assist such partnerships. This platform would be beneficial for Rutgers to stimulate interaction among scholars working in related areas and problem spaces. Further it is important to follow initial introduction with an infrastructure that assists with locating potential team partners and sharing resources, potential contributions, and foci of research and initiatives.

How we 'Envision Tomorrow's University' as a place of collaboration wherein scholars address challenges of "Improving health and wellness through multidisciplinary/transdisciplinarity" perspectives is a critical question posed by the Rutgers strategic plan. Given that health and wellness areas at Rutgers are constituted as vast and highly distributed resources within the university community, the Summit and Incubator tools provide possible means for supporting collaboration. In doing so, they provide a springboard to cross-disciplinary dialogue that will prove to be the hallmark of Tomorrow's University.

The Summit

The two-day summit would include a "**project and initiative fair**" that would enable a period for open networking among attendees and the showcasing of current and envisioned projects related to health, wellness, science in community. Poster sessions would be set up for any project leader to display materials and outlines of ongoing or proposed projects. Graduate students, faculty, and staff would engage in discussion with participants who move through the fair. We could also include a

“speed networking” activity enabling rapid interactions between potential partners that can be expanded in lengthier conversations once key connections are made.

Panel presentations would be incorporated into the Summit to highlight existing collaborative projects and those actively seeking partners for ongoing projects. The panel presentations would focus on problem presentations. Project leaders will provide short briefings on an issue that they are struggling with in their current projects or projects they are designing. The discussion session in each panel would provide an opportunity to begin the conversation about novel approaches to solving the problems posed.

The Summit would include an opportunity for **socializing around a lunch or dinner** with a **keynote presentation** (likely related to the keys to success of team science). A strong possible first keynoter would be Noshir Contractor (<http://sonic.northwestern.edu/people/noshir-contractor/>). Dr. Contractor, a communication scholar, is Director of the Science of Networks in Communities (SONIC) Research Group at Northwestern University. He is investigating factors that lead to the formation, maintenance, and dissolution of dynamically linked social and knowledge networks in a wide variety of contexts including communities of practice in business, translational science and engineering communities, public health networks and virtual worlds. Dr. Contractor has strong ties to several Communication faculty as well as our NetSci Lab and has visited campus for other events we’ve hosted in recent years.

The Partnership Incubator

Following the Summit, the Partnership Incubator would be launched. The Incubator would exist as a website that includes collaborative tools, team science research archive, mechanism to track Rutgers partnerships, and stories of successful partnerships at Rutgers. The Incubator would be built from the initial networking that was established at the Summit and serve a year-round method of stimulating collaboration among scholars at Rutgers as well as a method to track the success of partnerships formed through this initiative. The online tool would be designed in collaboration with health, wellness and science faculty at Rutgers to further enable locating partners for potential and ongoing projects in research, pedagogy, and community.

Included in the Incubator could be tools such as the following:

- **Project Partner Search Tool** –Project Leaders would use this tool for identifying the scope, needs, goals, resources, history, and future plans for any given collaborative initiative that seeks partners. We would consider implementation of C-IKNOW VIVO recommender system (<http://sonic.northwestern.edu/software/c-iknow-vivo-recommender/>) as part of this tool.
- **Talent Finder Tool**-- Graduate students would use this tool to offer skills, talent, and intellectual contributions for projects that align with their training and interests. Project leaders can scan the postings of graduate students to initiate contact with potential staff on projects and can also post calls for applications for needs on specific projects.
- **Collaborator Search Tool**—Individual scholars who are interested in involvement in collaborative groups would use this tool to share knowledge, coordinate grant application efforts, seek resources, and explore partnerships.
- **Team Science Research Archive**—Participants would find an archive of research about team science providing insights into the most up to date knowledge about predictors of successful partnerships, collaborative process, and team composition.
- **Crowd Source Tool** – This tool will enable the development of communities of practice wherein participants can “crowd source” problems, issues, needs for new approaches. One

model is SOcNET (<http://www.insna.org/socnet.html>). This tool is used not only for announcing events and opportunities but also for crowdsourcing. Anyone can post a question to the list and get help quickly, which builds a community that is committed to collaboration.

