

Engage NJ
2039 Kennedy Boulevard,
Jersey City, NJ 07305

May 9, 2022

Dear Members of NJHEPS

Proposal to NJHEPS for 1 Year Contract with Engage NJ

Dr. Saul Petersen. May 2022

Engage NJ operates as an independent 501c3 nonprofit and recruits higher education institutions as members. These member institutions represent 2-year and 4-year public and private colleges and universities, and whose presidents serve in the majority on our board of directors. Our mission is to be a collaborative force in equipping and empowering campuses to foster competencies that advance democracy and enable students to thrive in 21st century life and work. Our board and staff, along with strategic plan, can be found [here](#) for reference, along with past IRS990 filings of financial statements.

The proposal laid out here in succinct form is based on our multiple conversations about an obvious aligned interest in our entities related to the roles and responsibilities of higher education to contribute positively to the health and wellbeing of society, broadly speaking. Similarly, we believe in the capacity of networks.

The proposal is written in the absence of a clear understanding on the part of Engage NJ of the financial history or health of NJHEPS, including:

- How reserves are currently stored; how these reserves were historically allocated and based on whose authority; how these reserves are accessed for use currently; and how these reserves can be transferred to a legal entity in the future
- How NJHEPS historically makes decisions on behalf of a statewide group of faculty volunteers; how NJHEPS intends to make decisions now and for the next year

Given these uncertainties, there is a degree of risk assumed by Engage NJ in entering into a contract agreement with Engage NJ and, rather than making judgments, it is written in the interest of transparency.

The proposal is for NJHEPS to contract with Engage NJ to manage a transition phase of one year from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, resulting in NJHEPS being incorporated in Engage NJ. Therefore, Engage NJ will:

1. Devote 10 percent of Dr. Petersen's time as executive director to the work of incorporating NJHEPS into Engage NJ
2. Hire an assistant on contract for 10 hours per week to coordinate all work and ensure consistent communication and tracking to the desired end point, including by making quarterly progress reports to the group for review
3. Work solely on the goal of NJHEPS being capable of acting with significant autonomy, nimbleness, creativity, and financial capacity, while operating as a program absorbed into Engage NJ

Please see overleaf...

4. Communicate monthly with a representative group of NJHEPS, with follow ups preferably with one spokesperson of NJHEPS, to create agreeable operating and governance structures for NJHEPS as a program of Engage NJ. For example:
 - a. Engage NJ supports NJHEPS in advancing a governance structure that allows for information sharing, innovation, decision-making, and democratic empowerment of all volunteer faculty – both experienced with NJHEPS and new to it
 - b. Engage NJ supports NJHEPS in advancing a governance structure that enables it to develop its own academic year 2024 annual plan for events, facilities, student engagement, research, grants, and other initiatives of interest to the NJHEPS program members
 - c. Engage NJ supports NJHEPS in determining the budgetary detail associated with its annual plan – how to spend based on priorities and how much to spend
5. Work with its own board and legal advisors on acceptable operating and governance structures for NJHEPS program
 - a. NJHEPS' annual plan will have virtually complete autonomy but must nonetheless be developed and adopted by a recognized group of NJHEPS and then proposed and approved at the Engage NJ board level
 - b. Minutes of meetings must be kept in good order including, where NJHEPS deems appropriate, issues associated with quorum, voting, terms, and so forth
 - c. Engage NJ will be legally responsible for the sound financial management of NJHEPS programming and so all budgets must be proposed and approved by the Engage NJ board prior to commencement of a new fiscal year
6. Identify potential sources of funding from within institutions of higher education such as the president's budget and facilities budgets that can sustain NJHEPS.
 - a. Again, historical documentation about founding, membership solicitation, and actual payment history, will be crucial to this work.
 - b. In addition, Engage NJ will work in anticipation of a potential need to identify additional sources of funding outside of institutional budgets in the case of a perceived lack of return on membership dollar investment for higher ed in NJHEPS. The purpose of this outreach will be to be proactive in sustaining NJHEPS viability and programming

Costs (Subject to a clear communication structure and transparent financial situation) :

- Engage NJ will charge NJHEPS \$52,000 for personnel costs for a 12-month period
- Should NJHEPS wish for Engage NJ to manage costs associated with meeting and travel costs for work done together, a separate budget of approximately \$8,000 will be required to cover those costs, subject to refunding unused funds back to NJHEPS future operating budget

Please provide a response by May 20th to allow for a full agreement to be made detailing both parties responsibilities prior to recruiting personnel and beginning the contract from July 1, 2022, forward.

Signed



Dr. Saul Petersen

Executive Director