



**RUTGERS**

UNIVERSITY | NEW BRUNSWICK

*This is what*

**EXCELLENCE**

*looks like*

**> ACADEMIC MASTER PLAN**





> **ACADEMIC MASTER PLAN**



## TO OUR CAMPUS COMMUNITY

Nearly 20 years ago, Nelson Mandela uttered the wise words, “Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.”

Today, as then and centuries before, Rutgers University–New Brunswick stands as a testament to all that becomes possible when pursuing education: insight and opportunity; discovery and innovation; growth and understanding. Our students, past and present, who have graced our campus, exemplify this transformational power and the life-changing impact it can have in our world.

But for higher education to do its masterful work, it must remain relevant, keenly focused on the needs of a changing demographic of students and the complexities of an ever-evolving world.

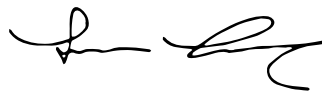
At Rutgers–New Brunswick, we are uniquely positioned to be torchbearers in this space, illuminating the path toward progress and relentlessly leading through change. Our mission is clear: to provide a rigorous academic experience that prepares our students to lead in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; to solve the most complex grand challenges of our day; to lead in the area of social justice; and to continue to make the world a better place for us all.

This Academic Master Plan was born from these ideals. We remain secure in our past accomplishments but clear-eyed to the need to plan carefully for the future. It results from months-long work, broad community engagement, ongoing introspection, and a burning desire always to do—and be—better.

Accomplishing the work of this plan will take us all, and we will need to come together in ways we have never before. We will need to dream and create together, support and challenge one another, and always hold sacred the needs of our students.

The path toward excellence is rarely straight, but our determination and drive—which has been in our ethos for more than 255 years—continue to burn bright. We will light the way.

With our sincere appreciation for the work ahead,



**Francine Conway**  
Chancellor-Provost  
Rutgers University–New Brunswick



**Jonathan Holloway**  
President  
Rutgers University



# THIS IS WHAT EXCELLENCE LOOKS LIKE

# INTRODUCTION

**In his November 2021 inauguration address,** Rutgers University President Jonathan Holloway laid out perhaps the most explicit articulation yet of the university's current state of, and potential future for, excellence.

"I stand before you gladly, having seen the excellence already embodied in Rutgers, and eager to do everything in my power to amplify that excellence and to elevate and guide what is already one of the finest public research universities in the world," he stated.

The Rutgers–New Brunswick Academic Master Plan takes up that challenge with an honest and ambitious vision for excellence. It is deeply grounded in our university mission, and it sets a clear pathway toward relentlessly pursuing academic excellence, building a beloved community, and establishing strategic institutional clarity.

This Academic Master Plan is rooted in our history as The State University of New Jersey and our constantly evolving understanding of who we are and what we can become. The nation's eighth-oldest institution of higher education and one of nine colonial

colleges, Rutgers was founded in 1766 as Queen's College, a private institution in New Brunswick. In 1825, following periods of economic uncertainty, the college was renamed for Colonel Henry Rutgers, whose philanthropy helped stabilize the institution.

During the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act that granted states federal land to establish publicly funded universities. These universities were tasked with capturing the dynamism of the industrial revolution and educating a new and broader population. Rutgers gained this responsibility in 1864 when it became New Jersey's land-grant institution. By the end of World War II, Rutgers consisted of three liberal arts colleges—Rutgers College, the New Jersey College for Women (now Douglass Residential College), and University College, which served part-time students who studied in the evening—along with schools of agriculture, engineering, and other professions.

**TODAY, RUTGERS–NEW BRUNSWICK  
IS A THRIVING, BUSTLING,  
DIVERSE COMMUNITY ...**



A further transformation came in 1945 when Rutgers became New Jersey's state university during the postwar period alongside new federal investments in the GI Bill. During the 1980s, the gradual integration of the university's five New Brunswick-based colleges occurred. In 1989, Rutgers–New Brunswick, now a research and scholarship powerhouse, joined the prestigious Association of American Universities (AAU). In 2013, the former University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey merged with Rutgers, positioning Rutgers–New Brunswick to become uniquely aligned with the new Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences campus. The resulting surge in academic power and intensity was Rutgers' ticket into the Big Ten Academic Alliance in 2014.

Rutgers has, however, often failed to uphold the ideals of equity and justice and has an infamous past. In its early years, the institution benefited from the enslaving of African Americans and the dispossession of Indigenous people. Sojourner Truth, the abolitionist and women's rights activist, was at one time enslaved to the family of Rutgers' first president. It was not until 126 years later, in 1892, that the first Black student graduated from Rutgers, and not until

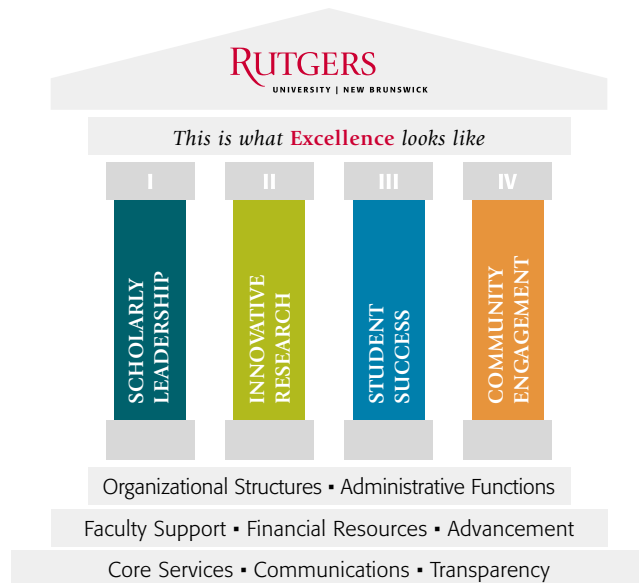
1970 that women had the same educational opportunities at Rutgers College as men. In time, however, members of historically excluded groups made their voices heard and demanded that Rutgers become the inclusive place it strives to embody today.

