



RUTGERS

Centers for Global Advancement
and International Affairs

2014

GAIA CENTERS STRATEGIC PLAN

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PREAMBLE

This document is the strategic plan for the Centers for Global Advancement and International Affairs (GAIA Centers), the unit of Rutgers University responsible for leading, developing, and promoting global initiatives in collaboration with all Rutgers units (Rutgers University–New Brunswick, Rutgers University–Newark, Rutgers University–Camden, and Rutgers’ Biological and Health Sciences). It was created as part of an overall strategic planning process undertaken by Rutgers University and uses the strategic priorities, foundational elements, and integrating themes highlighted in the university plan as its basis. This document outlines the GAIA Centers’ plan for integrating international engagement into every aspect of the university’s plan.

The GAIA Centers staff developed its strategic plan with input from the International Advisory Committee (a universitywide faculty and staff advisory group) and from proposals submitted in response to an open solicitation to the entire university. The process was further informed by the results of the GAIA Centers’ comprehensive inventory of international engagement, which compiled the global priorities of every dean, center and institute, and selected faculty, and benchmarked data from CIC peer institutions.

ABOUT THE CENTERS FOR GLOBAL ADVANCEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The GAIA Centers were founded in 2011 to lead and foster international engagement across all Rutgers’ units. The GAIA Centers are implementing a strong strategy for university internationalization and positioning Rutgers as a leader in international higher education. In 2014, the GAIA Centers and Rutgers received the Paul Simon Award, the most prestigious internationalization award in the United States, from NAFSA: Association of International Education Administrators. The centers’ work is organized around four pillars:

Global Education: Fostering the development of global citizenship in Rutgers students by providing opportunities for international study, research, internships, service learning, and multicultural experiences that are integrated with and support the learning goals of the academic majors.

Global Programs: Internationalizing the campus and surrounding communities by developing and facilitating programs that foster research, teaching, and learning while encouraging and supporting international and global engagement for faculty, staff, and students.

Global Relations: Cultivating strong and consequential partnerships with universities, governments, and communities abroad to encourage the exchange of knowledge, ideas, expertise, technology, and cross-cultural dialogue.

Global Services: Providing members of the Rutgers community and visitors with quality and timely services that support both the growth and strength of the university’s global network and integrate international visitors into the university community.

The GAIA Centers work closely with the university’s International Advisory Committee (IAC), which serves in a consultative role to make recommendations and support the efforts to expand international and global perspectives in research and education at the university.

The GAIA Centers have provided funding for international research, expanded global programs and opportunities on campus and abroad for students, enhanced services for the international community at Rutgers, and developed comprehensive partnerships with foreign universities and organizations.

GAIA CENTERS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the GAIA Centers is to transform the culture and practice of Rutgers by fostering global engagement that enriches the student experience, builds faculty excellence, and enhances Rutgers’ national and international reputation as a preeminent teaching and research university. The GAIA Centers are committed to nurturing the diversity of Rutgers and New Jersey, to advancing cross-cultural awareness, and to cultivating citizens and leaders whose knowledge and skills can bridge the local and the global.

GAIA STRATEGIC PRIORITY I: Internationalize the Rutgers Student Experience

The GAIA Centers are committed to transforming the Rutgers student experience by making innovative, high-quality international, and global education opportunities accessible to all students. The GAIA Centers will enhance students’ global competencies by supporting internationalization of the curriculum, expanding the range of international opportunities, and developing campus and community programs that embrace Rutgers’ global diversity.

Make global awareness and international experience an integral part of the student experience at Rutgers

- Review the geographic focus of global opportunities for students to align them with other dimensions of Rutgers’ international engagement

- Increase Rutgers students' participation in learning abroad
- Develop internship opportunities abroad
- Explore opportunities for embedding an international experience in courses offered on campus
- Develop wide-ranging, creative programming that facilitates cross-cultural learning
- Create incentives for faculty to develop global opportunities in New Jersey for students

Advance internationalization by building connections between domestic and international students

- Foster connections among prospective or returning study abroad students and international students
- Increase the involvement of international student organizations from all campuses in existing GAIA Centers programs, including the Biennial Theme, International Education Week, Rutgers Day, and others
- Internationalize the dining and housing experience

