

Background and Resolution on Proposed 3 Plus 1 Degree Programs
University Senate Executive Committee
November 2016

Background

The New Jersey College Affordability Study Commission recently submitted its final report [http://www.njasfaa.org/docs/news/CASC_FinalReport.pdf] to the Governor and the State legislature. Among its recommendations is the development and implementation of 3 plus 1 degree programs whereby a student completes an associate degree at a county college, remains at the county college for a third year, transfers to a senior institution in the fourth year, and receives his or her bachelor's degree from that senior institution.

While we laud the Commission for its dedication to making higher education more affordable, we think that the proposed 3 plus 1 program is misguided and strongly oppose Rutgers participation in such a program. Our major reasons for this opposition are as follows:

1. Students in such a 3 plus 1 program would not adequately be prepared to succeed in their senior year at Rutgers. The county colleges lack the broad faculty expertise and the facilities (particularly in the laboratory sciences) needed for the junior year in a 4-year college or university. Students who transfer into Rutgers now after two years at a county college generally have a very hard time in their junior year but most manage to catch up by their senior year. Students transferring in their senior year would not have time to catch up and succeed. It is unlikely that such students would be able to finish in one year and staying for another year would greatly reduce the financial savings the 3 plus 1 program was presumably designed to produce.
2. Students transferring into Rutgers in their fourth year would be denied opportunities that are an integral part of a Rutgers education, including
 - access to a rigorous, integrated curriculum in their major field of study.
 - regular access to senior faculty in their major field of study.
 - the opportunity to take foundation courses required for advanced degrees.
 - the opportunity for internships, fellowships, research opportunities, and experience-based learning.
 - the full undergraduate experience.
3. The reputation of all Rutgers undergraduate degrees would be diminished by the existence of a degree program in which as few as 24 credits of the degree work could represent Rutgers courses taught by Rutgers faculty.
4. 3 plus 1 programs are clearly contrary to the mission of New Jersey county colleges as defined in New Jersey statutes whereby: "County college" means an educational institution established or to be established by one or more counties, offering programs of instruction, extending not more than two years beyond the high school, which may include but need not be limited to specialized or comprehensive curriculums, including college credit transfer courses, terminal courses in the liberal arts and sciences, and technical institute type programs" [18A:64A-1c]. We do not see any compelling reason to change the very important mission of New Jersey county colleges.

We therefore offer the following resolution.

Resolution

Whereas, the Rutgers University Senate has reviewed the College Affordability Study Commission's proposal for 3 plus 1 degree programs, in which a student would complete an associate degree at a county college, remain at the county college for a third year, transfer to a senior institution in the fourth year, and receive a bachelor's degree from that senior institution

Whereas, we believe that participation in such a 3 plus 1 program would not be in the best interests of students, who would not adequately be prepared to succeed in their fourth year and would be deprived of opportunities that are an integral part of a Rutgers education, and

Whereas, participation in such a program would diminish the value of all Rutgers undergraduate degrees, and

Whereas, offering 3 plus 1 programs would clearly be a violation of the mission of the county colleges.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Rutgers University Senate strongly opposes any Rutgers participation in a 3 plus 1 degree program.