Today, Rutgers–New Brunswick is a thriving, bustling, diverse community comprised of more than 50,000 students from 50 states and more than 100 countries. Its more than 100 undergraduate majors and 250 graduate programs prepare students to make a consequential impact on the world. And, our focus on research has consistently led to discoveries and breakthroughs that have bettered the course of history and improved lives in immeasurable ways.

The theme for this Academic Master Plan is "This Is What Excellence Looks Like." The ideals and priorities herein will support our scholarship, improve academic administration, enhance student success, and position Rutgers among the leading higher education institutions. The realization of these priorities will, undoubtedly, amplify our excellence.

# ACADEMIC MASTER PLAN RESEARCH PROCESS

The Academic Master Plan is visualized as a structure, supported by the four pillars shown below and described elsewhere in this document, and standing on the solid foundation of a multitude of resources: Rutgers–New Brunswick’s financial resources and organizational structures; core services; and our transparency and communications, to name just a few.



To create the blueprint for this structure, the Academic Master Plan Steering Committee needed a clear and detailed understanding of the materials needed to build the plan and the spaces it would occupy and elevate: Our areas of academic excellence and signature experiences; our many facilities for innovative research; the ways we support student success; our diversity of backgrounds and perspectives; and our strengths in public service and community engagement.

It was important to evaluate our strengths, both celebrated and hidden, and identify new opportunities for excellence. Just as crucially, we needed to understand how students, faculty, and staff experience Rutgers–New Brunswick and to receive their insights about—and suggestions for—the future of our academic enterprise.

The committee and its subcommittees undertook extensive research to attain quantitative, qualitative, and experiential data about each of these subjects. Befitting a leading national research institution, we used several complementary methodologies.

Among these, the most visible to our campus community were the Faculty and Staff Survey and the Student Survey, conducted in November and December 2021, respectively.

The Faculty and Staff Survey’s 1,575 respondents represented all academic units, administrative areas, faculty, and staff at all levels, including Rutgers-employed students, postdoctoral fellows, and administrators. Respondents provided valuable insights about institutional strengths, identified qualities distinguishing Rutgers–New Brunswick from its peers, unique and enriching aspects of the undergraduate experience, and signature programs that enhance the learning experience. They offered thoughts on encouraging interdisciplinary work, improving our infrastructures for teaching, research, community engagement, and—most crucially—student success and well-being.



The Student Survey's 2,440 respondents reflected the great diversity of our undergraduate and graduate student bodies. Among those who participated were students who are the first in their families to attend college or are from families of limited income; non-traditional students that included transfer and returning professional students; and a cross-section of in-state, out-of-state, and international students. We are grateful for their perspectives on their lived experiences at Rutgers–New Brunswick, including their suggestions for our support systems for academic success, health and wellness, and career preparation.

Beyond the surveys, the Steering Committee's subgroups convened stakeholder meetings with undergraduate students, graduate students, teaching faculty, research faculty, extension faculty, faculty of color, faculty involved in publicly engaged scholarship, faculty involved in climate science, academic deans, executive deans, and institute directors. The Steering Committee created a Student Experience Advisory Committee with representation from Career Exploration and Success, Learning Centers, Student Affairs, One-Stop Student Services Center, Enrollment Management, Dean of Students, New Student Orientation, Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research, and School of Graduate Studies. We met with members of the Undergraduate Research Council, the Undergraduate Education Council, and the Voorhees Center for Civic Engagement, to name only a few.

We reviewed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analyses of crucial research programs, centers, and institutes across such areas as funding, reputation, research impact, demographic diversity, social justice work, and staff relationships and collaborations. We analyzed the operations of signature programs like Study Abroad, the School of Arts and Sciences signature courses, the Mason Gross School of the Arts' partnership with London's Globe Theater, the Rutgers Climate Institute and Rutgers Energy Institute, the Business School's Road to Wall Street Program, experience-based education programs across all schools, and more.

We pursued our aspiration to become a beloved community through diverse efforts to engage with our campus community. We studied prior reports analyzing Rutgers–New Brunswick's academic enterprise, including the initial goals of the Diversity Strategic Plan that engaged our community in the process of identifying means for the cohesive, coherent, and collaborative integration of diversity and inclusion into New Brunswick's shared pursuit of excellence. We reviewed the results of Rutgers–New Brunswick's 2019 faculty survey in partnership with the Harvard Graduate School of Education Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education, which identified critical institutional strengths and gaps and developed recommendations for research, governance and communication, and faculty development. Additionally, we reviewed the 2015-2020 Rutgers–New Brunswick Strategic Plan; the 2017 report on the Task Force to Enhance Experiential Education for Undergraduate Students; the 2016 Task Force on Transfer Students Report; the 2018 Task Force on Non-Traditional Students Report; the 2018 Task Force report on Academic Unit Organization; and the 2019 Working Group on Student Success Report, to name a few.

## ... MOST IMPORTANT— OUR OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A LEADING LIGHT ...

This research provided the Academic Master Plan Steering Committee with comprehensive objectives and subjective data for a shared understanding of what Rutgers–New Brunswick represents. The students, our community, partnerships, and systems underlie our tremendous impact on the public good, and—most important—our opportunity to become a leading light for education, research, and service for the next generation of students, their communities, the state of New Jersey, and the world.

That clear understanding informs this blueprint of the Rutgers–New Brunswick Academic Master Plan.





## VISION AND EMERGING PILLARS

**Rutgers–New Brunswick stands clear-eyed** to the realities of our current moment and the ever-evolving dynamic of higher education, resolute in our commitment to approaching challenges as opportunities and continually arcing toward our students’ needs. Located in the heart of the northeast corridor, we reflect the rich diversity of our state, nation, and world, and use this unique strength to drive our collective vision as a world-class research institution that cherishes our students and nurtures our relationships with the surrounding community.

