

New Brunswick Strategic Planning Proposal

Proposal Title: *The Rutgers English Diversity Institute (REDI)*

Proposal Initiator: Cheryl Wall

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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):

The Rutgers English Diversity Institute (REDI) is a one-week summer program at the New Brunswick campus of Rutgers University. Now in its sixth year, REDI is designed for advanced college students and recent graduates whose cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds may contribute to *diversity* in the fields of English and American literary studies. The purpose of REDI is to encourage students to attend graduate school and to pursue careers as teachers and scholars in the field. Each year, up to fifteen students, chosen from a national pool of applicants, each receive a \$500 stipend for participating in the program.

Currently the funding for REDI (approximately 50,000 per year for 15 students. See details below) is released annually when applied for by Cheryl Wall. We would like a program such as this one to be put on a more regular financial footing in order to ensure its future, and the university's commitment to its goals.

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.]

Rutgers English Diversity Institute

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[REDI](#), a program that the Department has been running since 2009, is designed to address an abiding challenge faced by all top-ranked graduate programs in English, where the same programs compete to recruit the same small number of diversity candidates in each year's applicant pool. This situation, referred to as "the pipeline problem," has many causes, but the effect is the same: the current situation benefits a handful of applicants, who are frequently offered lucrative fellowships to entice them to particular programs, but the total number of diversity candidates entering the system remains largely unchanged. This situation is detrimental to all fields of higher education, where there can seem, at times, no way to break this vicious cycle: to generate more diversity candidates, one must have not only a more diversified curriculum and appropriately supportive funding, but also a more diversified faculty. The Rutgers **English Diversity Institute** is meant to break this cycle through a summer program designed to encourage outstanding English majors from underrepresented cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds to consider pursuing an advanced degree in English. Obviously a program such as this one is directly tied to the first integrating theme, *Cultures, diversity, and inequality—local and global* while it draws on our *Strong core of science and humanities* and works to bring about and support an *Inclusive, diverse, and cohesive culture*. Currently the funding for REDI (approximately 50,000 per year for 15 students. See details below) is released annually when applied for by Cheryl Wall. We would like a program such as this one to be put on a more regular financial footing in order to ensure its future, and the university's commitment to its goals.

This year's applicants come from institutions as diverse as UC Berkeley, Spelman, University of Illinois, CUNY-Queens College, Tougaloo College, Georgetown, and University of Alabama. We are rightly proud of the success of our alumni. Participants from REDI's first five years have been accepted into Ph.D. programs in English and Comparative Literature at Columbia, University of Chicago, UCLA, Vanderbilt, University of Virginia, Northwestern, and Rutgers. REDI has involved more than 20 faculty since its inception, *enhancing our public prominence* by drawing national attention to our *strong core of sciences and humanities*.

While this initiative has been developed and staffed by the English Department, we would be open to considering ways of collaborating with other Departments or schools to expand its scope and effectiveness. In the meantime, the current request is for Rutgers, New Brunswick to make a multi-year commitment to funding REDI in order to assure its long-term existence and as a concrete manifestation of the university's commitment to a forward-looking, concrete initiative that is documentably effective in contributing to the diversification of higher education.

Budget 2013-2014
Salaries, 15, 000

Supplies and books 800
Meals 7,500
Publicity 700
Extra curricular (theatre) 900
Mailings 300
Transportation to REDI of 15 students (x500) 7,500
Ground transportation 500
Stipends (x500) 7,500
Housing 17,000
Admin 5,000
62,700

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.]

The progress of REDI is unusually easy to document. In the first instances it will be measured by the increasing number of applicants to the program and the variety of institutions from which the students are drawn. We are already tracking the numbers of students who go on to graduate programs after completing REDI. Ultimately, we would aim to track the careers of our alumni in the academic job market.

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