

UGA River Basin Center 2020 Strategic Plan

Concise Version

Mission: The mission of the UGA River Basin Center is to produce and disseminate the knowledge and tools for sustainable management of water resources and ecosystems through integrative scientific and policy research, and to develop the next generation of managers and researchers.

Vision: The UGA River Basin Center is an internationally recognized hub for applied water research and policy development.

For 2020-2024, the RBC will focus on activities in four areas:

- 1. Facilitate integrative research that addresses the most critical water issues in the Southeast and beyond.** Specific objectives are that (a) RBC affiliates collectively submit at least 2-3 large, interdisciplinary research proposals per year on critical water issues (in addition to multiple smaller proposals), and (b) RBC affiliates collectively produce a total of 10+ peer-reviewed articles per year addressing critical water issues;

To achieve these objectives, we will:

- Host brainstorming meetings for new integrative research projects and proposals.
- Facilitate development of integrative water research proposals by coordinating investigator teams and helping to assemble proposals (in coordination with OVPR).
- Secure funding for a new program of competitive grants for integrative workshops that tackle important or emerging freshwater research and management issues. We envision these as 3-4 day retreats within Georgia by interdisciplinary teams of 6-8 UGA and up to 6-8 non-UGA participants.
- Continue to hold an annual RBC microconference for UGA faculty and students to exchange ideas.
- Support faculty in development and delivery of meaningful Broader Impacts sections of proposals. This will be facilitated through RBC-coordinated partnerships with communities, agencies, and institutions.
- Develop collaborative relationships with other water centers, particularly in the Southeastern US, to promote synergistic approaches, complement one another's strengths, and increase our collective effectiveness.
- Facilitate the development of diverse perspectives for addressing water resource challenges by fostering an inclusive environment and advancing opportunities for underrepresented minorities in the fields of water-related research, policy, and management.

- 2. Expand water policy capacity so that all projects with a potential policy application can include a policy component.** To achieve this objective, we will:

- a. Work with the Odum School of Ecology (OSE) to ensure full faculty leadership of the RBC in both science and policy, following the retirement of the co-director for policy.
 - b. Expand our partnership with faculty and staff at Carl Vinson Institute of Government.
 - c. Establish a partnership with the UGA School of Public and International Affairs.
 - d. Support the development of an environmental law clinic at the Law School.
 - e. Provide environmental policy training seminars on topics of current interest 1-2 times per semester.
- 3. Raise the profile of the RBC and its affiliates, so that the university is recognized regionally, nationally and internationally as a leader in applied water research and policy development.** To meet this objective, we will:
- a. Continue to expand the Georgia Water Resources Conference by increasing attendance from local governments and consultants, and increasing involvement of other Georgia Universities.
 - b. Support other conferences and meetings, such as the Symposium on Urbanization and Stream Ecology series, and the Microplastics Workshop.
 - c. Secure sustainable funding for a full-time communications professional.
 - d. Expand the RBC website by adding profiles of all current projects and profiles of all affiliates.
 - e. Showcase new publications by RBC affiliates via the website and social media.
 - f. Expand social media presence.
- 4. Develop the next generation of water managers and researchers.** The RBC works to support UGA colleges and schools in their educational missions by providing experiential learning resources to engage students in real-world water management and policy issues.
- a. Create an Internet hub for experiential learning resources focused on water, including the Watershed UGA educational materials.
 - b. Support affiliated experiential learning courses, such as the environmental law practicum and the OSE AB Maymester course, by leveraging our collective network of connections with management partners.
 - c. Support monitoring of campus streams as an experiential learning tool.
 - d. Create a stimulating transdisciplinary home for UGA graduate students to explore water issues from ecological, policy, economic, social, engineering and other perspectives.

UGA River Basin Center 2020 Strategic Plan

Annotated Version

Mission: The mission of the UGA River Basin Center is to produce and disseminate the knowledge and tools for sustainable management of water resources and ecosystems through integrative scientific and policy research, and to develop the next generation of managers and researchers.

Vision: The UGA River Basin Center is an internationally recognized hub for applied water research and policy development.

