



Robert L. Barchi, President

November 16, 2017

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 University Senate's February 2017 report and recommendations on Charge S-1404, Revisions to the University Policy Library. I thank the members of the University Structure and Governance Committee for their review and recommendations on improving communications to the university community regarding the University Policy Library. I note that this report also addresses a separate issue, the receipt and disposition of University Senate reports.

It should be noted that the University Policy Library currently consists of ten sections and more than 300 policies. Members of the Rutgers community can easily locate the University Policy Library with a simple search of the University's website. The policy website is user-friendly and includes not only each policy in its current form but also the most recently revised version so that the Rutgers Community can see what has changed. The website also includes a policy template, instructions to draft new or revise existing policies, and a "Frequently Asked Questions" page.

You are correct that some policies require Board of Governors or Board of Trustees approval, and some require the approval of the President of the University; however that is not true for all policies. Policies within the University Policy Library each have a Responsible Office, a Responsible Executive, and an Approval Authority. Changes to policies cannot be made without following the defined hierarchy within the policy itself.

The remainder of your report refers to new processes for the tracking of University Senate Reports and their disposition – an issue separate and apart from the University Policy Library. In accordance with University Policy 50.2.2, the University Senate considers matters of general University interest and recommends policies or policy revisions to the university administration. Senate recommendations come to me for review and, if necessary, are referred to the responsible executive for action. A fundamental point is that not all University Senate reports require action by the Governing Boards.

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Recommendation 1: That representatives from the University Secretary's office and the University Senate meet once per semester to catalog all submitted reports that are pending decision and determine deadline for dispensation by the Governing Boards.

While I understand the University Senate's desire for a more efficient process for disposition of its submitted reports and recommendations, I note there is already a process in place, managed by the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Office of Academic Affairs tracks University Senate reports and my responses. Adding another office to the process will only serve to slow the process, not make it more efficient. Moreover, not all reports and recommendations require the Board of Governors or Board of Trustees to take action. As the University Senate's main responsibility is to advise the administration on matters of broad educational and research policy, management of its recommendations correctly falls within the purview of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Recommendation 2: That the University Senate Office create an annotated document repository of all submitted reports and their disposition status.

I leave it to the University Senate to determine how best to manage its reports and recommendations. I agree that a public list on the University Senate's website, whether in its current format or in another format as determined by the Senate, aids in the university's goal of transparency and efficiency in shared governance.

Recommendation 3: That the University Secretary and the University Senate create a joint file-sharing space to maintain current records of submitted reports.

As stated in my response to the first recommendation, the University Secretary is not a part of the current process for responding to the University Senate's reports and recommendations and I do not agree that inserting another office into that process will accomplish the University Senate's goal of improving communications and efficiency. Furthermore, the University Senate's website already serves as a repository for University Senate reports and responses, and is accessible to all.

Recommendation 4: That the University Secretary disseminate links to all University Senate Reports via the Faculty and Staff Bulletin and to groups affected beyond faculty and staff.

The Faculty and Staff Bulletin, which was managed by University Communications and Marketing, has been discontinued. Also, it is not appropriate for the University Secretary to disseminate Senate reports or recommendations that have not been adopted by the Board of Governors or Board of Trustees. The University Senate Office is the appropriate office to disseminate links to Senate reports via distribution lists to the constituents it determines should receive these reports.


Recommendation 5: That the University Secretary prospectively create an archive of superseded versions of each policy within the University Policy Library.

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Currently, the University Policy Library includes current policy as well as the most recently revised version with strikeouts to indicate the changes that have been made. While I think the most recently revised version is certainly helpful to members of the Rutgers community seeking an explanation of what is now, or is no longer, permitted, I do not see the benefit of archived policies dating far beyond the most recent revision. Any member of the Rutgers community researching a particular policy can contact the Office of the Secretary for historical revisions.

Again, I thank the University Senate Structure and Governance Committee for its thoughtful suggestions.

Sincerely,



Robert Barchi

c: Barbara Lee, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Kimberlee Pastva, Secretary of the University