

New Brunswick Strategic Planning Proposal

Proposal Title: Establishing a vibrant Rutgers University TEDx Program

Proposal Initiator: The six New Brunswick / Piscataway Campus Deans

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

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

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

The six Campus Deans propose to establish and advise a student-led Rutgers University TEDx Program (RU-TEDx) that engages undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff. The RU-TEDx Program will afford Rutgers people to highlight innovative ideas, projects, initiatives and research findings. Currently, RU-TEDx is organized in a haphazard fashion by inexperienced volunteers, without much continuity from one year to the next. We propose to launch an undergraduate student club, specifically organized for the purpose of planning and implementing an annual RU-TEDx event with a pertinent topic – different from year to year – and lectures and performances by individuals who are experts in that theme. The group will be advised by an experienced staff member who is familiar with student organizations. This has several advantages for Rutgers New Brunswick: (1) It will enable Rutgers to invite the public and the press (theme: Enhance Our Public Prominence); (2) it will give us the opportunity to bring together diverse individuals both from within and outside of Rutgers to cross-fertilize ideas (theme: Inclusive, Diverse, and Cohesive Culture); (3) it will provide the students involved with valuable experience in organizing major events (theme: Educating Involved Citizens and Effective Leaders for a Dynamic World); (4) it will provide continuity from year to year; (5) it will not require additional financial resources because it can be covered by the budget that is currently allocated to the club that organizes RU-TEDx by RUSA and the Campus Deans; (6) it can be expanded to include simulcast across campuses.

Full Proposal Description (5-page limit)

[Insert here the full proposal, which should describe in detail a) what is being proposed, b) how the initiative aligns with the University Strategic Plan, c) any additional themes, priorities, and elements addressed, d) who will be involved, e) desired outcomes, and f) anticipated resources to support this initiative.]

The official TED.com website states: “University events are TEDx events hosted at a college or university, and organized by current university administration staff, faculty or students. It gives universities the opportunity to share the unique innovation and ideas that their community is creating.” This is precisely the primary reason for having a robust, vibrant Rutgers University TEDx Program (RU-TEDx) that will enable us to highlight our innovative ideas, projects, initiatives and research findings to the public and the media, as well as to share them not only with Rutgers colleagues but also with colleagues from other universities, organizations, corporate research laboratories, etc.

The first major element of this proposal is to start a dedicated undergraduate student organization, under a name such as “*RU-TEDx Student Group*”, that will be in charge of planning, organizing and putting together an annual Rutgers University TEDx event. Under our proposal, the RU-TEDx event will be supported and advised by Campus Deans, in collaboration with RUSA and Student Affairs. Graduate students can have the role of advisors to the RU-TEDx Student Group. Initially, the Campus Deans, with input from their constituents, will appoint undergraduates to the RU-TEDx Student Group, as well as some advisors. Ideally, in the long run, the group will be composed of students who will be recruited by the members themselves.

The second major element of this proposal is to have a staff member as the official advisor to the RU-TEDx Student Group. This is the case with every undergraduate student group at Rutgers, anyway. In this particular case, given the importance of the task and the potential impact of such a group, it would be best to have an experienced staff member to guide the group to success. We envision the RU-TEDx Student Group to collaborate with other student groups, particularly those that are pertinent to the specific theme selected for a given year. Thus, the staff advisor must be familiar with student groups at Rutgers.

We envision that the group will form several committees, each dedicated to various aspects of the planning, organization and implementation phases of the annual RU-TEDx event. Similar groups in other universities are similarly organized (see Appendix). Here is a list of possible committees:

- *Speaker/Performer Selection*: With input from faculty and staff, the committee selects, approaches and arranges for speakers and performers to present during the RU-TEDx event.
- *Website Development and Maintenance*: In charge of the very important task to build and maintain an up-to-date website with the main purpose of advertising the event and monitoring registration. In addition, the website keeps an archive of previous years’ events.
- *Student Group Collaborations*: Coordinates the efforts of student organizations and clubs that are relevant to the theme of the current year’s RU-TEDx event.
- *Marketing/Promotion*: Advertises and promotes the event internally, within Rutgers, as well as outside of Rutgers, with emphasis to the NJ residents, the press and politicians.
- *Logistics*: Makes sure that the RU-TEDx event conforms to the TED.com rules and specifications. They will be in charge of securing a venue, contacting contractors, suppliers, etc.
- *Accounting*: Keeps track of sources of income and seeks potential sponsors within and outside of Rutgers. Also in charge of expenses and budget.