Rutgers President Jonathan Holloway recognized these strengths upon his arrival and has clearly articulated three priorities to carry the university forward: academic excellence, institutional clarity, and creating a beloved community. These touchstones galvanized faculty, staff, students, and administrators to collaborate, pool our collective knowledge, and translate these priorities into action. We listened—to students, faculty, staff, members of the community, and one another. While it was illuminating to learn about the differences in the committee’s many roles at Rutgers–New Brunswick, our shared understanding of who we are and where we excel began to emerge from the diversity of perspectives, disciplines, fields of study, and experiences.

The Academic Master Plan, including its vision and emerging pillars, results from these conversations with our community.

What did we find? We repeatedly heard that we are a resilient and resourceful campus community. Our faculty and students are driven and committed to using scholarly inquiry to inform solutions to real-world problems. At Rutgers–New Brunswick, we are already among the most diverse universities in the nation, and we use this tremendous strength to inform everything we do. We understand that the public research university is an engine of social mobility, and we provide our students with the skills and confidence needed to work individually and collectively with diverse disciplinary approaches to transform themselves and the world. We love our connections with our students and colleagues, and we hold dear our relationships with the university-wide and local New Jersey community.

As we articulate who we are, we strive for an unwavering pursuit of excellence, especially in the distinct areas of scholarly leadership, innovative research, student success, and community engagement. These areas comprise the “pillars” of the Academic Master Plan and support its larger vision.

We invite you to learn more about these pillars, the work they entail, and our process for executing a roadmap toward excellence.

*We are committed to the relentless pursuit of **Excellence**.*

*We foster collaboration, partnerships, community engagement,  
and the solving of **grand challenges** to deliver social, economic,  
and cultural prosperity.*

*We value our rich history and remain steadfast in our  
commitment to **becoming a beloved community**.*

*We celebrate the personal and societal transformation that comes from  
**innovative scholarship and globally recognized research**, and we value  
the faculty and staff who commit their life's work to these endeavors.*

*We care for the **well-being of our students** and pledge our  
resources to nurture them on their paths to success.*

*We believe that students grow best into tomorrow's leaders when they have  
**opportunities for high-impact learning**, that learning can take place  
anywhere, and that its effect on communities can be profound.*

*We take to heart the esteemed privilege of **transforming lives** and  
helping to **make the world a better place**.*



*This is what **Excellence** looks like*

ACHIEVING OUR GOALS OF  
LEADERSHIP WILL BRING OUT  
THE BEST IN ALL OF US.  
OUR SUCCESS WILL BE BUILT UPON  
A FOUNDATION OF ESSENTIAL  
ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS:  
FOUR PILLARS OF EXCELLENCE.



P I L L A R  
I

SCHOLARLY  
LEADERSHIP

**Goal:**

Elevate the scholarly leadership of intellectual communities that support the diverse populations within Rutgers, New Jersey, the nation, and the world.



P I L L A R  
II

INNOVATIVE  
RESEARCH

**Goal:**

Strengthen Rutgers–New Brunswick’s capacity to solve grand challenges in our community, state, country, and the world to reflect our commitment to the public good.



## PILLAR III

### STUDENT SUCCESS

**Goal:**

Transform the student experience.



## PILLAR IV

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**Goal:**

Build on Rutgers–New Brunswick's strong foundation of community engagement.



PILLAR I

# SCHOLARLY LEADERSHIP

**Goal:** Elevate the scholarly leadership of intellectual communities that support the diverse populations within Rutgers, New Jersey, the nation, and the world.

Situated in the heart of New Jersey, Rutgers–New Brunswick is home to a vibrant, diverse, and global intellectual community. As defined by our research, teaching, and outreach, scholarship drives our society. It positions us as thought leaders ready to confront contemporary challenges and improve the public good. As a large, immersive, and dynamic university, our intellectual strengths are reflected in our multifaceted educational programs, research agendas, and scholarly impact. While this excellence is reflected in the quality of our many academic programs, we never tire and continually strive for improvement.

To advance the scholarly excellence that is our trademark, we must encourage the development of bold initiatives and creative collaborations. By engaging our entire campus community, we will create new pathways of academic cooperation and convergence that will enrich the campus community as a whole.



**Objective I: Amplify our excellence in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) by identifying shared areas of interest that enhance our strengths and enable collaboration.**

Rutgers–New Brunswick is a world leader in education and scholarship across STEM disciplines and related areas, which are essential in producing solutions to the critical challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Excellence is reflected in our nationally recognized computer science programs, innovative content areas such as technology entrepreneurship and the microbiome, and groundbreaking research on global concerns like climate change and the development of alternative energy sources.

We recognize that the critical challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will not be solved by science alone, nor is our excellence limited to those fields. Along with amplifying our excellence in STEM, we also must look across Rutgers–New Brunswick to build connections with and among the humanities, social and behavioral sciences, and the professional fields to address the global challenges of today and those that will come in the future.

These areas of study are not nested in just one school but rather located throughout Rutgers–New Brunswick. As we look ahead, however, we commit ourselves to harnessing our total academic capacity across the campus. This vital work will entail pledging to build bridges across academic and co-curricular units and reframing perceived overlaps into shared strengths. It also will mean prioritizing collaboration among disparate academic units and identifying and establishing clear pathways among essential areas of convergence.

Work also should be done to increase coordination and identify academic pathways between Rutgers–New Brunswick and Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences. These unique, yet complementary campuses, provide a wealth of STEM-related pathways in education and research. Collectively, enhanced collaborations could have a tremendous impact on our students' academic experiences, as well as scientific breakthroughs in the areas of health and wellness that could benefit us all.

**Objective II: Lead the nation and world in engaging our community's diversity in our teaching, research, and outreach.**

At Rutgers–New Brunswick, our greatest strength is the educational benefits derived from our diversity. We experience its benefits everywhere: in our classrooms, across our research, throughout our intellectual and scholarly communities, and in the world as our graduates serve the public good.

