

Transforming Transfer Enrollment and Budget Processes at Rutgers University–Newark

Leveraging NACUBO Resources to Enhance Efficiency, Data-Informed Decision-Making, and Stakeholder Engagement

Rutgers University–Newark (RU-N) is one of the regional campuses of Rutgers University, a distinguished public land-grant research institution with three campuses in New Jersey. Located in the heart of Newark, RU-N offers a diverse and vibrant academic environment with a strong commitment to research, community engagement, and student success. Like many institutions across the state, RU-N faced challenges with declining transfer enrollment. To address this and other enrollment and budget-related issues, RU-N embarked on a transformative journey with the help of the NACUBO grant-funded project.

Understanding and Addressing Knowledge Gaps

To gain insights into the knowledge gaps stakeholders had regarding the budget process, RU-N utilized the Budget Process Assessment. This assessment, along with the modified networked improvement community (NIC) approach and techniques taught by the NACUBO Project Team, enabled RU-N to:

- **Leverage Cross-Functional Teams:** RU-N organized cross-functional teams involving budget, institutional effectiveness, and enrollment experts. This collaboration disrupted silos and fostered open, honest conversations about cultural changes needed to connect student outcomes to budget decisions.
- **Streamline Transfer Evaluation:** RU-N funded a new transfer evaluation team and transfer center, significantly reducing the transfer evaluation time from several weeks to just 1 to 2 days. This was achieved by implementing an in-house solution for transfer credit evaluation at no additional cost, creating efficiencies for advisors.

Improvement Project

Improving the Enrollment Projection Process for Transfer Students

Toolkit Used

Budget Process Assessment

Results

- With the implementation of a new transfer evaluation team and center, RU-N decreased the transfer credit evaluation time from several weeks to 1 to 2 days.
- The development of an enrollment dashboard by the cross-functional institutional team provided diverse stakeholders with centralized access to enrollment and financial data.
- RU-N launched a SharePoint site as a centralized communication hub, offering comprehensive information on budget processes and guidelines, promoting budget literacy, and ensuring clear and consistent messaging to stakeholders.



“With NACUBO’s support, RU-N transformed the budget process into one that places the needs of our students at the forefront of our priorities and aligns our budget requests with a commitment to equitable outcomes for all.”

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Amber Randolph,

*Former Senior Vice
Chancellor for Administration,
Economic Development and
Chief Financial Officer*

Developing Data-Driven Tools and Communication Platforms

The cross-functional institutional team developed an enrollment dashboard centralizing enrollment and financial data. This tool, a collaborative effort influenced by the NACUBO grant-funded project, provided diverse stakeholders with access to review and analyze data independently.

Building on these successes, RU-N also launched a centralized communication hub using a SharePoint site. This hub offers stakeholders comprehensive information on budget processes, guidelines, and data literacy tools. Furthermore, collaboration with the Institutional Effectiveness team continues to refine and improve the enrollment dashboard tested during the project.

Sustaining Momentum for Future Success

RU-N’s future budgeting process is anchored in a culture of collaboration and student-centeredness. Key elements of this culture include:

- **Student-Centeredness:** Prioritizing student outcomes as a strategic value.
- **Equitable Budgeting:** Aligning budget requests with equitable student outcomes.
- **Strategic Communication:** Ensuring clear, consistent, and differentiated messaging for stakeholders.
- **Budget Literacy:** Emphasizing and supporting budget knowledge and skills for effective engagement in the budget process.
- **Budget Stewardship:** Setting expectations for behaviors that uphold a commitment to moral, ethical, and prudent financial decision-making.

By embracing these principles and leveraging the tools and frameworks developed through the NACUBO grant-funded project, RU-N is well-positioned to sustain momentum, enhance stakeholder engagement, and further optimize its enrollment and budget processes for the benefit of its students and the institution as a whole.