For 2020-2024, the RBC will focus on activities in four areas:

- 1. Facilitate integrative research that addresses the most critical water issues in the Southeast and beyond.** Specific objectives are that (a) RBC affiliates collectively submit at 2-3 large, interdisciplinary research proposals per year on critical water issues (in addition to multiple smaller proposals), and (b) RBC affiliates collectively produce a total of 10+ peer-reviewed articles per year addressing critical water issues;

To achieve these objectives, we will:

- a. Host brainstorming meetings for new integrative research projects and proposals. *We will hold a minimum of one per year. "Integrative research" involves multiple disciplines and perspectives in academia, as well as active involvement from managers and end-users.*
- b. Facilitate development of integrative water research proposals by coordinating investigator teams and helping to assemble proposals (in coordination with OVPR). *We will target three large, integrative proposals per year.*
- c. Secure funding for a new program of competitive grants for integrative workshops that tackle important or emerging freshwater research and management issues. *We envision these as 3-4 day retreats within Georgia by interdisciplinary teams of 6-8 UGA and up to 6-8 non-UGA participants. These are modeled on USGS Powell Center or NCEAS workshops, although grants would cover only meeting and travel expenses. We envision this as an inexpensive way to catalyze creative solutions to difficult problems. We expect each group to produce at least two substantial publications or grant proposals within a year of meeting.*
- d. Continue to hold an annual RBC microconference for UGA faculty and students to exchange ideas. *These will move to a spring schedule: April in non-GWRC years, February in GWRC years.*
- e. Support faculty in development and delivery of meaningful Broader Impacts sections of proposals. This will be facilitated through RBC-coordinated partnerships with communities, agencies, and institutions. *The Co-Directors or other RBC affiliates with experience in science applications and policy will meet with grant PIs to make connections with management partners, develop a policy component, and otherwise assist in connecting the research content of the proposal with real-world applications and/or community engagement. The RBC can assist in the delivery of Broader Impacts*

components through staff support, if funding is written into the proposal. This means that PIs don't need to budget for a full-time engagement or communications position, but can instead buy a few months of time from shared positions.

- f. Develop collaborative relationships with other water centers, particularly in the Southeastern U.S., to promote synergistic approaches, to complement one another's strengths, and to increase our collective effectiveness. *These include the National Water Center at the University of Alabama, the University of Florida Water Institute, the South Carolina Water Resources Center at Clemson, and the USGS South Atlantic Water Science Center.*
 - g. Facilitate the development of diverse perspectives for addressing water resource challenges by fostering an inclusive environment and advancing opportunities for underrepresented minorities in the fields of water-related research, policy, and management.
- 2. Expand water policy capacity so that all projects with a potential policy application can include a policy component.** To achieve this objective, we will:
- a. Work with the Odum School of Ecology (OSE) to ensure full faculty leadership of the RBC in both science and policy, following the retirement of the co-director for policy. *This has been written into OSE's strategic plan.*
 - b. Expand our partnership with faculty and staff at Carl Vinson Institute of Government. *We will work to increase the number of collaborative projects that involve affiliates from CVIOG and other RBC affiliates.*
 - c. Establish a partnership with the UGA School of Public and International Affairs. *We will work to recruit SPIA faculty and students as RBC affiliates and involve them in collaborative projects with other RBC affiliates.*
 - d. Support the development of an environmental law clinic at the Law School. *The proposed clinic would oversee the environmental practicum courses; also see 4b.*
 - e. Provide environmental policy training seminars on topics of current interest 1-2 times per semester. *These are in addition to Third Wednesday seminars.*
- 3. Raise the profile of the RBC and its affiliates, so that the university is recognized regionally, nationally and internationally as a leader in applied water research and policy development.** To meet this objective, we will:
- a. Continue to expand the Georgia Water Resources Conference by increasing attendance from local governments and consultants, and increasing involvement of other Georgia Universities.
 - b. Support other conferences and meetings, such as the Symposium on Urbanization and Stream Ecology series, and the Microplastics Workshop.
 - c. Secure sustainable funding for a full-time communications professional.
 - d. Expand the RBC website by adding profiles of all current projects and profiles of all affiliates. *We aim to complete this goal by December 2020.*

- e. Showcase new publications by RBC affiliates via the website and social media.
 - f. Expand social media presence.
- 4. Develop the next generation of water managers and researchers.** The RBC works to support UGA colleges and schools in their educational missions by providing experiential, integrative learning resources to engage students in real-world water management and policy issues.
- a. Create an Internet hub for experiential learning resources focused on water, including the Watershed UGA educational materials.
 - b. Support affiliated experiential learning courses, such as the environmental law practicum and the OSE AB Maymester course, by leveraging our collective network of connections with management partners.
 - c. Support monitoring of campus streams as an experiential learning tool. *We will (i) support faculty and students in monitoring efforts by promoting coordination and information exchange, and sharing of equipment; (ii) develop and maintain a database of monitoring data; (iii) maintain a collaborative relationship with YSI to monitor campus streams; and (iv) obtain funding for a dedicated internship to support the program.*
 - d. Create a stimulating transdisciplinary home for UGA graduate students to explore water issues from ecological, policy, economic, social, engineering and other perspectives. *This is accomplished by creating space for students to meet informally over food in the RBC conference center and through the RBC symposia, and other programs to increase graduate student engagement.*