The Incubator would also include a mechanism to track partnerships that are initiated through the Summit and/or the Incubator and automatically request updates on partnership activity. Brief reports of the activity generated through the Incubator tools would enable benchmarking of the success of the tools. It also would provide an opportunity for faculty and graduate students to develop research around team science assembly. Our NetSci Lab would be well equipped to facilitate such a project.

The Incubator website could also archive stories of successful partnership activities (researcher, joint courses, community projects) that would be a database for Rutgers public relations staff to draw upon for follow-up.

How aligns with University Strategic Plan?

This proposal is directly connected to the Rutgers integrating theme of “improving health and wellness of individuals and populations.” With the integration of the legacy elements of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) and the creation of the Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS) unit, this seems to us to be the ideal time to create mechanisms and infrastructure to support familiarization and interdisciplinary partnership formation at Rutgers relevant to health, wellness, and science. “Rutgers is poised to build on its success in addressing a wide array of health challenges, locally and globally. As an institution, we must support both health and wellness. . .” (Rutgers Strategic Plan, 2014) This initiative is aimed at supporting this goal. As the Rutgers plan further states, “Doing so will require a holistic approach to education, discovery, and translation across the entire biomedical, social, behavioral, and public health research continuum.” This proposal speaks directly to realization of this mandate.

Additional Themes/priorities it aligns with?

In addition to the clear and compelling connection to the Rutgers integrating theme of “improving health and wellness of individuals and populations,” this proposal also contributes to the strategic priority of “enhancing our public prominence.” The future of an annual Summit on health, wellness, and science in community could easily become an opportunity to showcase not only to internal Rutgers audiences, but also to external stakeholders the breadth and significance of research, pedagogy, and community initiatives at Rutgers. We envision that invitations to press, policymakers, funding agencies and organizations, community leaders, influential practitioners, and scholars in our peer and aspirant institutions among others would become routine at the Summit. This has the potential to enhance our reputational status not only in the specific initiatives /areas of focus but also for the innovative manner in which we would be stimulating interdisciplinary work in these areas. This could be built as a model for team science formation in academic institutions and shared with our CIC and aspirant peers.

Who will be involved?

We intend to quickly build a planning group (starting with units who have endorsed the proposal) involving key partners from diverse units across campus if this proposal is improved. The Department of Communication will play a key convening and facilitative role in planning the Summit and the Incubator. Communication scholars are uniquely suited to lead this initiative because of our focus on

communication as a process that facilitates action. Our scholarship is primarily designed to help individuals, groups, organizations, and communities improve their capacity to communicate and therefore better connect, coordinate, and collaborate. Among the assets of the Department of Communication that would support the proposed initiatives are a number of faculty with relevant expertise and four organizational units associated with our Department:

- Faculty with expertise in networks, communication design, facilitation, and collaboration (Dr. Mark Aakhus, Dr. Marya Doerfel, Dr. Jennifer Gibbs, Dr. Laurie Lewis, Dr. Matt Weber)
- Faculty with expertise in health communication and community health (Dr. Kathryn Greene; Dr. Vikki Katz, Dr. Lisa Mikesell, Dr. Hartmut Mokros; Dr. Brent Ruben; Dr. Lea Stewart; Dr. Jennifer Warren; Dr. Itzhak Yanovitzky)
- Center for Communication and Health Issues Partnership for Education and Research (<http://commhealthissues.rutgers.edu/>)
- Center for Organizational Development and Leadership (<http://www.odl.rutgers.edu/>)
- The NetSci Lab (<http://netsci.rutgers.edu/>)
- Collaboratory for Organizing and Social Media (<http://cosm.rutgers.edu/>)

Endorsements and Support

We have accumulated several endorsements of our proposal from a variety of units across campus (see appendix A for list of specific endorsers). We anticipate first steps of pursuing this initiative would include developing a planning group comprised from the endorsing units and other related and supportive units. Our faculty have working relationships with colleagues at other units such as UMDNJ, RBHS, CINJ, SEBS, School of Pharmacy, UBHC, Bloustein School, IHPCPAR, among others.

Further, we have identified a related proposal—Teeing up Rutgers Investigators for Gifts, Grants, Engagements and Results (TRIGGER) with goals for support for team science within the biomedical units here at Rutgers. We've been in discussion with Terri Kinzy and Eileen Murphy (Office of Research and Economic Development) about the synergies between our proposals and have pledged to work collaboratively with each other should both be approved.

Desired Outcomes?