Our definition of diversity goes beyond numbers and statistics. Instead, we strive for deep and meaningful engagements across the broad spectrum of demographic characteristics and lived experiences. We embrace the opportunities diversity brings and use these opportunities to improve and nurture our conversations that span across communities, disciplines, and scholarly fields.

To this end, Rutgers–New Brunswick must develop mechanisms to reinforce existing strategies for enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion, such as recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty body, promoting inclusive teaching, and expanding university-community partnerships. We also must do more to further develop interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs, including, for example, in Race and Ethnic Studies, and we must implement strategies to increase cultural fluency across all disciplines.

Similarly, the principles of civic engagement, access, and equity, are integral to our history as an institution, and more is needed to facilitate enhanced understanding of democratic principles, critical listening skills, and civic discourse. These skills and knowledge will be required to navigate an increasingly diverse world, solve complex challenges, and succeed in future jobs.

Finally, priority also must be given to better connecting our campus to the world through global hubs and programs that support international opportunities, recruitment, and experiences. As we build these new programs and initiatives, we also must spotlight the excellent work our faculty, staff, students, and alumni are already doing in these areas.

### **Objective III: Expand our excellence through access to knowledge, opportunities, and infrastructure.**

Rutgers–New Brunswick is an intellectual community that thrives through in-person education and outreach while continually evolving to serve diverse needs for access and better delivery. Technology and circumstances simultaneously enable and necessitate online education, especially in a post-pandemic world. Therefore, we must invest in infrastructure to effectively deliver both in-person and virtual instruction; train our faculty to deliver instruction in a broad range of learning environments, methods, and philosophies; and ensure the learning needs of all students are met.

This work will likely include making digital courseware available to students, expanding infrastructure to enable more efficient cross-modality instruction from in-person to online, and meeting the specific needs of undergraduate and graduate working students.

In addition, investments in deferred maintenance, smart classrooms, teaching laboratories and studios, and experience-based learning spaces on campus are needed to sustain and increase our in-person educational opportunities. Advances in these areas will allow our students to pursue novel career paths and engage with external partners and industries that could develop into new forms of training, certificates, and degree-granting programs. Multi-modal delivery also will help expand opportunities for sharing knowledge and engaging with the public, increase Rutgers' impact and visibility, and foster relationships with communities beyond campus.

Finally, as part of this commitment, Rutgers–New Brunswick must prioritize and incentivize faculty and instructors to be more innovative and inclusive in their teaching and curriculum design. One strategy includes developing a more robust infrastructure to help coordinate instructor and staff training across academic programs and implement best practices. And it will require that the university continue to explore and foster inclusive, evidence-based teaching practices to ensure all students feel equally included and valued in Rutgers' learning environments.



## PILLAR II

# INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

**Goal:** Strengthen Rutgers–New Brunswick’s capacity to solve grand challenges in our community, state, country, and the world to reflect our commitment to the public good.

As the state’s public university, Rutgers–New Brunswick is committed to research and scholarship that enhance society’s well-being and solve the grand challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Situated in one of the country’s most diverse and densely populated areas, we recognize our unique position to expand the frontiers of knowledge by tapping into the diversity of thoughts and perspectives characteristic of our state and nation.

To leverage this strength, we must engage our campus community’s full breadth and diversity. Partnerships among faculty, staff, and students must continue to be prioritized, and we must emphasize progress toward creating an equitable environment where all students are empowered to contribute to transformational research.

**Objective I: Increase the impact of Rutgers–New Brunswick research excellence, including enhancing interdisciplinary and community-engaged scholarship.**

Rutgers–New Brunswick has a long track record of conducting groundbreaking research and advancing academic discussion across a wide range of disciplines, and we are committed to maintaining strong and active research in foundational fields of academic investigation. The challenges of the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have shown us, though, that the excellence of individualized research efforts is no longer sufficient to advance society toward a better future. Instead, it is more important than ever to find synergies that exist when we purposefully work across disciplines to maximize the impact of our research.

Engaging in this endeavor will mean fostering an environment that facilitates teams of collaborators, expands the frontiers of knowledge, and commits the necessary university resources to accomplish this goal. Cross-disciplinary efforts have been pursued in the past; however, there is a unique and present opportunity to go beyond conventional partnerships, engage scholars across the entire university, harness the full array of skills and talents in our scholarly community, and tackle important and meaningful problems.

Having a diverse approach to tackling important societal problems will promote equity in research and allow us to engage our communities and expand connections to industry locally and globally. To foster our bold vision of solving grand challenges, we must strengthen our research by seeding interdisciplinary, collaborative research efforts with the long-horizon goal of expanding our portfolio of externally funded research. Our competitive advantage will be how we leverage our region's rich activity in technology, business, the creative arts, and media to arrive at new multi-faceted approaches to solving societal problems and advancing public discourse.

Finally, Rutgers–New Brunswick has outstanding scholars who have changed the boundaries and methodologies of long-standing disciplines. We must not forget to celebrate the excellence that occurs within disciplines and the national and international reputation of many of our departments and programs.

**Objective II: Enhance equitable representation of all communities in the research process.**

As a university community, we are committed to ensuring that the broadest chorus of voices and ideas are brought to the table and empowered. This value is fundamental to our strategy to perform impactful research that advances the frontier of academic and public knowledge. We recognize that for Rutgers–New Brunswick to be a catalyst for innovation and societal change, we must cultivate a vibrant research community that expresses and learns from the many varied backgrounds and lived experiences of our students, faculty, and staff. To this end, we must expand our efforts to recruit diverse and talented faculty across a wide range of forward-looking fields, reflecting the diversity of our community, state, and students. And we must be committed to their continual professional development.

We also must recognize that the future of research will come from addressing many of the practical challenges that face communities. It is essential that we directly engage with residents, communities, and industries to shape our research, identify dynamically evolving problems, and support economic benefit to the state. Rutgers–New Brunswick must encourage and enhance partnership with the state and sustain publicly engaged scholarship, community-based participatory research, and extension practice as a way to effect lasting change and impact.

