

New Brunswick Strategic Planning Proposal

Proposal Title: Rutgers University Advanced Technology Organization Management (RU ATOM) Working Group

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Primary Strategic Priority/Foundation 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):

Effective technology management for an organization as large and complex as Rutgers University with its various departmental, school, and campus divisions requires advanced organizational, business, and strategic planning skills.

While general management courses and technology briefings are available through some university channels, one thing that would clearly benefit our community is an officially sponsored forum for the university's technology management professionals in Unit Computing Manager and IT Director roles to meet regularly, exchange knowledge, and learn from the experiences of colleagues.

The purpose of this initiative is to establish the **Rutgers University Advanced Technology Organization Management Group**. RU ATOM will bring together these individuals from across the university on a voluntary basis to meet monthly to share invaluable *in situ* working knowledge, share best practices, and learn from expert practitioners for the purpose of increasing operational effectiveness.

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 purpose of this initiative is to establish the **Rutgers University Advanced Technology Organization Management Working Group**.

The primary focus of the RU ATOM group will be to encourage dialogue around effective technology management by bringing together individuals from across the university to meet voluntarily on a monthly basis to share ideas and *in situ* working knowledge. An important component of this focus, critical to its success, is the ability to facilitate face-to-face dialogue, which management experts agree is necessary for building rapport and trust within a community.

The reason for focusing on effective management is because much of what is currently available to the professionals in roles such as Unit Computing Manager or IT Director is aimed at the purely technical aspects of the job. However, experts and many members of the university community now strongly believe that matters of effective communication, team building, and strategic planning need to be considered vital skills just as much as the technical aspects of running an efficient and effective operation.

The reason for focusing on a regular face-to-face exchange is that much of what is currently available takes place in disembodied venues such as via email lists. What we know, however, is that the spread of best practices is greatly facilitated by the amount of familiarity and trust we have with the people doing the sharing.

In addition, holding regular face-to-face meetings facilitates bringing experts into the venue. An expert speaker or practitioner, such as a Rutgers faculty member or a colleague from a CIC institution or nearby university may be invited on semester or quarterly basis to present on a topic of interest to the group in the areas of management, team building, and technology strategy. These occasional presentations will provide the group with an opportunity to learn about developments (for example, in diversity and multiculturalism, organizational psychology, educational technology, or risk management) that can contribute to a more effective technology organization for the community we serve.

The reason that this initiative needs to be developed as part of the campus-level strategic planning process is threefold. First, it is clearly an initiative that cuts across current departmental, school, and campus boundaries. Second, the approach is one of highly engaged, democratic self-determination, with the group run by the people it serves. The third reason is that doing this effectively will require some level of financial and moral support from Old Queens to get it off the ground.

To establish the initiative, a cooperative steering committee will be created initially. The committee will be responsible for carrying out the objectives outlined in this proposal, handling the logistics of scheduling, and managing the group's activities. Later, it will be responsible for mediating the group's needs and maintaining an appropriate culture of professional development.

This initiative aligns squarely with the Foundational Element of "Effective and Efficient Infrastructure and Staff", helping "establish an ethos of service and support, and nurture a culture of faculty and staff development" (University Strategic Plan, page 45). At the same time, it also complements several other aspects of the plan with regard to the people who will be needed for the following:

- **Strategic Priorities**
 - "Enhance Our Public Prominence"

- "Improve and innovate around the use of technology in show-casing Rutgers' excellence." (Page 41)
- **Foundational Elements**
 - "Build Faculty Excellence"
 - "Build and support state-of-the-art infrastructure to advance faculty achievement and innovation, and create an environment that fosters collaborative and interdisciplinary discovery." (Page 38)
 - "Transform The Student Experience:
 - "Revamp academic support services, instructional support, academic advising, and career counseling services [...] using technology to unify and simplify student data systems and to create efficient student services through integrative technology." (Page 40)

Desired Outcomes

While hard to quantify perhaps, an overall effect comparable to Rutgers' participation in the Committee on Institutional Cooperation is anticipated: By offering a regular, open, and officially sponsored forum for the university's technology management professionals to meet, share tips, and learn from the experiences of colleagues, the RU ATOM group will create a virtuous circle for best practices and knowledge.

What is shared and learned will benefit the people present directly, of course, and also help to expand their network of contacts within the university. But thanks to the network effect, the benefits will also accrue to the Rutgers community as a whole over time by better enabling good ideas and good technology management methods to be more readily vetted and disseminated.

Anticipated Resources

- An annual budget of \$20,000.00:
 - Hosting at The Rutgers Club: \$ 7,000.00
 - Honoraria for expert speakers: \$ 9,000.00
 - Materials and miscellaneous expenses: \$ 4,000.00
- RU ATOM steering committee
 - Handles logistics, communications, meeting management, member recruitment, group culture, and related activities
- The Rutgers Club
 - Provides a central, on-campus, and social atmosphere for discussion and presentations

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.]

New RU ATOM members will complete an assessment of the number of contacts in their professional network at Rutgers, their attitudes and orientation to the management aspects of their role, and any areas of professional development they would like to work on.

At the conclusion of each annual cycle, members will complete another assessment to illuminate the contributions that being involved with the group has made to their daily work as well as the number of new contacts they've established among the Rutgers community because of it.