



Robert L. Barchi, President

February 27, 2014

Mr. Kenneth Swalagin  
University Senate  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
ASB III, Suite 110  
Cook/Douglass Campus

Dear Mr. Swalagin:

I am writing in response to the Report and Recommendations on Charge S-1103, Information Technology and IT Services at Rutgers, as adopted by the University Senate in October 2012. The members of the Senate's Budget and Finance Committee and its IT subcommittee have my appreciation for their attention to this important issue.

As the Senate Report recognizes, IT and its related service functions touch nearly every member of the University community in some way, having an impact on virtually every major area of University operations and activities. Historically, Rutgers IT systems have evolved incrementally, resulting in a diverse array of systems with limited connectivity to one another. The integration of legacy UMDNJ units into Rutgers last July exacerbated the situation by introducing a second HR/finance/payroll system, resulting in two Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems being necessary in the short-term to manage the new Rutgers. This situation is further complicated by the pace of technological advance and the ever-growing number of technological products and processes available.

Much has happened on the IT front since the Senate passed this resolution in 2012. Last year, we retained the services of Moran Technology Consulting to conduct an evaluation of our ERP infrastructure and to provide recommendations for coalescing our business processes and systems into a single coherent University-wide environment. This firm has guided our efforts in gathering information from the University community on our business processes and our current and anticipated information technology needs, as well as the capabilities and deficiencies of our current systems. Under the direction of Senior Vice President for Finance Michael Gower and Senior Vice President for Administration Bruce Fehn, this initial analysis is focusing on our financial, human resources, and procurement data systems. This "fit-gap" analysis is expected to be completed by mid-March. It will include recommendations and cost estimates, as well as a detailed strategy to achieve significant improvements with our systems. A similar analysis will then be conducted for our student information systems. Implementation plans, timelines, and budgets for acting on the recommendations from these analyses will then be developed.

Multiple additional strategic initiatives that address Information Technology are being planned for this semester. As I recently announced to the University community, two major initiatives involving IT are being undertaken immediately as part of the initial implementation of our new Strategic Plan. The first is a University-wide Committee to examine instructional technology that will evaluate the latest educational

technology and assess the effectiveness of our current environments. The second is an extension of the ERP assessment that began last year. The committee will evaluate the infrastructure required to support the ERP environment as well as other applications, and it will develop a University-wide data center plan that addresses the need to support critical data systems that hold clinical data, administrative data, and research-related data, and to ensure secure storage of large data sets and critical business information. Other efforts include considering the consolidation of our email and calendar systems, expanding and unifying desktop management, and developing a University-wide plan for managing online material and resources that support instruction (in collaboration with the Center for Online and Hybrid Learning and Instructional Technology). In addition, we have plans to upgrade network bandwidth to key University buildings and expand and improve our wireless capabilities, with a focus on classrooms. Senior Vice President for Research and Economic Development Christopher Molloy is overseeing an Advanced Research Cyber Infrastructure (ACI) initiative. An ACI planning committee, consisting of faculty researchers from all Rutgers campuses and units along with representatives from the Office of Information Technology, is examining the critical role that advanced research cyber infrastructure is playing in all areas of computational and data-enabled science, medicine, engineering, and business.

All of these initiatives are proceeding with input from faculty members and the University's IT leadership, and they include assessments of the work required and transition schedules for implementation. With respect to the Senate's recommendation for a faculty-student IT advisory group, I leave to the Vice President for Information Technology, Donald Smith, whether and when establishing such a group would be useful, given all the other multiple inputs to the current IT initiatives.

We all realize how critical it is to bring our technology systems up-to-date and to provide a practical plan to ensure that they remain current. I believe the initiatives we have recently launched will develop a roadmap for addressing our current problems and for developing efficient and effective technology practices and systems across the University.

Sincerely,

Robert Barchi

c: Bruce Fehn, Senior Vice President for Administration  
Michael Gower, Senior Vice President for Finance  
Christopher Molloy, Senior Vice President for Research and Economic Development  
Richard Novak, Vice President for Continuing Studies and Distance Education  
Donald Smith, Vice President for Information Technology