New Jersey Big Data Alliance Meeting: A Synopsis
December 5, 2012

Chairs: Dr. Manish Parashar, Director of the RDI²
Dr. Margaret Brennan-Tonetta, Associate Vice President of Economic Development

Purpose: The Rutgers Discovery Informatics Institute (RDI²) and the Rutgers Office of Economic Development initiated the New Jersey Big Data Alliance to encourage New Jersey government, academia and industry to address, in a strategic and coordinated manner, the significant and immediate challenges posed by the proliferation of data sources and the resultant deluge of digital data. This unprecedented alliance brings together universities and colleges from across the state, and has the overarching goals of identifying common challenges and areas of synergy, developing joint programs, and ultimately nucleating an effective alliance that will increase our research competitiveness and drive economic development within New Jersey.

Attendees: Representatives from Princeton, NJIT, Rowan, Stockton, Kean, Stevens, RU New Brunswick, Newark, Camden, UMDNJ, NJEDA, State Office of Information Technology, Offices of Assemblyman Chivukula and Representative Pallone.

Key Outcomes:
• Institutionalizing the Alliance: The Big Data Alliance will be formalized through a memorandum of understanding and through the adoption of a charter. A membership fee structure will also be considered.
• Establishment of a New Jersey Shared Data Cloud: The Big Data Alliance will explore the establishment of a shared data cloud that integrates data infrastructure, hosted data and data analytics. Such an infrastructure will provide a sandbox for addressing Big Data challenges and will catalyze collaborations between the members of the alliance as well as interactions with industry and government partners. The Alliance will also explore policy and governance issues related to shared data use and data preservation.
• Exploring Multi-disciplinary Research and Educational Collaborations: The Alliance will work on identifying potential inter-university synergies in the key Big Data research areas such as data policy, data infrastructure (storage, management and transport), analytics, and data sustainability and preservation. The Alliance will explore the possibility of providing seed funding for research collaborations and for supporting joint proposals. The Alliance will also explore joint education programs including establishing a common curriculum for data sciences and creating coordinated certificate, workforce training, and outreach programs. Finally, the Alliance will explore academic-government-industry partnerships as catalysts for data-centric economic development.

Next Steps:
• Regular Teleconference: The members will setup regular monthly teleconference calls to explore issues related to establishing the Alliance and to address the specific issues outlined above.
• New Jersey Big Data Symposium: The Alliance will host a symposium (tentatively in Fall 2013) that will provide a forum for industry, government and academic experts to discuss coordinated strategies and mechanisms to address the challenges big data presents in order to establish New Jersey’s position as a leader in the era of Big Data. The goal is that the symposium and subsequent Alliance activities will inform the State’s advanced cyberinfrastructure and data management policies, its economic development initiatives, and will increase the state’s ability to attract businesses, entrepreneurs and academic talent.