

RESPONSE TO UNIVERSITY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND PROFESSOR GILLETT

JANE GILMAN, 2017-18 CHAIR NEWARK FACULTY COUNCIL (NFC)

ABSTRACT. The following motion was passed unanimously by the Newark Faculty Council on April 9th.

In light of the restructuring of Rutgers in recent years and the greater administrative independence of the Camden, Newark, and New Brunswick campuses from each other and in light of recent advances in technology, the Newark Faculty Council formally requests that the University Senate hold more than one meeting per academic year in Newark and arrange for Newark senators to participate in Council and Committee meeting via Skype or some other electronic means.

1. FROM THE SENATE WEB-SITE

*"The Rutgers University Senate is the only advisory and legislative body that **represents the entire community of faculty**, students, staff, administrators and alumni to the Rutgers' president and boards. It serves as the principal advisory body to the president. On certain matters, the president acts only after receiving the advice of the Senate or giving the Senate time to present its views."*

It is difficult for the Senate to honor the claim that it represents the entire community of faculty among others when it is very difficult for Rutgers-Newark faculty to participate in Senate meetings and committees and when there are any number of steps the Senate could take to remedy this situation.

2. HISTORY

The University Senate Executive Committee met before the NFC had time to send a copy of this motion to the Senate and discussed the concern of the NFC without having had any formal notification and without inviting participation or further comments from the NFC.

Date: May 24, 2018.

As a result of that meeting Professor Gillett sent e-mail to the NFC outlining the Senate Executive Committee's discussion. A copy of his e-mail is enclosed (see section 4). This e-mail is in response to that summary.

While Camden may have similar concerns to Newark, the NFC does not speak for Camden.

3. SOME COMMENTS FROM THE NFC CHAIR

Below are some random comments in response to Peter Gillett's e-mail and the Senate Executive Committee's discussion (section 4). These comments are not to be taken as a full response, but just random comments as the NFC has not been scheduled to meet since Gillett's e-mail. The hope is that the University Senate will revisit the issue in a setting that engages the NFC more fully.

- It is good to learn that "*the [Senate] Executive Committee is aware of, sensitive to, and sympathetic to, the Newark Faculty*" plight. The small step that the Senate is ready to take a small step this Fall to begin to address the issues involved is appreciated.
- It has been reported that the New Brunswick seats on the Senate are filled through very competitive elections. This is not the case in Newark. The NFC does not know what the Camden situation is. In April elections were held for positions on the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Newark (the FASN) committees and the list of nominees were posted at a FASN faculty meeting. There were four positions to be filled for Senate seats. Only two nominees were posted along with two blanks.

Thus as can be seen it is difficult to find FASN faculty who have the time or the inclination to serve on the Senate.

- Most Senate Committees have meetings on the afternoon of a morning Senate meeting. Thus having participation in a committee meeting available electronically to Newark Senators does not address the issue of the commute.
- It does not seem appropriate for the Senate to put a higher priority on making its proceedings available to all Rutgers via video-streaming than on participation of Newark representatives.
- It would be easy for the Senate to set up a Skype connection this Fall for Newark senators who gather in a designated room on the Newark campus during Senate meetings. It may be that in the

future a better Skype connection (or another connection) can be arranged, but a minimal Skype connection seems possible now.

- Since attendance at Newark and Camden meetings is low, it seems that it is difficult for faculty to travel to Newark and Camden for meetings. Perhaps Skype arrangements can be made for those meetings as well. Further, it is noted that Senate members are allowed two absences from Senate meetings. In light of the inequitable situations, perhaps the number for Newark and Camden Senate members should be raised to five per member.
- The Senate Executive Committee expresses concern that additional meetings in Newark would increase the burden on Camden senators. The NFC does not speak for Camden, but, of course, if Camden passed a motion similar to the Newark motion, it is expected that the NFC would support it.
- Gillett's e-mail indicated that there were to be further discussion and response from the Senate this AY, but to date none has been forthcoming. The hope is that the Senate will engage with the NFC in any further discussions. President Gillett was sent invitations to meet with the NFC during Spring 2018, but never responded.

4. SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND GILLETT DISCUSSION

From: Peter Gillett Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2018 2:24 PM To: Robert Boikess; Sanjib Bhuyan; Martha Cotter; Martin Gliserman; Tugrul Ozel; Thomas Stephens; Paul Hirschfield; Karen Thompson; Julia Rubin; Jane Gilman; Jon Oliver; Mary Mickelsen Subject: Senate Meetings

Dear Jane and everyone:

I do not have the motion that was at the beginning of this chain.

But the Newark Faculty Council's desire to have more Senate meetings in Newark was passed on to me earlier via Bob Pukak. I, in turn, passed it on the Senate Executive Committee, which discussed and considered this recently prior to setting the meeting schedule for the next Senate year, which was recently issued to the Senate.

The Executive Committee is aware of, sensitive to, and sympathetic to, the Newark Faculty Council's wishes. However, it did not decide to add extra meetings in Newark this forthcoming year - though it plans to revisit this issue later in the year prior to setting the meeting schedule for the following year.

This decision was reached in light of a number of factors, including:

- awareness of the schedule of meetings followed by the Board of Governors, to whom the Senate is ultimately responsible

- the hope that the requested change would increase participation by Newark Senators

- awareness that in making attendance easier for Newark senators we would be adding to the burden for Camden senators (and vice versa, of course)

- the determination that if a change were made for Newark, a concomitant change would be made for Camden without waiting for a request from senators there for consideration

- the realization that the meetings that are held in Camden and Newark are regularly the poorest attended of the year

- in fact, the only meeting in the last two years that has started late is the most recent meeting in Camden, where there was no quorum present in the room at 1:10

- consideration of the fact that although Senate meetings are important, the majority of the work is carried out at Committee meetings in the morning, and that whatever arrangements we make need to work well not just for the main meeting but also for the Committee meetings and the caucuses

- two meetings in Newark and two in Camden, with five in New Brunswick (covering RBHS, too) seems ass disproportionate in one way as the current schedule in the other

- on the other hand, just a year ago, we added Executive Committee meetings in Camden and Newark to the schedule and will continue this experiment next year.

In the end, though we did not decide to change the meeting schedule, we did think it a good idea to investigate using Skype or other video- or tele-conferencing.

Here again, the issue is that if we do this, it has to be done for committees and caucuses, too - otherwise the real work will never get done.

(Also, we have not had success with our testing of video-streaming Senate meetings this year.)

We are going to pilot this with one committee next Fall, and if successful extend it to others in the Spring.

Best wishes

Peter

JANE GILMAN, FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY AND DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR, FASN DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS

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