An Introduction to the Rutgers University Senate
http://senate.rutgers.edu

What is the Senate?

The Rutgers University Senate is the only advisory and legislative body that represents the entire community of faculty, students, staff, administrators and alumni to 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.

More specifically, the Senate advises on areas including:

- Budget priorities, allocations, and general planning;
- Special affiliations and programs;
- Establishment, merger or dissolution of colleges, schools, divisions, institutes, and other educational units;
- Regulations affecting students and faculty, such as those concerning academic freedom, equal opportunities, and personnel practices and procedures as they affect the academic mission of Rutgers; and
- Such changes in educational and research policy as are covered in University Regulations.

Beyond advising, the Senate has the authority to legislate:

- The academic calendar;
- Minimum standards of admission, scholarship and honors; and
- Formal relationships among academic units.

How does the Senate work? (http://senate.rutgers.edu)

The Senate is a representative body. Most members are elected by their constituent groups to terms specific to that group: 3 years (full-time faculty and alumni), 2 years (staff), 1 year (students and part-time lecturers). The Senate currently has seven active standing committees, and one Executive Committee. Senators are usually appointed to the standing committee of their choice. The Executive Committee generally functions as a steering committee, and its members are elected each year by the full Senate. The standing committees look at (http://senate.rutgers.edu/standchg.html):

- **Budget and Finance** - budget priorities, allocations and general planning
- **University Structure and Governance** - relationships among units at Rutgers, relationships among student and faculty governing bodies, and the structure of the Senate itself
- **Faculty Affairs and Personnel** - matters directly concerning faculty and other personnel as they affect the academic mission of Rutgers, with the exception of matters included under the collective bargaining agreements
- **Student Affairs** - matters directly concerning students
- **Instruction, Curricula, and Advising** - matters directly concerning these areas
- **Academic Standards, Regulations, and Admissions** - matters directly concerning these areas
- **Research, and Graduate and Professional Education** – matters directly concerning those areas

What kinds of specific issues is the Senate looking at now? (http://senate.rutgers.edu/pendchgs.html)

- Rutgers’ Financial Investments
- Smoke-Free Rutgers
- Process for Unit Mergers or Other Structural Changes
- Revisions to University Policy Library
- Greater Integration of Contingent Faculty into the Rutgers Community
- Improving Search Processes for Senior Administrators
- Shared Governance at Rutgers
- Responsible Conduct of Research
- Best Practices in Evaluation of Teaching
- Allocation of Faculty Lines/Positions in RCM Units
- Policies on Excused Student Absences for Religious Observance
- Evaluation of Chancellors
- Weekend examinations
On what types of issues has the Senate made recommendations and reports to Rutgers’ administration recently? ([http://senate.rutgers.edu/reports.html](http://senate.rutgers.edu/reports.html))

- Implementing ORCID Identifiers
- Deregistration for Non-Payment of Term Bills
- Web Accessibility Policy
- Testing Facilities at Rutgers
- Honorary Degree and Commencement Speaker Selection Process
- Selection of Software Packages or Services of Significant Instructional Impact
- Removing Barriers to the Education of Veterans
- Balance of Full-time and Part-time Faculty Teaching
- Support for International Students
- Athletics Program Deficits
- Merger of Camden and Newark Schools of Law
- Cost of Textbooks

What does a Senator do?

Senators bring the voice and perspectives of their constituent groups to Senate issues. They do this first through their work with their standing committees, and later by acting on all committees’ reports and recommendations at Senate meetings. As representatives of their constituents, they also suggest new issues for the Senate. All Senators are expected to attend Senate meetings, and, of equal or greater importance, to attend and fully participate in their committee activities. If you accept nomination to the Senate, you are asked to arrange a schedule that does not conflict with Senate meetings. Full Senate meetings generally occur on one Friday afternoon each month during the academic year, and committees regularly meet in the morning on those same Senate Fridays. Next-year’s meeting schedule is already online at [http://senate.rutgers.edu/MeetingCalendar20162017.html](http://senate.rutgers.edu/MeetingCalendar20162017.html).

Participation in the Senate involves being aware and informed on the issues under consideration by the Senate (mostly in its committees), so you can respond and vote on the resolutions and recommendations on those issues when they come to the Senate floor. To the extent possible, you should also communicate with your constituents so they know what issues are current, and so you have a sense of their views. All Senators serve as representatives of their constituents. As such, they are the voice of the Rutgers University community in the shared-governance process.

Participation on a Senate committee requires a willingness to understand and discuss the specific issues charged to your standing committee. Working together, committee members bring their perspectives and ideas to a discussion that eventually becomes a report that the full Senate (in most cases) is asked to adopt. Whatever the Senate adopts is sent to Rutgers’ administration as the voice of the greater Rutgers community on that issue, so committee work is a significant responsibility. In the committees, Senators may be asked to do research on issues, and perhaps draft sections of or comments on reports. Outside of committee meetings, members are often asked to read and comment by e-mail. The Senate rarely acts on an issue without first considering that issue in committee.

Why might I want to be a Senator?

You’d want to be a Senator if you recognize the importance of bringing the Rutgers community’s voice to the president and administration. After reading this, if you think you can devote the time and attention Senate membership requires, and you feel you could ably represent the views of your constituency (faculty, staff, students, alumni) in advising Rutgers’ administration on a wide variety of issues, you should consider running for a position on the University Senate. You should probably not join the Senate if: you can’t contribute to committee work (attending full-Senate meetings is only one-third of the job); or if the travel costs to New Brunswick meetings (sorry, there’s no budget for reimbursement), or your work schedule, prohibit it. It’s also important to remember that, in many instances, the Senate advises on policy; it doesn’t dictate it.

How do I get elected?

For information on being elected to the Senate: Faculty (other than part-time lecturers) should contact their deans. Students are elected through their student governing associations. Staff will be informed about elections that are conducted electronically through the Office of Human Resources. Part-time lecturers will be contacted via e-mail from the executive secretary of the University Senate. Alumni are elected through the Alumni Association.

Additional information is always available on the Rutgers University Senate website at [http://senate.rutgers.edu](http://senate.rutgers.edu).

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