



**Rutgers University Senate  
University Structure and Governance Committee , November 2016**

**Response to Charge S-1501 Eligibility, Nomination, and Election of  
Senate Leadership and Board Representatives.**

**Charge S-1501: Eligibility, Nomination, and Election of Senate Leadership and Board Representatives** - Consider and make recommendations on the eligibility of candidates, and the nomination process and schedule for election of Senate officers, Executive Committee members, and board representatives.

**Background:** The Senate Executive Committee is the steering committee of the Senate. In that capacity, its officers are responsible for the functioning of the Senate body, as well as its relationship with the university administration, Boards of Governors and Trustees, and the many constituencies it serves. Thus, candidates for those positions should have a record that demonstrates a commitment to the Senate (e.g., evidence of dedicating time and effort for the Senate's work) and a fundamental understanding of how the work of the Senate is accomplished. In the recent past, questions have been raised regarding i) eligibility for the roles of Chair and Vice Chair and ii) how the full Senate runs the nomination and election process. While any candidate would be expected to understand the requirements and prerequisites of attaining those offices, as well as the time and effort they demand, the charge calls for a deeper and more detailed understanding of related requirements and qualifications. This charge is intended to i) ensure that candidates are prepared and able to appropriately serve if elected, and ii) guide and facilitate the election process of its leadership.

**Considerations:** A primary consideration of the University Structure and Governance Committee in addressing this charge was to ensure minimal yet thorough and clear guidelines be established to support a systematic, informed, democratic process.

Nomination and election of candidates to become Chair, Vice Chair, Executive Committee members and Board representatives (Governors or Trustees) are arguably some of the most important decisions undertaken by the Senate body. These Senate leaders speak on behalf of the Senate when the body as a whole does not or cannot meet. Given the significant responsibilities, those positions call for an established level of experience regarding work and productivity within the Senate. The business of the Senate is performed by its committees, thus those who have served in positions of responsibility best understand the processes and the operation of the Senate. Providing a baseline of experience that all candidates must have, ensures that they are prepared for the responsibilities of the office. Additionally, submission of carefully considered campaign statements well in advance of the election was considered to be a requirement for demonstrating intent and providing an appropriate profile for the benefit of voting members.

The Chair and Vice Chair regularly meet and interact with the President and senior University leadership. They work with the Big 10 Academic Alliance, interact with other AAU Senate peers and are privy to information not generally or publicly disseminated. The sensitive nature of the roles involves access to and working with confidential information, e.g. university legal and/or personnel issues, performance reviews, grievance cases, and so on. These are fundamental considerations regarding the question of who is eligible to take on the role of Chair and Vice Chair, i.e., one of the central questions which motivated this charge. Due to the need for the University President and Chancellors to seek counsel from the Chair and Vice Chair, as well as the Chair's and Vice Chair's exposure to sensitive employee and promotion data, these positions require a fundamental understanding of the university and its operations and mission. Providing a baseline of required time and experience working in the Senate, ensures that candidates have a foundation of requisite knowledge and understanding of Rutgers' policies, processes, and procedures. Working with related confidential information and matters (as cited above) intrinsically calls for both professional work experience and life experience as well.

Based on all this rationale, the committee (USGC) concluded that only Faculty, Staff, and Alumni Senators, with at least three years of experience actively working in the Senate, and who have carefully considered their candidacy and have been nominated or self-nominated at least five days prior to the election, should be considered for these roles. Campaign statements for Chair and Vice

Chair should also be received by the Secretary of Senate at least five days before the election. The intent is to provide the Senate membership with time to consider the slate of candidates.

In considering this charge, it came to the attention of the committee that University Senate enabling Policy 50.2.1 “Senate – Membership and Organization” section F (attached as Appendix A) needs to be updated to accurately reflect the current structure and function of the Executive Committee, as well as the current structure regarding the major units within Rutgers University.

In the first sentence, the wording

- i) “*chairperson*” and “*vice chairperson*” needs to be changed to “*chair*” and “*vice chair*” respectively
- ii) “*five faculty*” needs to be updated to “*six full-time faculty*”
- iii) “*three student members*” needs to be updated to “*four student members*”
- iv) “*part-time lecturer/annual appointee*” needs to be changed to “*part-time lecturer*”, deleting the term “*annual appointee*”

In the third sentence, the word “*campus*” needs to be replaced with

*“major unit of the university (Rutgers University – Camden (RU-C), Rutgers University – Newark (RU-N), Rutgers University - New Brunswick (RU-NB), and Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS))”*