### Objective III: Enhance opportunities for student research.

At Rutgers–New Brunswick, we know that learning does not just happen within the walls of a classroom. Involvement and participation in research opportunities—even at the undergraduate level—are an essential component of holistic education. We also know it is vital that all students have access to these same opportunities regardless of background.

To this end, we must expand our portfolio of research activities available to students so they have immersive research experiences that challenge them to put theory into practice and have a role in creating knowledge. Building upon the success of existing undergraduate programs, such as the Aresty Center for Undergraduate Research, the McNair Scholar Program, and RISE, Rutgers–New Brunswick must expand the university's collection of semester-long and summer research experiences for students. Tightening the connection between the research and education missions of the university will be critical to this work.

Beyond enhancing our portfolio of research opportunities, Rutgers–New Brunswick also must commit to ensuring all students are aware of and have the opportunity to engage in research. Establishing graduate fellowships to further engage graduate students in research allows us to differentiate ourselves among other programs in the country. Work also must be done to prioritize research training and mentoring opportunities for all students, including those who may not have traditionally participated in research. To this end, the university must prepare faculty for stepping into these mentorship roles by providing training opportunities to meet the students' needs.

Finally, it is vitally important to recognize the importance of supporting and connecting Rutgers–New Brunswick students to government, industry, and associated research opportunities. However, we must acknowledge that in some cases, providing access and ongoing support of technology resources will be necessary and should be an ongoing commitment for the university.





## PILLAR III

# STUDENT SUCCESS

### **Goal: Transform the student experience.**

Today's students are action-oriented, socially-conscious, technology-driven, entrepreneurial, and financially focused. They are naturally social and frequent multi-taskers who prioritize their well-being. They are discerning, and their selectivity extends to their college selection. They demand more from universities than previous generations, expecting delivered results.

Students and their families also are questioning the value of a college degree. Universities worldwide are grappling with what higher education looks like in a post-pandemic world. And all students—concerned about opportunities after graduation—are viewing higher education through a much more pragmatic lens.

To meet the needs of these students and those to come, Rutgers–New Brunswick must, too, evolve.

### **Objective I: Create a welcoming, equitable, and supportive learning environment for all students.**

As a highly diverse campus that continues to work toward its goal of becoming a beloved community, Rutgers–New Brunswick is committed to ensuring that all undergraduate and graduate students feel welcomed, valued, and informed, and have access to resources to move through their degree programs efficiently. Inclusion requires confronting challenges of equity head on and working to foster engaging, civil, and supportive environments both inside and outside the classroom.



Fostering students' connectedness is key so they meet and engage with others with shared interests, identities, and aspirations. These connections, as well as the thoughts and actions that create a sense of belonging, create the foundation for a beloved community. As a place of intersection for many identities, Rutgers–New Brunswick serves as a global microcosm with the opportunity to help students develop into globally minded, culturally fluent citizens of the nation and world. We must seize this unique opportunity by creating learning opportunities and programming focused on global and intellectual competencies.

We must facilitate everyday interactions, as well as develop signature experiences that will bring students together across areas of difference to engage in cross-cultural exchange, critical dialogue, diversity, inclusion, and equity education both inside and outside the classroom. These opportunities for interaction will contribute to an appreciation of our inherent differences and a better understanding of our collective strength and value as a diverse campus community.

Finally, we must pay ongoing attention to students' mental health. Practically, we know that when students suffer from anxiety and depression, we see a decline in their academic performance, leading to both short- and long-term consequences. To begin to address these issues, Rutgers–New Brunswick must think holistically about the student experience, both inside and outside the classroom. Ongoing priority must be given to cultivating a campus environment that promotes well-being, advocates for health equity, and prioritizes mental health resources.

## **Objective II: Prioritize on-time graduation with minimal debt for all students.**

Higher education costs continue to increase, and with it, student debt, placing long-term financial security and social mobility constraints on graduates and their families. The financial risks associated with pursuing a college education are disproportionately higher for first-generation college students and those from limited-income households.

Rutgers–New Brunswick is committed to ensuring students graduate with minimal debt, and we recognize the correlation of such efforts with on-time graduation. To this end, undergraduate students must be given the tools and resources needed to understand degree requirements early in their academic careers, and we should look critically at policies and practices that may create bottlenecks and barriers that can delay graduation.

We also must illuminate clearly defined and transparent pathways to success so that all students can easily navigate the university, graduate on time, and transition to their career and advanced degree opportunities. Transfer students and adult learners need support to address their particular needs while also integrating them into the broader Rutgers–New Brunswick community. And we need to enhance policies to facilitate greater access for students with past educational experiences and strengthen relationships with community colleges.

Once here, we are committed to student success demonstrated through opportunity to explore broad areas of interdisciplinary study before committing to an academic field without increasing their time to graduation. Students exploring research opportunities and graduate education should be mentored by faculty to create development plans that similarly achieve on-time graduation and recognize students' broad aspirations in professional interests, needs, and challenges.

Attention to graduate education must be paid, as well. This includes reimagining how we better integrate graduate students among programmatically aligned areas, coordinate the services we offer them, and continue to review programs to determine where resources are most needed. We also must provide adequate financial support for graduate students through fellowships and teaching assistantships as ways to ensure timely degree completion.

Finally, all students should be well equipped to succeed at Rutgers–New Brunswick, regardless of their academic pursuits. The university should promote collaboration across academic, student support,

enrollment management, course planning, and student life units. Faculty and staff across campus must come together to develop a set of learning and programmatic outcomes that will define Rutgers' commitment to student success and foster an interdisciplinary approach to academic advising and coaching.

**Objective III: Expand high-impact learning opportunities to best prepare students for future success.**

Rutgers–New Brunswick remains committed to educating and equipping all students with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Students can apply knowledge gained in the classroom to real-world settings and work cross-culturally in and among diverse teams. Today's employers have echoed this need, indicating that the best-prepared graduates are the ones who have engaged in key experiences that augment their traditional learning.

