

Mr. Kenneth Swalagin
Executive Secretary of the University Senate

This document addresses the 11 questions you sent to me following the University Senate meeting regarding our presentation of the nursing merger proposal. Please see below for our response to each question (responses are in bold and italic font) and a separate document, which is an expansion of the proposal submitted earlier to the University Senate.

1. It became clear during the discussion at the Executive Committee that different aspects of the proposal were discussed in the different Senate committees; a comprehensive document really is needed to give the merger the full consideration it is due. Can you provide such a document?

A more comprehensive document has been prepared and will be provided separately.

2. Regarding the process for consulting Camden, was there discussion or vote on Camden's decision to remain separate? Or was this a decision made independently by the dean? Can the document be clearer regarding why Camden School of Nursing is not being included? What scenarios might be expected to evolve in the near future regarding the Camden program?

The three deans of the three nursing schools at the time, Susan W. Salmond, EdD, RN, ANEF, FAAN (School of Nursing-Newark), William Holzemer, RN, PhD, FAAN (College of Nursing), and Joanne P. Robinson, PhD, RN, GCNS-BC, FAAN (School of Nursing-Camden), met with Rutgers Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Richard L. Edwards, PhD to discuss a merger of all three schools. The initial concept was to create one nursing school with three distinct campuses, which would allow for greater unification and efficiency and eliminate redundancy. However, Dean Robinson, as well as the Camden Chancellor, did not support the merger. (We do not know if School of Nursing faculty in Camden voted on this decision.) Following this meeting, President Barchi decided that the Camden-based School of Nursing (now identified as Rutgers School of Nursing-Camden) would remain separate, but that the College of Nursing and School of Nursing would merge. Note that the School of Nursing (formerly UMDNJ) faculty at the Stratford campus voted unanimously to become part of Rutgers Camden.

3. Is there statutory or contractual requirement that this merger take place?

No, there is not a statutory or contractual requirement for the College of Nursing and the School of Nursing to merge. Our desire and mutual decision to do so is based on geographic issues and our desire for excellence.

- ***The School of Nursing in Newark and the College of Nursing in Newark are less than two miles apart.***
- ***The School and College offer the same degrees (bachelors, masters, doctor of nursing practice, and PhD). Further, there is significant overlap in course offerings. Continuing as separate schools would:***

- *be inefficient,*
- *cause significant student and applicant confusion, and*
- *require both schools to compete for the same applicant pool.*
- *Both schools have identical goals and aspirations and equal in stature/accomplishments in terms of research and scholarship.*
 - *Combined, the schools can pool their resources and expertise, which should lead to increased productivity and recognition.*
- *Both schools have innovative clinical practice programs in the form of nurse-managed primary care health centers.*
 - *Together, there is greater opportunity.*

Please note that President Barchi, on his arrival, expected that the three nursing schools would merge, and he stated that on at least three occasions. President Barchi, Executive Vice President Edwards, and I, as RBHS Chancellor, have been involved in the plan to move forward with the July 1, 2014 date for the merger.

4. Can you provide a curriculum document that will help inform the Senate regarding curriculum issues?

The document provided originally lists the programs offered currently by each school. Progress since then includes harmonization of course titles, learning outcome objectives, etc. so that curricula are aligned for each of our degree programs. The background for each degree program and the progress to date on curricula integration, as needed, are described briefly below.

Baccalaureate: The College of Nursing has a large generic baccalaureate program and a small 2nd degree program. The 2nd degree students at the College are integrated into the generic courses. The School has a large 2nd degree program and does not offer the generic program.

A joint baccalaureate committee met informally in the Fall of 2013 and officially in January of 2013. The committee was charged with harmonizing the curricula. To date the following have been achieved:

- *Revised admission requirements: recommended by the baccalaureate harmonization committee. Faculty members from both programs have voted to approve the new admission criteria.*
 - *Added prerequisite courses: interprofessional communication, nutrition, and lifespan growth and development*
 - *Changed required GPA from 3.0 to 3.3 (3.3 was the mean score of UMDNJ BSN admits and the requirement for College of Nursing).*
- *Joint committee recommendations regarding 2nd degree program:*
 - *The 2nd degree baccalaureate program should be a distinct cohort of students and not integrated with generic students.*
 - *The 2nd degree program should be offered on both the Newark and New Brunswick campuses.*