Educate faculty and staff on opportunities to strengthen students' global competencies

- Provide comprehensive information about learning abroad opportunities to faculty and advisers on all campuses to help them better advise students
- Develop and offer intercultural awareness and communication training programs for Rutgers staff and faculty in collaboration with other units
- Create programs that connect Rutgers with the diverse international communities of New Jersey
- Engage faculty in crafting and enhancing international opportunities for students

Internationalize the curriculum

- Integrate international opportunities with curriculum through embedded programming, pre-departure, and re-entry courses
- Develop a menu of credit-bearing international research opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students
- Continue to develop the internationalization of the curriculum projects under the GAIA Centers grants program in collaboration with other teaching/learning units
- Facilitate faculty and student access to UN-related organizations and NGO resources to enhance course content and experiential learning opportunities
- Develop a model to train and expose GAIA Centers' student interns to international education opportunities and concepts
- Offer short-term, low-cost gateway programming for first-year students
- Explore first semester study abroad opportunities
- Develop global Byrne Seminars
- Assist academic units in delivering language studies through curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs
- Develop a campuswide strategy for strengthening area studies scholarship and programming
- Develop co-curricular opportunities (service-learning, internship, volunteer, research) in nontraditional destinations

Eliminate financial obstacles to students' global engagement

- Obtain approval for a new financing model for study abroad programs
- Build a scholarship fund to support students' global engagement
- Identify and pursue grants that help finance study abroad opportunities for Rutgers and international students, especially first-generation, minority, disabled, and commuter students

GAIA STRATEGIC PRIORITY II: Transform the International Faculty, Student, and Scholar Experience

The GAIA Centers will lead the university's efforts to create a campus environment conducive to cross-cultural learning and the celebration of diversity by delivering expert programs and services to international students and scholars, solidifying Rutgers as the destination of choice for the best and brightest from around the world.

Enhance information and services for international students, scholars, and their dependents

- Actively engage the Rutgers community in developing a better understanding of the needs of the international population
- Conduct regular surveys to assess the level of satisfaction and the needs of international students and international faculty and scholars.
- Enhance services and support for international students, faculty, and scholars on campus, such as an English-language writing assistance service
- Build a new multimedia web portal with information and services for international students, scholars, and visitors
- Continue to foster relationships with global, federal, state, and local agencies to ensure Rutgers is in regulatory compliance with all visa requirements
- Expand orientation programming to include semester-length modules that allow for ongoing assessment of international student needs and resources to help them better navigate their adjustment to Rutgers

Create a welcoming environment for international faculty, students, and scholars

- Offer short orientation programs for visiting international scholars, and provide ongoing programming for them and their families to ease their transition and acculturate to the United States
- Deliver regular orientation programs for newly hired international faculty on legal and regulatory processes relating to their visa status
- Develop a Global Ally Certificate Program for faculty and staff working with international populations at Rutgers
- Facilitate scholars' involvement with surrounding and diaspora communities by establishing partnerships with local governments, school districts, and NGOs to build connections and coordinate cross-cultural programs

GAIA STRATEGIC PRIORITY III: Support Faculty Excellence through International Opportunities

The GAIA Centers will provide active support for Rutgers faculty to excel in global and international research. The GAIA Centers will facilitate collaborative and interdisciplinary research projects and partnerships that address issues of global concern, foster teaching that is globally engaged, and provide services that connect our local and global communities.

Promote international research and teaching

- Create an infrastructure and information sessions to help faculty identify and apply for external, internationally-focused fellowships and grants in cooperation with academic units and the Office of Research and Economic Development
- Expand Faculty International Interest Groups by identifying common topical and country/regional interests, and align these interests with Rutgers' global strengths and priorities
- Organize three to four working lunches a year for faculty focused on a particular country or topic, and invite funding agencies and representatives from local, national, and international governments to participate
- Host conferences on international topics with an inaugural conference on international research in fall 2015
- Continue to expand faculty participation in the Biennial Theme
- Improve the GAIA Centers' grants program and ensure it addresses academic themes outlined in the university and/or individual campus strategic plans
- Reach new faculty audiences through enhanced publicity and new incentives, e.g., grants for junior faculty
- Develop new opportunities for faculty to engage with students through internationally focused courses, internships, and research, particularly in the sciences and engineering

