



University Senate  
Executive Committee

**Response to the Proposed Union of Nursing Programs and Personnel on the Stratford Campus of the Legacy UMDNJ School of Nursing with the Rutgers School of Nursing – Camden**

May 2, 2014

On March 31, 2014, the University Senate was asked to consider a [proposal](#) prepared by Joanne Robinson, Dean, Rutgers School of Nursing – Camden and Marie O’Toole, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Stratford Campus, Legacy UMDNJ School of Nursing to integrate the Legacy UMDNJ School of Nursing (Stratford) program with the Rutgers School of Nursing – Camden.<sup>1</sup> In her communication to the Senate office, Dean Robinson indicated that she and Dean O’Toole wish to present this proposal to the Board of Governors for approval at the June 2014 meeting.

The Executive Committee of the Senate considered the proposal at their meeting on April 11, 2014. Present at the meeting were Deans Robinson and O’Toole who provided background on the union and answered questions. The Executive Committee discussed at length the merits of the proposal. Since this meeting, the Senate leadership has spoken with Chancellor Pritchett, who is in favor of the merger, and has received many letters of support for the merger from faculty members at both units.

In principle, the Executive Committee is highly supportive of the union of the two units. It is apparent that since the July 2013 integration of UMDNJ with Rutgers University, the nursing faculty and staff based at the legacy UMDNJ in Stratford have been working closely with those at the Rutgers School of Nursing – Camden to integrate their programs. The union makes sense logistically and programmatically and should serve the nursing community of southern New Jersey well.

The Executive Committee is, however, highly concerned with the lack of timely notice for Senate input as well as the lack of a financial plan and possible contractual violations with respect to the treatment of staff with expired contracts.

In particular, Rutgers Policy 50.2.2, University Senate – Duties and Powers grants the University Senate the authority to “regulate formal relationships among academic units within the University, including the organization of the disciplines...” In established practice, the Senate strives to evaluate proposals thoroughly to determine if such changes in unit relationships are in Rutgers’ best interests. For example, in 2006, the Senate considered the report of the New Brunswick Task Force on Undergraduate Education at then-President McCormick’s request; the recommendations formulated in committee and subsequently debated and approved on the Senate floor, which included matters concerning collegiate structure, admissions and recruitment,

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<sup>1</sup> Robinson, J. and O’Toole, M. 2014. [Union of Nursing Programs and Personnel on the Stratford Campus of the Legacy UMDNJ School of Nursing with the Rutgers School of Nursing – Camden.](#)

faculty incentives, advising and curriculum, the student experience, and plan implementation, served to inform the process and were accordingly adopted by the administration.

Just like the recently considered [Proposed Merger of the Rutgers College of Nursing – Newark and New Brunswick and the Rutgers School of Nursing – Newark](#), but with an even more compressed time-frame, the proposed [Union of Nursing Programs and Personnel on the Stratford Campus of the Legacy UMDNJ School of Nursing with the Rutgers School of Nursing – Camden](#) was not submitted to the Senate in a timely manner for a considered evaluation, nor was it supported by adequate details facilitating such an evaluation. While the Executive Committee believes in the merits of the proposal and the good will of those bringing it forward, there has been little opportunity to evaluate this in any detail as per established practice. The Senate holds as a priority the responsibility to protect the integrity and authority of the University Senate as the sole, university-wide shared-governance body at Rutgers. That responsibility, coupled with the timing and insufficient information to permit a judicious consideration of this proposal on behalf of our constituencies, has, regrettably, led us to decide that we cannot approve or disapprove this proposal at this time.

## **Recommendation**

The Executive Committee is concerned with the lack of timely notice for consideration of the proposal as the Senate's legislative authority (Rutgers Policy 50.2.2, University Senate – Duties and Powers) over changes in the structure of units demands, as well as with the lack of suitable budgetary detail in the proposal and possible contractual violations in the merger process. Regardless of the apparent ardent support the proposal has among the faculty and staff most affected by the integration, the Executive Committee finds that without sufficient notice to examine the proposal thoroughly, it cannot approve or disapprove the integration at this time. Thus, the Executive Committee cannot urge the Senate community to support the merger on its merits, but does recommend that the Senate body affirm the Executive Committee's authority to act to approve the proposal on behalf of the Senate should sufficient budgetary and contractual details become available prior to the Board of Governors meeting on June 19, 2014.

## **Rutgers University Senate Executive Committee members:**

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