- *Admissions are now being accepted for 2nd degree bachelors students for both campuses.*
- *Course Plan: The overall course plan for the generic and 2nd degree programs are similar. Legacy UMDNJ had 17 courses and College of Nursing had 15 courses.*
 - *A joint faculty committee recommended the elimination of one legacy UMDNJ course with integration of that content into two other courses.*
 - *This was voted upon by both faculties and approved.*
 - *The program plans for the generic and 2nd degree programs vary slightly with a 62 and 61 course credit load. For the 2nd degree program, 62 credits are dispersed across 16 courses. For the generic program, 61 credits are dispersed across 15 courses. This will remain the program plan until a complete curriculum revision can be undertaken by faculty.*
- *Courses: At the baccalaureate level (both 2nd degree and generic): A joint committee of faculty was formed for each of the 15 overlapping courses. Committees were charged with reviewing and “harmonizing” the Title, Course Description, Course Objectives and Course Outcomes.*
 - *The purpose of the harmonization was not to do a full curriculum revision but for there to be dialog and agreement among faculty as to how the courses from both programs can be slightly adapted so that common syllabi can be shared.*
 - *The joint faculty committees have completed reviews of 80% of the courses and made recommendations for revisions.*
 - *The proposed revisions are currently being reviewed by a joint curriculum committee.*
 - *After approval by the joint curriculum committee, the revised syllabi will be voted upon at a joint March faculty meeting.*
- *Impact: There will be a teach-out of the old curriculum by both the School of Nursing and the College of Nursing. New course syllabi will be used beginning Fall 2014. This will be totally seamless by students as the changes are not content-specific.*

Masters:

- *NP Programs: Legacy UMDNJ School of Nursing has five masters level NP programs (and some joint programs that combined specialty). Rutgers College of Nursing offers the same NP programs, but at the DNP level. Legacy UMDNJ School of Nursing had plans to transition these programs to the DNP level in one-two years. Consequently, the decision was made that the merger would be an ideal time to make this move.*
 - *The existing website clearly indicates that these masters programs are transitioning to the DNP.*
 - *The last admissions to the nurse practitioner masters programs was for the Spring 2014 term*
- *Remaining Masters level programs:*
 - *Informatics: the curriculum remains the same. This program was only offered by the School of Nursing.*
 - *Midwifery: will admit an MSN cohort for Fall 2014 and transition to the DNP level for the 2015-16 academic year.*
 - *Anesthesia: will admit an MSN cohort for Fall 2014 and transition to the DNP level for the 2015-16 academic year.*

Doctor of Nursing Practice:

- **Admission Requirements:** *The harmonization committee examined the admission requirements for the DNP from both schools. Recommendations for changes included: eliminate the requirement for GRE (was a college requirement), reduce the number of letters of reference from three to two, and recommend an interview for students with GPAs < 3.25 and > 3.0.*
 - *The admission requirement changes were presented at a joint faculty meeting and approved.*
 - **Core Course Plan:** *Both the College of Nursing and School of Nursing have existing DNP programs, with some similarities. A joint committee from the School and College examined the core courses and made recommendations for changes to the DNP Core.*
 - *The revised DNP Core plan was presented to the joint faculty in January 2014 and the Core plan was approved by both faculty groups.*
 - *Students currently in the program will be taught out with their respective core requirement on admission. Students entering in fall of 2014 will have a curriculum plan based on the new Core.*
 - **Course Changes:** *A harmonization committee consisting of faculty from the School and College was formed for each course at the DNP level.*
 - *The committees have completed their work and submitted revised courses.*
 - *The courses are being reviewed at the curriculum committee level.*
 - *The courses will be presented to faculty at the February and March faculty meetings for approval.*
5. How will the name of the combined school appear on diplomas? Will students be allowed to choose if they are currently enrolled in one of the existing schools?

Our plan is for there to be one School, effective July 1, 2014. Students graduating in May 2014 will receive a diploma from their respective school. For all graduations to follow, students will receive a diploma from the new entity.

6. The numbers of tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty are indicated in the nursing merger proposal distributed to Senate committees. The number of PTLs is not. Concerning PTLs: how many PTLs contribute to the two nursing programs under consideration by the proposal? What roles do PTLs have at a nursing school? As indicated by Dean Holzemer in his remarks to one of the Senate committees, the ratio of PTLs to full-time faculty is high. How does the ratio in the proposed merged school compare to other nursing programs, in particular to our aspirant AAUs?

Both the School of Nursing and College of Nursing are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, which documents that both schools meet all the standards set by the accrediting body. All PTLs (College of Nursing) and adjunct faculty (School of Nursing) are at least MS-prepared nurses currently working in practice within a healthcare organization that agrees to take up to ten students for a clinical experience in a topical area such as medical-surgical nursing or pediatrics. PTLs and adjunct faculty are clinically competent and current and provide extremely important clinical training for students. They

receive the going rate for this as compensation. This is common practice across almost all schools of nursing that provide clinical training.

Thus, PTLs (College of Nursing) and adjunct faculty (School of Nursing) are an important component of the faculty in both programs. The number of PTLs/adjuncts varies by term but generally, it is estimated that there are approximately twice the number of PTLs/adjuncts as full-time faculty. Note that PTLs/adjuncts teach one course whereas full-time faculty teach multiple courses per term.