Many departments throughout campus offer real-world opportunities that enhance students' classroom experiences, including internships, externships, cooperative education, research with faculty, leadership development, and service learning. Rutgers' geographic location in a major urban thoroughfare augments these opportunities and provides a competitive advantage for students.

Rutgers–New Brunswick must take a thoughtful, deliberate, and proactive approach in expanding these high-impact learning opportunities for students. We also must create and coordinate opportunities for students to partner on new initiatives, including those forged with innovation, start-ups, civic, and industry partners. And, we should focus on new ways to integrate and engage students in our cities and state and bring their developing skills and education to benefit our communities.







## PILLAR IV

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### **Goal: Build on Rutgers–New Brunswick’s strong foundation of community engagement.**

Civic engagement is a critical component of a Rutgers–New Brunswick education and a central pillar of higher education. It provides a path toward appreciating our differences, restoring civil discourse, and working in service to the common good. President Jonathan Holloway avowed these points during his inauguration, saying, “When I look at Rutgers, I want to see a public university that embraces the call to serve as an ethical obligation and inspires that call in every member of the community. This, surely, is what excellence looks like.”

In 2020, Rutgers–New Brunswick was awarded the prestigious Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, a distinguished endorsement given by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The designation marks the second time since 2010 that the campus was recognized for its exemplary commitment to embedding community engagement in teaching, research, and co-curricular programming.

This rich history began with our designation as New Jersey’s land-grant college in 1864 and the establishment of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station and Rutgers Cooperative Extension years later. Today, we are fortunate to have an abundance of community engagement programs that involve research and

outreach, including the Rutgers Summer Service Internship Initiative, a new program that provides meaningful internship experiences for all undergraduate students at public service-orientated nonprofit organizations and direct-service government offices. The internship expands the students' knowledge and develops their skills to engage as active citizens. Other existing programs include the Rutgers Collaborative Center, which has supported community engagement in the curriculum and curated opportunities for engagement with community partners throughout New Brunswick and Piscataway; the Campus Compact, a national coalition of colleges and universities; many national high-profile community-engaged centers and institutes; and several local initiatives.

Community engagement allows students, faculty, and staff to interact with the world beyond the campus, be it the distinct culture of the local city or town or the global community, by promoting a mutually beneficial relationship through the sharing and co-generation of knowledge and resources. It also represents a comprehensive continuum of activities that includes multidisciplinary community-engaged teaching, research, and service; recognizes diverse human interdependence; promotes inclusive and reciprocal collaborations; encourages ethical, social action; and prepares students to be engaged citizens.

Rutgers–New Brunswick must maintain its Carnegie Classification. Increasing emphasis on civic engagement in the curriculum and building on existing programs leads to recognition as a national leader among our peers for integrating community engagement into all aspects of our mission.

### **Objective I: Integrate community engagement into the curricular and co-curricular student experience.**

Community service has significant and reciprocal advantages as it allows Rutgers–New Brunswick to accomplish its vision of serving the greater public good while addressing grand challenges and stimulating the economy and changing the lives of our students. Civic-engaged learning enlightens students and develops the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation needed to make a difference in communities and be active participants in our democratic society.

High-impact learning opportunities in the context of community-engaged partnerships must become a core component of a Rutgers–New Brunswick education to prepare both graduate and undergraduate students to be respectful and effective community partners. To this end, the campus should prioritize a community-engaged experience for all students. A central repository of existing and developing programs can be recorded as part of the broader university initiative. Faculty and staff who will be implementing civic engagement offerings are essential partners in creating curriculum and co-curriculum innovations. Faculty support for curriculum development, best practices for engaging students, and ensuring high-impact experiences are necessary for future success.

### **Objective II: Incentivize and reward faculty committed to civic engagement and scholarship.**

As a public, land-grant university, Rutgers–New Brunswick has a distinct commitment to benefit the communities it serves. Community-engaged, interdisciplinary scholarship that amplifies the reach and impact of our talented faculty's work is one way to help achieve this goal while also ensuring our community partners are active contributors in this mutually beneficial work.

For Rutgers–New Brunswick to grow in its commitment to community-engaged scholarship and become the place that top community-engaged scholars seek to advance their careers and serve communities, we must continue to create a dynamic culture that fosters this important work. Generally, this should include encouraging faculty to seek opportunities to engage with the community and to use their voices and areas of scholarship in service to the public good.

Specifically, we must provide mechanisms that support faculty in developing and implementing public scholarship and reward them for this work. Academic policies that encourage and support faculty to integrate community engagement into their teaching and research allow for this work's recognition in promotion, tenure, and faculty recognition.

**Objective III: Develop infrastructure for civic engagement initiatives to better partner across the institution and serve the state.**

Rutgers–New Brunswick maintains long-standing community-engagement efforts ranging from outreach programs to research studies to university partnerships that operate independently. Critical to our success going forward will be cataloging and coordinating faculty, staff, and student programs that serve both common and unique agendas within the context of larger goals. Establishing a centralized framework, creating a shared understanding of the reciprocity in our engagement, and developing a campuswide commitment to an understanding of community engagement will enable us to leverage our educational mission and extend our reach throughout the state of New Jersey, the nation, and the world. This new infrastructure and culture of engagement will encourage conversations across disciplines and units and promote communication with existing external stakeholders and potential new external partners. It also will increase faculty, staff, and student awareness of and access to civic engagement activities. Coordinating collaborations across the campus to avoid redundancy will maximize impact.

To accomplish this, Rutgers–New Brunswick must create a centrally supported and locally enacted civic engagement initiative that will distinguish among the community, civic, and public engagement programs built on a shared understanding of community engagement anchored in reciprocity. Efforts that promote institutional clarity and organizational goals will move us closer to our goal of becoming a national exemplar for integrating community engagement into all aspects of our mission. Identifying, cataloging, and managing community engagement initiatives on a single, easily accessible, searchable platform will enhance student involvement and allow faculty to identify appropriate civic engagement opportunities—all vital to our success.