Facilitate faculty engagement and connections with international partners

- Streamline the process of developing and managing memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and create a searchable MOU database of international collaborations
- Regularly assess faculty regional/country involvement to better align the GAIA Centers' program development with their priorities and interests
- Enhance internal opportunities for engaging the Rutgers community with our international partners, including inviting faculty from diverse units to participate in visits from international delegations
- Create and promote external opportunities through teaching, collaborative research, or sabbaticals abroad to encourage faculty to collaborate with the university's new or existing global partners
- Expand and strengthen the Faculty and Staff Ambassadors grant program
- Invite faculty to participate in visits to the UN missions, consulates, international institutions, and embassies in Washington, D.C.
- Invite one or two global leaders to Rutgers each year to connect with faculty

Facilitate Rutgers faculty travel abroad and serve as a travel resource

- Provide updated and comprehensive information/resources on the Center for Global Services and other GAIA Centers' websites for faculty and staff traveling abroad (e.g., travel warnings, health-related travel information, and a "Rutgers Faculty: Travel Abroad" tab)
- Establish a monthly kiosk where faculty can obtain passport photos and passport applications
- Each quarter track and build a list of faculty travel from the travel registration database, highlighting their accomplishments on the trips
- Hold a GAIA Centers' open house at the beginning of the fall semester to share information about international engagement resources

GAIA STRATEGIC PRIORITY IV: Enhance Rutgers' Global Reputation

The GAIA Centers will promote the global successes of Rutgers faculty, students, and staff within the university, the state, and the world. The GAIA Centers will cultivate key audiences—including alumni—for the university's global initiatives and will strive to make Rutgers' excellence and global reach better known throughout our networks around the world.

Develop a comprehensive communications and marketing strategy to make Rutgers' status as a leader in international higher education more widely known

- Continue to expand content and distribution channels for information about Rutgers' global success, excellent academic programs, cutting-edge research, and internationally engaged faculty and staff
- Develop promotional materials and/or briefings for state and federal officials and agencies, the public, the media, and partners that outline the GAIA Centers' programs and services, and articulate a clear message about benefits of global engagement
- Create a visual identity to raise awareness of the centers' services and train staff on how to consistently share our messages with both the university community and the greater public
- Expand marketing and outreach to make the transformative experience of going abroad an integral part of Rutgers culture for faculty and students
- Create a mechanism, such as collateral materials or mission brochures, to regularly explain the mission and role of the GAIA Centers to current and new audiences
- Encourage staff and faculty to create and participate in events that promote awareness of Rutgers as a globally engaged university

Identify and cultivate key networks and audiences that are internationally focused

- Develop a communications strategy to engage external stakeholders with international reach
- Establish relationships with U.S. and international media
- Deepen relationships between Rutgers and international alumni through regular communications and engagements
- Develop and execute follow-up activities with international delegations to maintain and build upon contacts to enhance partnerships and Rutgers' international reputation (e.g., thank you packages, surveys, communications contacts database)
- Develop a comprehensive, tagged contacts database for email and/or print communications
- Collect data and develop performance metrics for assessing the GAIA Centers' communication strategy (e.g., readership, web traffic, number of attendees/participants in events)

GAIA STRATEGIC PRIORITY V: Promote New Jersey's Global Connections

The GAIA Centers are committed to catalyzing New Jersey's cultural, economic, and social vitality through international engagement, bringing the innovative ingenuity of Rutgers and New Jersey to bear on issues that transcend national borders.