- *Community/Press Engagement*: This Committee's charge will be to develop ties with groups and communities beyond Rutgers, as well to work with colleagues at Media Relations to invite members of the press for coverage.

The Campus Deans collectively span a wide spectrum of disciplines: History (Matsuda), Communications (Stewart), Engineering/Psychology (Papathomas), Environmental Sciences (Turpin), Women/Gender Studies (Litt), Political Science (Daniels) and Management/Labor Relations (Schurman). As such, we can be effective in selecting speakers and performers from a wide range of areas for each annual RU-TEDx event. We will seek help and advice from other areas, such as Health Sciences, Fine Arts, English, Literature, Sciences, Business, Social Sciences, Math, Physics, Biological Sciences, etc. This will be an inclusive effort that will engage all the units of Rutgers in the New Brunswick campus (SAS, SoE, Pharmacy, Mason Gross School of the Arts, Institutes, Centers, etc.).

This program can improve the understanding of Rutgers by state politicians/legislators. It could add to the efforts of expanding the database for the speakers' bureau, maintained by Community Affairs. All speak to public prominence.

We must note that we tried to address all the criteria set forth for proposals:

- "Align with one or more of the strategic priorities, foundational elements, and integrating themes of the University Strategic Plan": We cover more than one of these areas (please see item 1 below).
- "Be cross-cutting for New Brunswick, not simply housed in or enhancing a single unit": We have made every effort to include all campuses and academic units, as well as many areas in Student Affairs.
- "Have the potential for significant impact and benefit for New Brunswick and Rutgers": We believe the impact will be not only for Rutgers but for the NJ public as well.
- "Leverage existing strengths or resources": The organizational resources are already in place. Similarly, the television/broadcast facilities, which are specified by the parent TED organization, are already available.
- "Require limited, or phased-in, financial resources": The RU-TEDx annual event has already been sponsored by internal Rutgers funds since 2011. Thus, our proposal does not involve additional financial burdens. On the contrary, we plan to phase-in outside sponsors, thus gradually reducing costs for Rutgers. The only request is to assign a staff member who is experienced in student groups and event organization to serve as the RU-TEDx group's advisor.

RESPONSES TO THE GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. In addition to the *primary* strategic priority, foundational element, or integrating theme addressed in the proposal, are there others to which this proposal relates.

The primary strategic priority is to Enhance Our Public Prominence but this initiative will impact many other areas, listed below:

- Transform Student Experience: In addition to the student-members of the RU-TEDx Student Group, this activity will give the opportunity to talented students to present lectures or stage a performance; furthermore, it will serve as a tool to educate students in general beyond the classroom.

- Inclusive, Diverse, and Cohesive Culture: The RU-TEDx event must mirror the University's commitment to these principles. Thus, the selection of speakers and performers must be guided by these principles.

- Finally, the RU-TEDx organization and event can serve many of the integrating themes by organizing annual events around their particular topics. This can be easily done for themes (10) through (14), as numbered above under "Primary Strategic Priority/Foundational Element/Integrating Theme Addressed".

2. What needs and current trends are addressed by this proposal (e.g., diversity goals, needs and advances in instructional technology, online education, organizational streamlining, revenue enhancement)?

This proposal addresses directly the need for online education, albeit not for conventional course usage, but for continuing education. The TEDx talks, in addition to benefitting those who attend them live, also benefit anyone with access to the Internet, via the archived lectures of previous years' events. Organizationally, this proposal makes a lot of sense because it streamlines the planning, organization and implementation of the RU-TEDx annual event that has been administered so far in a scattered fashion by a student group that does not have the capabilities to bring together such a high-power annual event.