Work also must be done to leverage existing efforts across Rutgers–New Brunswick that exhibit excellence, develop best practices that create and scale new efforts, and further integrate civic engagement into our mission. As one example, Rutgers Cooperative Extension supports our extensive partners in counties across the state, and we have an opportunity going forward to grow existing areas of community-scholarship partnerships and environments to strengthen our relationship with the community through the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers Gardens, Rutgers Makerspace, the Labor Education Action Research Network, and other existing and future programs.

Finally, the State of New Jersey will be an important and strategic partner in our work. Rutgers–New Brunswick must engage in planned, coordinated engagement with the state, focusing on new opportunities in critical areas that rely on the state's investment, as well as building on current opportunities to bring the citizens of the state to campus to experience Rutgers first hand. Partnerships at all levels will support the university's education, research, and service missions with the benefit of enhancing the communities in which we work and partner.





# OPERATIONALIZING EXCELLENCE

The Rutgers–New Brunswick Academic Master Plan is the cornerstone upon which the university will continue to build on its academic excellence. Yet, its success will require a careful re-evaluation of and investment in the foundations that underlie our campus and university operations.

The key to success will be cultivating a culture among academic and operational units, faculty, and staff that is focused on working collaboratively in the best interest of our students, regardless of silos or agendas. Such a culture must begin by developing better coordination across our institution, removing unnecessary complexities, and establishing clear academic policies that guide our efforts.

A concerted effort must be paid to the structures and policies impacting student success, including equitable access to academic support and advising, the removal of barriers to timely academic achievement, the creation of clear and lighted pathways that support learning, and the development of intellectual communities. To ensure these efforts include graduate students, we must rethink the coordination of graduate student services and collaboration among programmatically aligned disciplines.

We also must commit ourselves to ensuring the foundation of our faculty's success, including looking critically at our research funding, our commitment to interdisciplinary collaborations and external partnerships, how we conduct technology transfer, the management of our information and reporting systems, and collaborations with colleagues around the world. Once again, graduate students must be given consideration as we work to find additional ways to attract and retain them through developing competitive fellowships and support for interdisciplinary programs.

Attention must be paid, too, to our physical infrastructure, which is widely recognized as needing significant improvements. Top faculty talent and today's discerning students demand an environment conducive to supporting their academic, research, and social needs. State-of-the-art research buildings, cutting-edge core services, great libraries, fully accessible buildings, modern classrooms, and safe, attractive, and dynamic on-campus housing also are needed. We must think creatively about designing spaces that facilitate high-impact learning opportunities, social engagement, and vibrant programming on campus and ensure that student services are available when and where students want them.

Undoubtedly, this will not be easy work. It will require us to hold to our guiding principles of institutional clarity and efficiency at every turn. It will mean that we commit ourselves to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us. And, it will require that we be creative and progressive in our thinking, unencumbered by past ways of operating, and dedicated to ensuring that student needs are always placed first.



# ACADEMIC MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Academic Master Plan document is merely the beginning—the blueprint for an edifice that we, the Rutgers–New Brunswick community, will build together during the coming months and years to manifest our vision of excellence.

The Chancellor-Provost Office will serve as the clearinghouse, facilitator, and keeper of transparency and accountability for initiatives that support the Academic Master Plan, align with its Four Pillars of Excellence, and advance its objectives.

Recognizing, however, that great ideas can come from any unit or individual within our campus community, the Chancellor-Provost has established a structure for the discovery, development, and implementation of Academic Master Plan projects.

## SCHOOL AND DIVISIONAL INITIATIVES

In our research and creation of this document, we have uncovered many outstanding programs and initiatives that already embody the principles of the Academic Master Plan and that will move the university toward further excellence. The Chancellor-Provost Office will support, track, and bring awareness to these existing operations—and invite faculty, staff, and students to propose new initiatives within their respective units. Such proposals would be reviewed and endorsed by divisional leadership before being presented to the Chancellor-Provost for consideration. Each idea must fully align with the Academic Master Plan and include the presenter's timeline for and commitment to project completion, recognizing that the Chancellor-Provost expects results and positive change for our community.



## THE CHANCELLOR-PROVOST CHALLENGE

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The Chancellor-Provost Challenge will comprise the second part of implementation, focused on transformational campuswide initiatives. It will call for innovative ideas from Rutgers–New Brunswick and catalyze exploration, collaboration, concept-testing, and risk-taking. Cross-disciplinary groups representing multiple campus units will bring ideas forward within a structured environment. The Chancellor-Provost Challenge will advance the very best talent, creativity, and initiative of our faculty, staff, and students by selecting ideas and supporting successful teams in preparing their projects for scale and making them sustainable to achieve lasting change. Successful teams will work together to implement their innovations.

## ADMINISTRATIVE-LEVEL INITIATIVES

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This will include administrative-level initiatives that the Chancellor-Provost will advance and implement in close collaboration with the University President. These will include developing and funding administrative processes, clear academic unit organization, and infrastructure investments in technology and physical plants. The initiatives will address gaps in our academic enterprise and position Rutgers–New Brunswick for success in localized and campuswide endeavors supporting the Academic Master Plan.

## ACADEMIC MASTER PLAN

# STEERING AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

Members include faculty, staff, and administrators from across Rutgers–New Brunswick campuses.

