

## New Brunswick Strategic Planning Proposal

### Proposal Title: Sustainable Technologies Symposia

**Proposal Initiators:** from open brainstorming discussions beginning on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014, between Susan Albin, Dunbar P. Birnie, III, Fuat E. Celik, Kim Cook-Chennault, Steve Garofalini, Bernard Kear, Jennifer Lynch, Tom Nosker, Tugrul Ozel, and Deborah Silver.

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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**

“Sustainability” is such a huge concept and people around the world have taken an increasing interest in how to understand its myriad facets. Rutgers already has extensive “Global Reach” in many departments and fields – but sometimes lags in connecting the pieces together and building “more than the sum of the parts” – and we definitely lag at expressing our expertise to the broader community. The present theme suggests the creation of regular symposia (each semester, at least) that provide a platform for highlighting what we do well – but also helps connect these strengths to others in New Jersey, regionally, and internationally who are also interested in sustainability more broadly. We would take a themed approach semester-by-semester to give our advanced researchers a visible platform for building external connections and raising the Rutgers profile. Ideally this would operate similarly to how the Rutgers Energy Institute has for the last decade, but have a broader sustainability mandate and be more aggressive about reaching out. We suggest that the first theme would aim at “Sustainable Manufacturing”. No doubt a long list of other theme topics will be apparent from the sum of strategic initiative submissions to the present program!

## **Full Proposal Description**

### ***a) what is being proposed,***

A semi-annual Sustainability Symposium Series is proposed with the objective of bringing together bigger themed cross-disciplinary teams for building new funded sustainability initiatives and visibly showing the state and region our strengths and how we partner well with industry, other schools, local governments, and the public. The platform of an advertised symposium with invited speakers (some external and some internal) is excellent for helping connect the pieces together and aiming for future funding initiatives.

This should be an ongoing initiative where faculty from among the broad sustainability community at Rutgers would have input on what the future themes would be. Again, they should be chosen with high likelihood of benefiting team building and program growth in targeted areas.

For discussion purposes, it is proposed that the kick-off theme of this symposium series for next Fall would be on Sustainable Manufacturing as this is a known opportunity area and one where we have proven strength. Presently there is a US Presidential effort aimed broadly at manufacturing and several new centers have already been funded. These have all been funded to large teams – many schools with alliances to national labs, industry, and regional economic development. Clearly at the present we do not have a network in place to know what the right *next* DOE Manufacturing Center should be; however, we *do* have many faculty working on aspects of manufacturing who could help guide a symposium on the topic – and lead to some excellent strategic discussions and team building.

### ***b) how the initiative aligns with the University Strategic Plan, and c) any additional themes, priorities, and elements addressed,***

Sustainability is the topic on everyone's mind. How do we provide sustainable energy sources? How do we sustain our food supply? How do we sustain civilization if sea levels rise as projected? How do we sustain our quality of life in this increasingly complex world? These are just a few of the pressing questions that great universities like Rutgers are poised to answer – and where we have a responsibility to show leadership in developing the solutions. These are challenging times; this is one way we can effectively rise to the challenge.

In addition to enhancing our public prominence, this series would serve to highlight and build faculty excellence. It would also be used as leverage to help attract external financial support for these critical activities. Further there is strong synergy with the "Creating a sustainable world" theme. Again, many other connections might be possible, and are only limited by the imagination of the faculty who are submitting ideas now to the Strategic Initiatives solicitation.

### ***d) who will be involved,***

ALL Faculty who are interested in sustainability and who are open to exploring and building research/outreach partnerships.

### ***e) desired outcomes,***

The main desired outcome is to build visible partnerships between our excellent faculty and programs in connection with appropriate groups outside of Rutgers. This has the value of expanding our visibility and also enhances our prospects for major block funding in critical areas related to sustainability.

***f) anticipated resources to support this initiative.***

Sufficient funds are requested to allow two large symposia to be held each year, Fall and Spring. This should be possible with \$25K/year, paying for travel of invited speakers, food, venue costs, printing, advertising, and related meeting expenses.

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

The faculty participants at these meetings can give feedback about the depth of community building that has taken place and assist in evaluating how external participants have fared. Since this would be pushed to happen more frequently than many symposium series then there is more chance to learn from mistakes, install “best practices” and continue to raise the Rutgers profile within our many constituencies.