7. Uniform reappointment and promotion procedures are essential for the two merging groups to operate as one. How can the merger be effective if reappointment and promotion procedures will not be in place by July 2014? What is the timeframe to consider these issues?

The new School of Nursing plans to operate with two separate AAUP contracts until negotiations have been completed and this issue has been resolved at the University level. School leadership and faculty believe that the contracts are sufficiently similar to prevent this from being a concern. Further, Drs. Holzemer and Salmond will work with faculty members, academic affairs, and union representatives to administratively manage differences. For assignment of newly hired faculty, guidance will be provided by the legacy of the vacancy, with decisions made on a case-by-case basis as needed. Note that RBHS is developing standardized appointment, reappointment, and promotions procedures for all RBHS schools, to be consistent with the Rutgers procedures, which will go into effect in 2014-15.

8. Why is the new school located in Newark rather than New Brunswick?

The new school will be housed in both Newark and New Brunswick. In fact, a charge to the new school by President Barchi and Executive Vice President Edwards has been to grow the presence of the program in New Brunswick.

- *The generic baccalaureate program has been offered on both campuses and will continue to be offered.*
- *A new 2nd degree baccalaureate program will be offered on the New Brunswick campus. Applications are currently being accepted.*
 - *This expansion has been based on an assumption that space for this expansion would be found in New Brunswick. This is being worked on.*

9. How does the size and staffing (including faculty) of the merged unit compare to 1) the individual units prior to the merger; and 2) nursing schools at fellow aspirant AAUs? Also, are the size, complexity, and cost of the administrative structure in the preliminary proposal sent to the Senate comparable to those of the administrative structures in the best nursing schools?

The merged School will approximately double the number of students, faculty, and staff in each of the two existing entities and be comparable to some of the larger nursing programs such as those at the University of Michigan, Indiana University, and the University of Illinois. Drs. Holzemer and Salmond believe that most existing personnel will be needed in the new

structure, given doubling in size of each existing program. They anticipate utilizing a budget neutral approach in the first year, then will assess any need for realignment in subsequent years.

Currently, the School of Nursing operates with three departments and the College of Nursing operates as a department of the whole. At the joint faculty retreat and subsequent joint faculty meeting, different options on how to organize the faculty were considered and discussed. Nursing is too broad a field to have easily identified departments, so the decision was made to adopt a functional division approach, based on a reality check of what the new school will do and what the school aspires to be. The school will function in three major areas: Entry to Baccalaureate Nursing Education, Advanced Practice Nursing, and Nursing Science, so the decision was made to utilize this framework for both the administrative support structure and the faculty governance structure. Faculty members have voted on and approved this structure.

10. What steps were taken to ensure that faculty members were involved in all aspects of the restructuring process? Given that only 14 percent of the full-time faculty are tenured, what precautions were taken to ensure that votes were confidential and not coerced?

The following steps have been taken:

- *A joint two-day strategic planning retreat was held, combining both faculty, where faculty explored a vision for the future and potential governance structure models.*
- *Harmonization committees from both schools have been working for several months to bring the academic programs into similar titles, numbering, learning objectives, and learning outcomes. This work is nearly completed. While it was a major undertaking, the curriculum content is mandated by a common accrediting body so the two programs were actually very similar.*
- *One joint faculty meeting has been held and two more have been scheduled for this year. Faculty will vote on adopting the structure and harmonized curriculum. Note that the votes and recording of the votes are performed separately by the two faculty since they have not officially merged. Separate voting on curriculum issues by tenure and non-tenure has not occurred in the past for either school and did not occur in votes related to curriculum as part of the merger.*

11. What are approximate cost projections for the merger? What are expected long-term savings? If money is being taken from a budget reserve to help cover merger costs, then what are the expected short- and long-term impacts of that diminishment of the budget reserve? How will that affect other programs or areas of the university?

Work on the merger is being completed while maintaining a commitment to current students, community-based projects, and research endeavors.

Drs. Holzemer and Salmond are not able to estimate the cost of the merger given that they are operating with two different financial accounting systems, etc. However, they are confident that both nursing programs have adequate reserves to manage any unanticipated costs.

Recently a funding request from the Rutgers Registrar has been put forward, to provide financial support to make the system changes necessary to support the merger. Drs. Holzemer and Salmond are exploring how that might be managed. The School of Nursing is accustomed to paying for services they request as that is how their budget system is managed. However, the College of Nursing is not used to paying extra for services that are considered already included in the 50% tuition tax that they receive. If this needs to be paid at all, it will probably come from the integration budget. No funds will come from other parts of the University.

To date, although they have requested from the President's Office support for a faculty retreat, none has been received.

The merger will benefit from the combined strength of two excellent faculty and will greatly enhance the quality of nursing programs and the research activity of its faculty.

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