

## New Brunswick Strategic Planning Proposal

**Proposal Title:** HPO Sponsored Alumni Shadowing Program

**Proposal Initiator:** Bruce Babiarz, PhD, Director of the Health Professions Office (HPO)

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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):

Gaining clinical experiences is paramount in creating a competitive application to medical, dental, and other health professions schools. We believe we can offer our students these clinical experiences by establishing a Rutgers University Alumni Shadowing Program. We will organize a network of alumni physicians, dentists, and other health professional to provide access to their professional lives in both academic year and summer programs. Alumni volunteers will also be invited to campus to participate in a variety of forums with our current students. These shadowing positions will be open to all Rutgers students in New Brunswick, including students in SAS, SEBS, Pharmacy, Engineering, as well as in our graduate and post-baccalaureate programs. This proposed Alumni Shadowing Program will have two specific long-term effects: it will improve our applicants to medical, dental, and other health professions schools and strengthen our relationship with our alumni.

## **Full Proposal Description** (5-page limit)

**(a)** Gaining clinical experiences is paramount in creating a competitive application to medical, dental, and other health professions schools. We believe we can offer our students these clinical experiences by establishing a Rutgers University Alumni Shadowing Program.

The HPO Sponsored Alumni Shadowing Program will include:

- 1) A plan for the academic year (and summer) for RU students to shadow alumni working within driving distance from New Brunswick. This will allow current full time students to shadow during the school year.
- 2) A summer program where RU students will travel and stay near the alumni. Preliminary outreach suggests that programs in NYC, Philadelphia, and Chicago will be very well represented. Additional sites would be added as alumni are recruited.
- 3) Alumni volunteers will be invited to campus to participate in for panel discussions, give seminars, and interact with student groups.

**(b)** The HPO Sponsored Alumni Shadowing Program relates directly to the Strategic Priority “Transform the Student Experience”. In particular, we believe this program will make our students more competitive for admission by increasing their insights into these professions, allowing them to be confident in their choice of career, firm in their commitment, and passionate about their future work and impact. Admission committees are clear in their desire for applicants to be committed, passionate, and informed.

Our current programs with RWJ and Saint Peter’s Hospitals cannot possibly serve the demands for clinical experiences for all the Rutgers students interested in medicine and dentistry. The majority of students find clinical experiences (physician shadowing) on their own. However, the HPO has records of approximately 1000 alumni which have used our office and successfully completed medical or dental school between 1985-1996. Incorporating these alumni into our academic year and summer shadowing programs will allow us to better serve our current students and drastically increase the opportunities we can provide. This will certainly support the goals of the Strategic Plan to revamp our services “to establish a platform that best supports our students and best positions them for professional success”.

The HPO has already begun work on this initiative and has located most of our BA/MD alumni and alumni that were active in Alpha Epsilon Delta (pre-med honors fraternity). We have also begun to build a database of these physicians (medical/dental) alumni, collecting and confirming contact information and professional specialties. The response we have received from a few targeted alums has been great. All are excited to hear from us and indicate their willingness to help. We know many of these alums very well as their interactions with the HPO have created strong ties with Rutgers and for most, positive memories. With proper funding, we believe this program can be very successful.

**(c)** This proposal impacts other priorities, elements, and themes of the strategic plan. One of the priorities of the plan is to enhance our public prominence. The program will strengthen our ties

with our physician alumni. We feel that by engaging our current students and seeing the positive effects of their efforts these alumni will renew their pride in Rutgers. This pride will show in their professional efforts and will raise Rutgers' reputation and stature. We are very excited about the potential to more fully engage our alumni, both as a resource for our current students but also as potential donors.

One of the elements of the plan is to find the “financial resources sufficient to fund our aspirations”. As we have searched our student database to identify practicing alumni, we have shared this information with the Rutgers Foundation and the SAS Development Office. These fundraising units are extremely excited to pursue this group of alumni. For example, in past year, two new scholarships have been funded by alumni, one for pre-med students and one for pre-dental students. Finding professional alumni willing to donate their time is a great way to identify alumni willing to donate their money. We (and the Foundation) believe that this is a very effective way to engage these alumni and show them that their efforts are needed and truly have a positive effect on our current students.