In the fourth sentence, the word “*campus*” needs to be replaced with

*“major unit of the university (RU-C, RU-N, RU-NB, and RBHS)”*

In the fifth sentence

- i) “*chairperson*” needs to be changed to “*chair*”
- ii) the phrase “*for one year following the member’s chairpersonship*” needs to be changed to “*for one year following the member’s last term serving as chair*”

In the eighth sentence, the word “campus” needs to be replaced with

*“major unit of the university (RU-C, RU-N, RU-NB, and RBHS)”*

The tenth sentence

*“Vacancies on the Executive Committee shall be filled by the Executive Committee nominating a replacement, which shall be voted upon by the Senate at its next meeting.”*

should be changed to

*“If a vacancy occurs on the Executive Committee, the executive secretary shall solicit self-nominations from the appropriate category of voting senators. The Executive Committee should then advance those nominations to the Senate, to be voted upon at the Senate's next meeting.”*

Subsequently section F would read:

#### *F. Executive Committee*

*There shall be an Executive Committee of the Senate consisting of the chair, vice chair, six full-time faculty members, four student members, one part-time lecturer, one staff representative, and one alumni member elected from the Senate. All members of the Executive Committee must be voting Senators. One faculty representative shall be elected from each major unit of the university ( Rutgers University – Camden (RU-C), Rutgers University – Newark (RU-N), Rutgers University - New Brunswick (RU-NB), and Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS)), with the additional members elected at large. One student representative shall be elected from each major unit of the university (RU-C, RU-N, RU-NB, and RBHS). The immediate past chair of the Senate shall become an additional member of the Executive Committee, with vote, for one year following the member's last term serving as chair. Members of the Executive Committee shall assume office on July 1 following the date of their election, and shall serve for a period of one year. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for coordinating the activities of the Senate and its*

*committees, exercising such powers as the Senate may delegate to it and acting on its behalf between meetings of the Senate. At least one representative from each major unit of the university (RU-C, RU-N, RU-NB, and RBHS) shall be elected to serve on the Executive Committee. If the Executive Committee deems a member to be excessively absent from its meetings, it may request that member's resignation or recall from the Executive Committee. If a vacancy occurs on the Executive Committee, the executive secretary shall solicit self-nominations from the appropriate category of voting senators. The Executive Committee should then advance those nominations to the Senate, to be voted upon at the Senate's next meeting. Other nominations may be made from the floor at that time."*

Finally, as the initial charge was being formulated by the Senate Executive Committee, the committee was reminded that the nature of election processes for Student representatives to the Senate Executive Committee is, in certain cases, negatively impacted by the varied inter- and intra-campus election processes for students being elected to the University Senate. Often times, some units have not completed their election of student representatives to the Senate in time for subsequent Student Senators to be considered for election to the Senate's Executive Committee, i.e., during the regular election process of Senate leadership toward the end of the academic year. The affected seats are then empty until the following academic year. It would be beneficial to the Senate and its operations if student elections across the university were conducted in a timely manner, including identification of those responsible for running student elections for each unit. The Senate Executive Committee should charge the appropriate Senate committee to address the issue.

**Recommendations:**

**Recommendation 1:** The candidates for Chair and Vice Chair of the Senate shall be elected Senators representing the faculty, staff, or alumni of Rutgers University.

**Recommendation 2:** Floor nominations will not be considered for the candidacy of Chair or Vice Chair. Nominations and campaign statements for Chair and Vice Chair must be received by the Secretary of the Senate at least five days prior to the election, so that campaign statements can be disseminated to all University Senators in advance of the election.

**Recommendation 3:** All candidates for Chair and Vice Chair must have at least three years of experience (not necessarily consecutive) on the Rutgers University Senate. As part of their campaign statement, candidates must include their Committee and Senate attendance record for the last three years of their tenure on the Senate.

**Recommendation 4:** The Senate’s enabling University Policy should be changed to accurately reflect the current structure and function of the Executive Committee, as well as the integration of legacy Rutgers and UMDNJ, by changing the current wording in University Policy 50.2.1 section F, such that

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**Recommendation 5:** The Senate Executive Committee charge the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) to consider and investigate ways to facilitate having student elections conducted in a timely manner, including identifying who is responsible for running student elections for each unit.

### **Resolution:**

**Be it resolved** that the University Senate endorses the USGC’s Recommendations as contained in this report regarding the process for the nomination and election of the Chair, Vice Chair, Executive Committee and representatives to the Board of Governors and Board of Trustees

**Be it further resolved**, that if these recommendations are accepted by the University, then the Handbook of the Rutgers University Senate should be updated to reflect these changes.