

Draft Synthesis: Goals, Strategies, Indicators of Success from Research-Practice Partnership Discussion, 4/5/19

Compiled/synthesized after the meeting by Laura Millay, Marina Van der Eb, Michael Wittmann, and Franzi Peterson from the RiSE Center

Meeting Attendees: Jason Charland (Research Development), Sue Dowling (Advanced Manufacturing Center), Kyle Forsythe (Advanced Manufacturing Center), Ellen Mallory (Cooperative Extension), Julia McGuire (School of Biology and Ecology), Susan McKay (Maine Center for Research in STEM Education (RiSE Center)), Shane O'Neill (School of Forest Resources), Franzi Peterson (RiSE Center), Brian Roth (Cooperative Forestry Research Unit (CFRU)), Linda Silka (Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions), Owen Smith (Innovative Media Research and Commercialization Center (IMRC)), Rachel Snell (Honors College), Marina Van der Eb (RiSE Center), Jake Ward (Innovation and Economic Development), and Michael Wittmann (RiSE Center) with Provost Jeff Hecker, Kim Jenkins (Organizational Effectiveness), and Laura Millay (RiSE Center) facilitating discussion and Beth Muncey (RiSE Center) taking notes

Goal 1: Solve problems and innovate: UMaine is a recognized leader and partner in research-based and innovative solutions to challenges in Maine and beyond

Strategies:

- Leverage diverse expertise
- Involve diverse stakeholders (e.g., researchers, community members, industry) to innovate creatively and strategically in addressing Maine's challenges
- Establish a culture of creative problem-solving and innovation
- Involve partners in identifying and solving problems
- Think strategically about future needs
- Create structures (an established group or think-tank) to support collaborative thinking
- Improve supports for faculty to be involved in these efforts - one specific way is to change promotion/tenure guidelines and inform committees that this work is valued. (Another way to state this: eliminate barriers that prevent faculty participation in research-practice partnerships.)

Goal 2: Be a valuable and valued partner: UMaine is a sought-after partner by community members to carry out practical research on issues of interest

Strategies:

- Lower barriers to collaboration (see above on improving supports for faculty to be involved)
- Increase capacity for responsiveness by providing centralized/shared resources to support the work of research-practice partnerships (e.g., support for data analysis, support for communications with stakeholders)
- Increase communication/collaboration across groups on campus and share strategies across groups so we don't reinvent the wheel
- Communicate to stakeholders about the value in collaborating with UMaine (communicate that we are worth partnering with)
- Improve documentation of impacts of UMaine partnerships on Maine's communities, economy, and workforce and better promote our (UMaine's) value in order to gain more support from the community (e.g., document how many CEUs we provide to professional partners)
- Define impacts of student learning outcomes as they play out years into the future

Goal 3: Value and support sustained partnerships: Improve university infrastructure to support and sustain collaborative partnerships that lead to research productivity and benefit all stakeholders

Strategies:

- Plan for long-term support resources to sustain partnerships through development from starter funding to sustainability
- Create a structure on campus (for instance, an official working group) to support sharing of resources and expertise across groups on campus that engage in research-practice partnerships as a way to streamline, be efficient and effective, and open time to pursue research
- Increase recognition and understanding across campus that research-practice partnerships may lead to different types of publications than traditional research
- Change annual reporting requirements on campus to honor partnership work (currently, for some faculty/employees this work is not counted toward service work)
- Encourage deans to value faculty working cross-department and not view this as "taking away" from home department
- Develop strategies to sustain partnerships through campus supports that help keep partnerships going (rather than only helping to start new ones)
- Develop a means to know what others across campus are doing and to help foster collaboration/awareness
- Use symposiums and lectures as a purposeful way to build collaborations (publicize/communicate about them more effectively)

- Increase interdisciplinary/cross-discipline collaboration

Goal 4: Involve students (undergraduate/graduate) in partnership work (increase student involvement)

Strategies:

(We didn't get to strategies for this yet...)

Ideas about indicators of success (we didn't have a chance to talk about these, but some groups discussed them; we haven't yet mapped them to the goals – could do more work here):

1. Research-practice partnerships that are maintained/sustained over time
2. Stakeholders find/articulate value from the partnership work (could be measured through surveys)
3. Publications are produced that cross departments/disciplines through partnership work
4. Measure an increase in cross-department activities
5. Measure stakeholder/community investment (dollars coming in to support the work + other forms of investment?)
6. Measure faculty involvement in research-practice partnerships
7. Measure student involvement in research-practice partnerships