

EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

Seven educational initiatives have been selected for development during the five-year strategic plan: novel approaches to teaching and interprofessional education, led centrally by RBHS; undergraduate health-related education, underrepresented minority group pipeline programs, and leadership training, pursued by RBHS, with Rutgers taking the lead; and joint degree and professional educational program efforts, led primarily by specific RBHS schools.

Underrepresented Minority Group Pipeline Programs

Underrepresented minority group pipeline programs are a high priority for RBHS and elsewhere at Rutgers, as these programs highlight two of Rutgers' greatest strengths: its diverse student body and the range of its educational offerings in the health sciences and related fields. RBHS is in an advantageous position to recruit and train promising students who are members of populations underrepresented in the health sciences and is poised to do so. Multiple ongoing and successful pipeline programs are managed by schools and institutes within RBHS, including the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) program, which provides opportunities for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in New Jersey to participate in higher education programs. The program provides financial, academic, and counseling support services to qualified students who demonstrate potential and need. SON's EOF program is the only such New Jersey program tailored for nursing students and SHRP's EOF program is the only such New Jersey program designed for allied health professions students. Graduates of these programs have assumed leadership roles as health professionals. Additional programs include the Rutgers Summer Medical and Dental Education Program, born 52 years ago, which teaches college sophomores and juniors leaning toward those professions about the medical and dental school experiences, and Project L/EARN, which is a social science health research internship program that trains and advises undergraduates with interests in careers in health services and research. Founded in 1991, Project L/EARN, housed in the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research, received an "Innovative Program Model" award from the National Association of Minority Medical Educators.

Underrepresented minority group pipeline programs are also a high priority Rutgers-wide, so efforts will be undertaken to coordinate/bridge RBHS programs with other Rutgers programs, Rutgers-wide and geographic campus-specific, as well as with the emerging community health and health systems signature program. These efforts will be managed through the chancellor's office to ensure Rutgers-wide coordination and collaboration. RBHS activities, in particular, will include an emphasis on scholarly activity and identifying funding opportunities.

Critical gaps in underrepresented minority group opportunities within RBHS include:

- a lack of information regarding the structure, function, and impact of existing pipeline programs;
- a lack of a tracking system for all pipeline program participants/graduates;
- a robust mentoring and alumni pool and standard measures of success; and
- the identities of additional funding sources to grow and replicate programs and entice qualified participants from under-represented groups to RBHS pipeline programs.

Highly accessible opportunities include:

- existing rich educational offerings for humanistic, linguistic, and cultural competency training that can support further interprofessional collaborations among RBHS units; and
- multiple campuses, which can produce local replications of programs developed by other Rutgers units.

In collaboration with RU-Camden, RU-New Brunswick, and RU-Newark, RBHS aims to:

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- increase the visibility of productive high caliber underrepresented minority group programs available throughout Rutgers;
- focus on holistic admissions processes (i.e., a balanced, individualistic review and assessment of qualities presented by an applicant taking into account cognitive and non-cognitive factors);
- retention of minority students and faculty; increase diversity and inclusion in the allied health, research, and policy professions;
- provide educational experiences that are humanistic and culturally and linguistically sensitive through RBHS pipeline programs;
- continue to develop and enhance mentoring, role modeling, and leadership opportunities; and
- promote collaboration across all campuses in education and research training.

The timeline and metrics will be developed in collaboration with the university.