



University Senate
Executive Committee

**Response to the Proposed Merger of The Rutgers University – Camden School of Law and
the Rutgers University – Newark School of Law**

March 27, 2015

On January 20, 2015, the University Senate was asked to consider a proposal prepared by John Oberdiek, Acting Dean, Camden School of Law, and Ron Chen, Acting Dean, Newark School of Law to integrate their respective, individually accredited units into a single school with the proposed name of the Rutgers University School of Law. In communication with the Senate office, the deans indicated they wished to present this proposal to the Board of Governors for approval at the June meeting. Two documents prepared for accreditation of the new unit by the American Bar Association were provided to the Senate for consideration: "[Rutgers Law: A 21st Century Public Law School](#), and the [American Bar Association Major Change Questionnaire](#).

The Executive Committee of the Senate considered the proposed merger and supporting documentation at their meeting on February 6, 2015. Present at the meeting were Deans Chen and Oberdiek who provided background on the merger and answered questions. The Executive Committee discussed at length the merits of the proposed merger and directed the Senate standing committee chairs to distribute the Law School documents to their committees for discussion at the February 20, 2015 meeting. The committees then forwarded questions or comments to Senate Secretary Ken Swalagin, who compiled committee concerns and sent them to the law school deans for response [<http://senate.rutgers.edu/LawMergerResponsesFromDeans.pdf>]. In general, issues of committee concern included reporting relationships, impact of the merger on existing faculty, staff, and administrative staff, changes to the tenure and promotion process for faculty, impact on student life including travel and course requirements, budget, and future plans. The Law School deans were able to respond concretely to several of the Senate concerns; the details of other issues, such as the faculty tenure process, remain unresolved. The committees were given a final opportunity to consider the proposed merger prior to a planned vote on the Senate floor on March 27, 2015.

The Executive Committee is supportive of the merger of the two Law Schools and feels that the union makes sense logistically and programmatically and should serve the law community in New Jersey well. The Executive Committee urges the Law Schools to quickly address issues such as changes in staffing (especially of new administrative hires), and to review and finalize the tenure process as soon as possible.

Recommendations

1. The Executive Committee urges the University Senate to support the Law School merger on its merits.

2. The Executive Committee requests that the deans provide a status update to the Senate Executive Committee within six months of approval by the Board of Governors.

Rutgers University Senate Executive Committee members:

Ann Gould, SEBS, Faculty, Chairperson

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