

PROP: Program Reinvention Opportunity Project

What is the challenge?

A Bridge to the Future: The Rutgers Digital Library Initiative describes the ambitious plan of the Rutgers University Libraries to use technology to enhance collection resources and library services. At the same time that we seek to move in new areas, we will for some time to come live in a hybrid environment that requires us to maintain existing services. The resulting dilemma for Rutgers librarians is how to continue our excellent service program while at the same time carve out the effort required to invent new ways of offering library services.

What is PROP?

The Program Reinvention Opportunity Project (PROP) will award librarians internal leaves of up to one semester, renewable for one additional semester, for projects that the Libraries have identified as essential to the reinvention of our systemwide library service program. Librarians with PROP leaves will be exempt from all regular duties and committees and may relocate to specially designated and fully equipped offices.

How will PROP help?

PROP will give librarians the time and space necessary to develop the new skills and services that are required for the Digital Library Initiative. PROP projects will benefit library users systemwide by reinventing basic services. PROP projects will also result in new skills and a different way of working that will enhance the Rutgers Libraries and individual librarian's ability to participate in external collaborative projects. PROP responds to our strategy to develop our services by using existing personnel.

How will PROP work?

PROP will take advantage of two existing circumstances: our successful experience with the short research assignment program, and the increased interest of Rutgers librarians in seeking work assignments, grants, and other opportunities "beyond the reference desk".

It is proposed that one or two librarians be continuously on leave to PROP. Normal duties will be covered by the closing of ranks at the home library in the same way that coverage is provided when short research leaves are granted. The short research leave program will focus on providing opportunities for faculty to pursue scholarly activities, while PROP will focus on faculty projects that advance library services.

Librarians are already working successfully on grant-funded projects from agencies external to the libraries. PROP will give Rutgers librarians the opportunity to turn their creativity and energy to internal projects that will benefit library users systemwide by the reinventing of basic services.

What are examples of possible PROP projects?

- ✍ Creating an instructional multi-media module or video
- ✍ Writing a suite of Web pages
- ✍ Reviewing and revising documentation on the Libraries' website
- ✍ Creating in-context help for IRIS
- ✍ Attendance at an in depth retraining course preparatory to a new assignment
- ✍ Developing training programs for librarians and staff

How do we begin?

Cabinet will charge the Public Services Council to identify PROP projects for the coming academic year. With the list of projects in hand, Cabinet will review the Libraries' mission and annual goals, prioritize the projects accordingly, and identify librarians who may participate.