

# ENGAGED LEARNING IN THE LANDSCAPE: CAMPUS AS LIVING LAB

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### 1 ABSTRACT

*This paper is a case study of the Rutgers University's Living Lab Initiative, which grew out of grassroots student, faculty, and staff effort and is evolving into a vital component of a university-wide endeavor to amplify hands-on research and education through a network of campus resources and experiences in gardens, forests, and biodiversity collections. Our goal is to enhance and innovate college education, promote lifelong learning, and enrich human lives as we improve campus sustainability and promote conservation of global natural resources. Through these experiential learning opportunities, students also develop skills in interdisciplinary teamwork and joint problem solving, integration and synthesis of data across specialties, and build confidence in communication, both verbal and written. To date, our Living Labs include a pollinator meadow and garden complex associated with the newly built New Jersey Institute of Food, Nutrition and Health and restoration of an historic arbor trail. Challenges inhibiting our success include an understaffed grounds crew, conflicting definitions of landscape stewardship, and lack of understanding about natural ecological dynamics. As we move forward, we realize the significance of these student-designed landscapes in activating conversations about engaged learning and sustainability on campus.*

#### 1.1 Keywords

Living labs, campus as lab, design build, engaged scholarship, experiential learning, interdisciplinary curriculum