3. Are there similar initiatives already in place in New Brunswick? If so, how would this proposal add a new dimension to those initiatives?

Please see item 2 above. RU-TEDx started its annual events in 2011. It has been organized by teams of dedicated students, albeit with limited experience and advising. Thus, the quality varied from year to year, with the worst outcome in 2014, when the event had to be cancelled for lack of expected financial support from RUSA, which had supported it in past years. It must be emphasized that the basic infrastructure – the Campus Deans - is already in place (thus no new resources are needed for faculty advisors) and this new program builds on the Campus Deans' mission. Under our proposal, the event will be organized by a dedicated student group, supported and advised by Campus Deans, in collaboration with RUSA and Student Affairs.

Proposed Measures to Mark Progress or Determine Success

[Please explain, in one or two paragraphs, how progress toward achievement of the initiative will be measured and how overall success will be determined.]

Over the next three years, we will monitor trends in several measures of progress and success that relate to the quality of the program and its ability to attract and benefit the targeted audience:

- (1) Speakers' quality (as measured by questionnaires)
- (2) Audience participation
- (3) Attendance by students, faculty and staff
- (4) Attendance by the public
- (5) Attendance by media
- (6) Success in having continuity by training lower classmen by upper classmen
- (7) Improvement of facilities
- (8) Participation of financial sponsors outside of Rutgers

APPENDIX – SOME TEDx PROGRAMS AT PRIVATE AND STATE UNIVERSITIES

- TEDx Berkeley: TEDx University of CA @ Berkeley - <http://tedxberkeley.org/>

Operates annually since 2010. Team composed of undergraduate students and staff members.

“On February 8, 2014 TEDxBerkeley is gathering world-leading thinkers, makers, and doers at UC Berkeley to discuss “Rethink. Redefine. Recreate”. The audience will be composed of a diverse mix of over 1000 students, professors, and thought leaders from Berkeley and beyond for a stimulating day of presentations, discussions, entertainment and art that will spark new ideas and opportunities for all.”

- TEDx HGSE: TEDx Harvard Graduate School of Education

<http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=tedxhgse&tabgroupid=icb.tabgroup176619>

They have a team of 9 people, 6 of whom are graduate students, the other 3 (possibly) staff members.

- TEDx for Columbia Engineering - tedxcolumbiaengineering.com

TEDxColumbiaEngineering is a student-led event organized by science and engineering undergraduate and graduate students from a number of schools at Columbia University (Columbia College, GSAS, SEAS, CBS, Teachers College), as well as from Barnard College.

They have several committees: Speaker selection (8 members), Marketing/Promotion (8), Logistics (2), website (1), advised by three University Advisors (a Vice Dean, the Assistant Director of Graduate Affairs, and a Business Professor).

- TEDx for Columbia SIPA (School of International and Public Affairs) - www.tedxcolumbiasipa.com

TEDxColumbiaSIPA is a locally organized, student-led event designed to spark authentic, impassioned, and open-minded dialogue in our community. It is being organized by students from Columbia University's Graduate School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA)

They have several committees of students: Speakers (3 members, one faculty), Management (3), Community development (4), Operations (3).

- TEDxUVA: TEDx University of Virginia - <http://tedxuva.com/>

The team consists of 36 undergraduate students, mostly sophomore and some freshmen.

- TEDxUofM: TEDx for the University of Michigan - <http://tedxuofm.com/>

Operates annually since 2010. “TEDxUofM is a university-wide initiative to galvanize the community for an event like no other; filled with inspiration, discovery and excitement ... TEDxUofM aims to bring a TED-like experience to the University of Michigan.”

- TEDx at NYU - <http://tedxnyu.com/>

It is not clear how it is organized. They have had events in April 2012, October 2012 and May 2013, mostly with NYU people as speakers and performers. This is the most relevant quote from their website:

“Our mission is to ‘unite the global network of New York University through the power of ideas.’ We produce 100% student-organized TEDx events to showcase the amazing student, faculty and alumni talents who call NYU home.”

Please save your proposal as a Word document and submit it as an email attachment to NBStratPlanProposals@rutgers.edu by April 15, 2014.