

**Rutgers University Senate
Student Affairs Committee
Response to Charge S-1210, Early-Open Study Space
April 2014**

S-1210 Early-Open Study Space: Determine the interest in, and feasibility of, a study area on each campus opening early (5:00 a.m.) for commuter students.

Background:

Student Senators brought the issue of an early open study space to the attention of the Senate Executive Committee. It was noted that commuting students that wanted to arrive at the University in the early morning (i.e. prior to student center or library business hours, 7:30 – 8:30 am, depending on the campus) had nowhere to stay or study but their car. Neither the student centers nor libraries were open during those early morning hours. The only other alternative was to come to campus at a later time. However, there was uncertainty as to whether this was a mandate from the commuting students themselves or a perception of need. The Student Affairs Committee was then charged to determine the interest in and then feasibility of an early open study space for such purpose.

Committee Actions and Considerations:

The Student Affairs Committee decided that determining interest was the first step. A survey was developed by Senator Joseph Cashin and distributed to Rutgers students. The survey was limited to commuters. The survey results for each campus are attached as Appendices. Over 40% of respondents on each campus felt they would use such a space. Of those who would use the space, the greatest number would recommend the space open at 7 am. The survey results were brought to both the Student Affairs Committee and the Senate Executive Committee, the latter deeming the student interest enough to proceed with the feasibility portion of the charge.

Senator Cashin proceeded to find contacts on each campus that would be responsible for opening such a space to help determine feasibility. It was discovered that the Camden student government had already begun to address this issue. Their student center hours have been changed from 8:30 am to 7 am and library now opens at 7:30 am.

Communication with the Director of New Brunswick Campus Student Centers found full support of opening 4 of the 6 student centers at 7 am instead of 8 am on weekdays. These are the Rutgers Student Center, Livingston Student Center, Douglass Student Center and Busch Student Center. The cost of this early opening was estimated at \$11,500 per semester. This would be piloted in Spring 2014, with the additional cost for the pilot picked up by the Student Centers. However, future funding would be helpful if the pilot is successful. The results of the pilot would be determined by the student centers.

There has been little further discussion of this issue on the Newark Campus. It had come to our attention that the graduate students had asked for the hours of their student lounge be available earlier. The 2012 proposal prepared by the Executive Board of the Rutgers-Newark Graduate Student Government Association is also included in the Appendices. Currently the Newark Student Center opens at 8:30am and two of the three libraries open at 8:00am. We had awaited action on that proposal but there has been none to date.

Though two of the three campuses above made space available earlier, it was clear from the surveys that between 60 and 70% of students recommended opening times of 5 and 6am. Nothing has been done to address this population. Given the additional costs involved, a look at utilization of these buildings with the times in place now after the change is warranted prior to any further recommendations on hours of operation.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

We conclude that there is interest in availability of an early open study space on each campus. We also conclude that although feasible, there are significant costs associated with such opening. A further look at the existing utilization data after the changes already made is warranted.

The Student Affairs Committee has the following recommendations:

1. Student Centers on the New Brunswick and Camden campuses track usage of the student centers and libraries during the hours of change and report back to the Student Affairs Committee of the Rutgers University Senate.
2. Further examination be done by those responsible for the student centers on each campus as to the cost and potential funding of such opening: a.) as already exists, and b.) as would be needed if even earlier opening is warranted.

Student Affairs Committee

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