One of the themes of the plan is related to “improving the health and wellness of individuals and populations”. The Alumni Shadowing Program will directly impact this as it will make our candidates for medical and dental school more competitive, better informed, and more motivated. More will gain admission and more Rutgers trained physicians will serve the people of our state and/or nation. This will definitely allow us to “help communities learn to stay healthy to prevent disease and help our communities recover from and manage the health challenges they already face”.

**(d)** This program will be coordinated and administrated by the staff of the HPO. The effort will be led by the Director (Dr. Bruce Babiarz) and Associate Director (Dr. Elizabeth Vogel). The HPO Program Coordinator (Loretta Stepka) will maintain the database and coordinate the production of applications and brochures needed. We will begin by targeting our alumni from 1985-1996, as these graduates will be well established in their practices'. We intend to begin with the student populations that knew us (the HPO) best, participants in our BA/MD Programs and members of Alpha Epsilon Delta, the pre-med honors fraternity. We hope to first target local alumni to provide academic year shadowing and reach out to more distant alumni for summer programs. To date, our initial interactions suggest that programs in New York City and Philadelphia are very possible and will be the first established. These shadowing positions will be open to all Rutgers students in New Brunswick (SAS, SEBS, Pharmacy, Engineering, Graduate students, recent alumni, and post-baccalaureate students). We will use our current shadowing application (from the Saint Peter's Program) to identify serious medical or dental candidates to match with our alumni volunteers.

**(e)** The HPO Sponsored Alumni Shadowing Program will have two specific long-term effects. First, the program will serve to improve our applicants to medical, dental, and other health professions schools. Second, the program will serve to strengthen our relationship with our alumni.

**(f)** The HPO has a successful track record in the solicitation of alumni donations. We anticipate that the HPO Sponsored Alumni Shadowing Program will provide a platform to better engage

our alumni, giving them the opportunity to work with RU students and observe the support provided by the HPO. It is our expectation that they will then invest both their time and money in the support of the alumni shadowing program and thus we envision that with the initial investment from the University, this program will become self-supporting as it grows.

To establish the HPO Sponsored Alumni Shadowing Program, we would make a funding request of \$96,000:

- 1) We need to create a database for the alumni involved and student applicants to the shadowing programs (\$45,000 for alumni outreach and to pay for the development of the searchable computer database).
- 2) Student costs for participation in the program. For the local program (academic year) – travel costs to/from shadowing sites are needed. For the distant (summer) program – travel costs and living expenses are needed. Both would be administered in the form of competitive travel awards of a few hundred dollars each for local and \$1000 for summer (costs would be dependent upon distance and cost of living at the site). We request funding for the first 3 years of \$45,000 (\$15,000/year), with the expectation that alumni donations will cover expenses in year 4 and beyond.
- 3) Alumni costs – bringing alumni volunteers to campus for interactions with student groups and/or other functions. Travel costs plus an honorarium (\$200 each for 10/year or approx. \$2000/year). Again, we request funding for the first 3 years, \$6000.

### **Proposed Measures to Mark Progress or Determine Success**

Success of this program can be measure in two ways:

First, the HPO keeps records of the successful acceptance and matriculation of our students into medical, dental, and other health profession programs. We would anticipate that the shadowing program would have a positive impact on these numbers and over time we would see an increase in our success rate. These data would be tracked using our existing HPO database (created for us by IT Solutions).

Second, success would equate to the future growth of the program, both in the number of participating alumni and Rutgers students. Both would be monitored through the data base we will create to run the shadowing program.

**Please save your proposal as a Word document and submit it as an email attachment to [NBStratPlanProposals@rutgers.edu](mailto:NBStratPlanProposals@rutgers.edu) by April 15, 2014.**