Collaborate with Rutgers' Department of External Affairs—among others—to promote Rutgers' international profile at the state and national level, and define the GAIA Centers' role in this sector

- Conduct a benchmarking exercise with CIC schools to learn how they work with state and federal officials to better link the university to business, NGOs, and international communities
- Conduct systematic outreach activities to inform state officials of collaborative opportunities that will enhance internationalization for both Rutgers and New Jersey such as workshops, meetings, and email communications
- Work more closely with Rutgers' federal government relations office in Washington, D.C., and federal agencies to learn about current opportunities, identify potential points of connection for Rutgers, and to define the GAIA Centers' role in promoting global engagement in New Jersey and nationally

Expand awareness of Rutgers' human and intellectual resources for New Jersey's private sector

- Conduct systematic outreach activities to inform international divisions of New Jersey business and industry about the global resources and opportunities for partnership available at Rutgers
- Determine which of Rutgers' global resources are useful to the New Jersey commercial sector in developing global business

Expand Rutgers connections with non-governmental organizations and international and diaspora communities in New Jersey

- Conduct systematic outreach activities to New Jersey's international and diaspora community organizations to create new collaborative opportunities
- Explore and develop connections with non-governmental and civic organizations
- Develop programming that unites New Jersey's diverse communities, domestic and international students, and the greater Rutgers community

Promote Rutgers as a source for the globally competent/multilingual workforce essential to New Jersey's economic vitality

- Work with high schools and colleges, career planning, and external stakeholders to articulate the attributes of a globally competent Rutgers graduate, and promote the concept as an essential element of a Rutgers education
- Support the development of online and in-person workshops for Rutgers students on networking and searching for jobs in the international sector
- In collaboration with schools and external stakeholders, assess the demand for foreign language skills by business, government agencies, social service providers, and K–12 educators
- Investigate creating a first language transcript notation for native speakers of languages other than English to enhance their employability and Rutgers' visibility as a global institution
- Investigate the need for continuing education programming directed at acculturating foreign nationals and their families working in New Jersey, and facilitate connections with Rutgers units to provide programming

Promote Rutgers and New Jersey as a welcoming destination for global business

- Develop sources of information to facilitate connections between Rutgers and New Jersey's global business, international NGOs, and diaspora communities
- Make information about Rutgers' regional expertise and international research available to relevant government offices, businesses, and international organizations
- Provide data on Rutgers' international population and their economic contributions to Rutgers and New Jersey (e.g., rising international enrollments, countries such as China, India, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia sending increasing numbers of students to New Jersey)
- Spearhead conferences and workshops on international research opportunities and best practices in international research collaboration

CONCLUSION

For the next five years, the GAIA Centers' Strategic Plan will guide the efforts of our centers as we fulfill our mission to further Rutgers' excellence by fostering global engagement. The annual work plan of each of the centers' pillars will be shaped by this strategic plan and will purposefully move us toward achieving our shared goals and implementing the initiatives we have identified. To accomplish these ends, each year's work plan will identify clear metrics and realistic timelines so that progress toward goals can be tracked and assessed. The GAIA Centers' dashboard of relevant metrics will include:

- The number and provenance of international students and scholars at Rutgers
- Rutgers' standing in the annual IIE Open Doors rankings and reports
- The results of international student satisfaction surveys, including benchmarking against peer institutions
- The results of periodic surveys of international faculty and scholars
- The number and attendance figures for GAIA Centers programs, including workshops, information sessions, and other activities, together with evaluation and exit surveys completed by program participants
- A qualitative assessment of the diversity and impact of projects supported by GAIA Centers grants
- The number and quality of visits to the centers' website and the websites of the pillars
- The number and degree of engagement of subscribers to the centers' listservs, social media channels, and other modes of information dissemination
- The number of GAIA Centers events that feature international students or scholars in interaction with the broader Rutgers community, including the number of participants in such events
- The number of new contacts and substantive interactions that the GAIA Centers and Rutgers staff have with representatives of local business, industry, and community groups
- The number and value of grant awards to faculty for international projects, whether through the GAIA Centers, Rutgers, or external sources
- The value of externally generated funding as a result of the GAIA Centers' support
- The number of faculty who apply for GAIA Centers grants and, in turn, become engaged in GAIA Centers programs, or otherwise participate in internationalization initiatives

- The number of international alumni identified by the GAIA Centers and the Rutgers Alumni Office, and the frequency of contacts with those alumni
- The number and destination of students who study or engage in internships abroad

In this way, the work of the GAIA Centers will be transparent and our progress measurable as we strive to achieve our mission, guided by the GAIA Centers Strategic Plan.

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Rutgers' GAIA Centers

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