## GOAL 1: VISION STATEMENT, ACADEMIC PRIORITIES, COMMUNICATION

**Goal 1: To develop an academic vision statement that reflects our academic priorities and develop a communication plan for the Rutgers–New Brunswick Academic Master Plan.**

### Steering Committee Co-Chairs

Jennifer Hollingshead, Rutgers Communications and Marketing

Peter March, School of Arts and Sciences

Sandra Tomlinson-Clarke, Office of the Chancellor-Provost

### Subcommittee Members

Neal Buccino, Office of the Chancellor-Provost

Sylvia Chan-Malik, School of Arts and Sciences

Jocelyn Crowley, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy

Ingrid Fulmer, Office of the Chancellor-Provost

Ryan Kettler, Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology

Courtney McAnuff, Division of Enrollment Management

Jonathan Potter, School of Communication and Information

Jennifer Theiss, School of Communication and Information

Wade Trappe, School of Engineering

Andrianni Vollas Viscariello, Rutgers University Foundation

## GOAL 2: PROGRAM GROWTH, ACADEMIC COHERENCE, SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

**Goal 2: To develop a plan for sustainable growth in an array of academic programs and disciplinary areas to increase our academic reputation, academic excellence, and signature experiences.**

### Steering Committee Co-Chairs

Romayne Botti, University Finance and Administration

(Co-Chair Infrastructure Subcommittee)

Laura Lawson, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences

(Co-Chair Signature Programs & Interdisciplinary Collaboration)

### Subcommittee Members

Wanda Blanchett, Graduate School of Education

Kay Bidle, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences

Tony Calcado, Institutional Planning and Operations

Elisabeth Camp, School of Arts and Sciences

Christopher Cartmill, Mason Gross School of the Arts

Madhavi Chakrabarty, Rutgers Business School–Newark and New Brunswick

Sylvia Chan-Malik, School of Arts and Sciences

Clark Chinn, Graduate School of Education – pending confirmation

Alberto Cuitiño, School of Engineering

Laura Curran, School of Social Work – pending confirmation

Eric Garfunkel, Rutgers Global Health Institute

Tina Grycenkov, Office of Institutional Research and Academic Planning

Paul Hammond, Office of the Chancellor-Provost

Susan Lawrence, School of Arts and Sciences

Ming Liu, School of Management and Labor Relations

Michele Norin, Office of the Chief Information Officer

Richard Novak, Division of Continuing Studies

Jon Oliver, Information Technology, University Senate



Anne Piehl, School of Arts and Sciences  
Cathryn Potter, School of Social Work  
Kathleen Scott, School of Arts and Sciences  
Tracey Shors, School of Arts and Sciences  
David Shreiber, School of Engineering

### **GOAL 3: INNOVATIVE RESEARCH, STUDENT EXPERIENCE, PUBLIC SERVICE**

**Goal 3: To develop a pathway for progress through innovative research, inclusive pedagogy and student experience, and public service that impacts the intellectual life of our faculty, students, and staff.**

#### **Group A: Innovative Research**

##### **Steering Committee Co-Chairs**

Thomas Farris, School of Engineering  
Denise Hien, Office of the Chancellor-Provost  
Michael Zwick, Office for Research

##### **Subcommittee Members**

Clint Andrews, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy  
Melissa Aronczyk, School of Communication and Information  
Jean Baum, School of Arts and Sciences  
Nicole Cain, Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology  
Chia-Yi Chiu, Graduate School of Education  
Wendie Cohick, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences  
Rebecca Cypess, Mason Gross School of the Arts  
Ravit Duncan, Graduate School of Education  
Dee Magnoni, New Brunswick Libraries  
Lou Masur, School of Arts and Sciences  
Aaron Mazzeo, School of Engineering  
Tom Prusa, School of Arts and Sciences  
Ronald Ransome, School of Arts and Sciences  
Anand Sarwate, School of Engineering  
Henry Turner, Office of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

#### **Group B: Inclusive Pedagogy & Student Experience**

##### **Steering Committee Co-Chairs**

Salvador Mena, Division of Student Affairs  
Carolyn Moehling, Office of the Chancellor-Provost  
Henrik Pedersen, School of Graduate Studies

##### **Subcommittee Members**

Stacey Blackwell, Rutgers Learning Centers  
Madhavi Chakrabarty, Rutgers Business School—Newark and New Brunswick  
Kimberly Cook-Chennault, School of Engineering  
Adrienne Eaton, School of Management and Labor Relations  
Gary Gigliotti, Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research  
William Jones, Career and Exploration Success  
Jacquelyn Litt, Douglass Residential College  
Javier Robles, School of Arts and Sciences  
Kristen Syrett, School of Arts and Sciences

#### **Group C: Public Service/Community Engagement**

##### **Steering Committee Co-Chairs**

Anna Branch, Office of the Senior Vice President for Equity  
Marybeth Gasman, Rutgers—New Brunswick Faculty Council  
Cathryn Potter, School of Social Work  
Melissa Wooten, Division of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement

##### **Subcommittee Members**

Emily Allen-Hornblower, School of Arts and Sciences  
Jason Geary, Mason Gross School of the Arts  
Terri Kurtzberg, Rutgers Business School—Newark and New Brunswick  
Jorge Marcone, School of Arts and Sciences  
Donald Schaffner, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences  
Matthew Stone, School of Arts and Sciences  
Vonu Thakuria, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy





## PARTING THOUGHTS

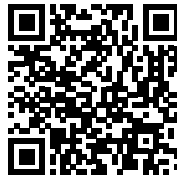
The Academic Master Plan Steering Committee has developed a profound awareness of the excellence at Rutgers–New Brunswick and the greater heights of which we are capable. We engaged with students, faculty, and staff in developing this document. We examined the signature experiences, research programs, institutes, and systems that underlie Rutgers–New Brunswick’s standing as a national public research institution. We are left feeling privileged to be a part of Rutgers’ legacy.

We are confident that the Four Pillars of Excellence, along with its goals, objectives, and implementation structure, will guide our community toward its full potential as a world-recognized provider of education, research, and public service. Becoming a globally recognized exemplar of the values of a beloved community, strategic institutional clarity, and academic excellence is our aspiration.

We agree with President Holloway’s assessment that “cultivating academic excellence is not about building something new at Rutgers, but about building on what we already are and moving toward a vision of what can be.”

This Academic Master Plan is our blueprint for building on our excellence and moving toward an even brighter future.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY – NEW BRUNSWICK



To track the progress of  
the Academic Master Plan  
visit [amp.rutgers.edu](https://amp.rutgers.edu)

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