The goals of this initiative include: (1) Enabling the introduction and networking of faculty who work in varied aspects of health, wellness, and scientific community-related work across Rutgers (especially those who may have little contact and awareness of one another otherwise); (2) Fostering potentially powerful cross-disciplinary collaborations in creating programs, research initiatives, pedagogical initiatives, and funded research collaborations; (3) Setting up follow-on collaborative infrastructure to make it easier for faculty /units to find one another; meet and discuss joint endeavors; learn about others' work and current research; (4) Contributing to branding Rutgers as the hub for community-related health, wellness, and scientific collaboration in the region and create a model for others in CIC and aspirant institutions to follow; (5) Developing a plan for an annual summit that involves speakers, community leaders, regional and national press. The long-term vision could involve workshops for community health leaders/facilitators; spokespersons of health-related organizations; science and health journalists; health and science policymakers.

Anticipated resources to support this initiative?

Resources needed to support this initiative include needs for event planning support, creation and maintenance of online website tools, and event-related expenses for meals, honorarium/travel for keynote speakers, venue fees, and public relations materials.

The Department of Communication pledges \$6,000 to this initiative to support event planning in the initial year. Faculty and graduate student involvement in support of the Summit and the development and maintenance of the Partnership Incubator is also pledged.

Peter Gillies, Director of the Institute of Nutrition in the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, has pledged support in the form of a venue (IFNH).

Proposed Measures to Mark Progress or Determine Success

The success of this initiative can be assessed through several benchmarks that can be tracked through the following metrics:

Short-term Outcomes

- Attendance of faculty at the event
- Attendance of graduate students at the event
- Representation of units at the event
- Satisfaction (as assessed through surveys) with event

Intermediate Outcomes

- Use of Incubator (number of users, frequency of use)
- Evidence of collaboration stimulated through Incubator

The Long-term Outcomes

- Number of and dollar amount of funded research obtained by partnerships formed through the event/incubator
- Number of pedagogical initiatives created by partnerships formed through the event/incubator
- Number of community initiatives created by partnerships formed through the event/incubator
- Attention paid to the summit in regional, national press

References

Lungeanu, A., Huang, Y., & Contractor, N. (2013). Understanding the assembly of interdisciplinary teams and its impact on performance. *Informetrics*, 8, 59-70.

National Science Foundation (2006). *Investing in America's Future*. Strategic Plan FY 2006-2011.

Wuchty, S., Jones, B. F., & Uzzi, B. (2007). The increasing dominance of teams in production of knowledge. *Science*, 316 (5827), 1036-1039.

Appendix A: Endorsements --The following individuals/units have reviewed the proposal and offered their endorsements

Joe Barone, Distinguished, PharmD, FCCP
Distinguished Professor and Dean
Earnest Mario School of Pharmacy

Peter Gillies, Ph.D.,
Director of the Institute of Food, Nutrition and Health
School of Environmental and Biological Sciences

Al Tallia, MD, MPH
Professor and Chair
Department of Family Medicine and Community Health
Robert Wood Johnson School of Medicine

Terri Goss Kinzy
Associate Vice President for Research Administration
Office of Research and Economic Development
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Professor, Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology & Pediatrics
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Jerome J. Kukor, Professor and Dean,
The Graduate School-New Brunswick

Maurice J. Elias, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology
Rutgers University
Academic Director, The Collaborative, Rutgers' Center for Community-Based Research and Service (engage.rutgers.edu)
Coordinator, Improving School Climate for Academic and Life Success (ISCALS), Rutgers Center for Applied Psychology

Eileen Murphy
Director of Research Development
Office of Research and Economic Development
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Cristine Delnevo, PhD, MPH
Chair and Professor
Department of Health Education & Behavioral Science
Rutgers School of Public Health

Sharon Manne
Associate Director for Cancer Prevention, Control and Population Science
Co-Leader, Cancer Prevention and Control Research Program
Professor of Medicine, Population Studies
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Shawna Hudson
Associate Professor and Associate Director for Research
Department of Family Medicine and Community Health
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Roger Strair, MD, PhD, Chief, Hematologic Malignancies/Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation
Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

Jane Lewis, DrPH
Associate Professor, Health Education and Behavioral Science
Rutgers School of Public Health

Chethan Sarabu MD
Pediatric Resident
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School