

INTEGRATION AMONG SCHOOLS AND ACROSS RUTGERS

Roles of Centers and Institutes

RBHS centers and institutes, as well as other Rutgers centers and institutes, represent an important mechanism for promoting interdisciplinary research and training, and overcoming some of the more significant challenges posed by geographic and structural impediments to synergy that are typical of large institutions. Centers and institutes have provided a critical avenue for entrepreneurial members of the faculty to pursue career objectives not well served by traditional departmental and other structures. At present, more than 200 centers and institutes exist throughout Rutgers, although only a handful are “autonomous responsibility” centers. Membership rosters range from one or a few individuals to hundreds of faculty members. Some are virtual in nature, while others are housed in a single building. Organizational *raison d’être* for centers and institutes within RBHS and the basic and applied sciences include utilization of shared technology/instrumentation, a commitment to treating related diseases, a commitment to understanding the origins of disease pathogenesis, and engagement in interdisciplinary and interprofessional collaboration, with much broader rationales for other areas of the university. These apply to the new Brain Health Institute and the four major RBHS centers/institutes: Cancer Institute of New Jersey; Center for Advanced Biotechnology and Medicine; Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute; and Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research (IFH). For example, IFH has facilitated collaboration among twelve disciplines within the School of Arts and Sciences and six professional schools in Camden, New Brunswick, and Newark, and serves as an important bridge in conducting health and health policy research across Rutgers.

There is a need to develop and coordinate centers and institute policies Rutgers-wide, then create a catalog to be publicized and distributed campus-wide. RBHS will work closely with the university administration in this effort. Several management-related issues must be addressed, possibly by implementing responsibility center management (RCM). Issues include:

- collecting, compiling, and analyzing essential information characterizing the centers and institutes (and related initiatives), beginning with a comprehensive inventory of each one;
- developing a precise definition of what constitutes a Rutgers center or institute;
- ensuring that Rutgers center and institute operations, governance, reviews, and succession planning follow best practices, perhaps those established by the Association of American Medical Colleges, with transparency to both membership and institution leadership;
- establishing sustainable business models for center and institute operations that incent pursuit of federal and private funding by appropriate sharing of indirect cost returns and other revenues with faculty, centers and institutes, schools and departments, and central administration, while minimizing perverse incentives and barriers to collaboration;
- engaging Rutgers centers and institutes in systematic, ongoing efforts to promote and participate in cross-disciplinary, cross-campus, and multi-institutional collaborations; and
- developing administrative and regulatory processes that are fully integrated and honored across the entire system.