

Senate Academic Standards, Regulations, and Admissions Committee Report on the Recommendations of the Task Force on Undergraduate Education EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ASRAC considered the recommendations of the Task Force involving admissions, recruitment, and closely related matters and decided to focus on seven major issues: structure and nomenclature (as they relate to recruiting); the admissions process for arts and sciences students: undergraduate recruiting materials; admission and support of transfer students; recruitment and admissions of honors students; recruitment of out-of-state students; and faculty role in admissions.

Structure, Nomenclature, and Recruitment

The Committee considered the implications for undergraduate recruitment of the arts and sciences collegiate structure and nomenclature proposed by the Task Force. We strongly support the Task Force recommendation to form a single degree-granting arts and sciences undergraduate unit on the New Brunswick Campus but disagree with the Task Force concerning the best name for the new unit.

Recommendation 1: *We strongly support the Task Force proposal to merge the current arts and sciences colleges into a single degree-granting arts and sciences undergraduate unit in New Brunswick/Piscataway. However, in agreement with the New Brunswick Faculty Council, we recommend that the new unit be called the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences and that the successors to the current arts and sciences colleges be called residential colleges.*

The Admission Process for Arts and Sciences Students

ASRAC enthusiastically agrees with the goals for undergraduate admissions set out in the Task Force Report:

- To ensure that the admissions process serves the New Brunswick Campus by attracting an excellent body of students prepared to use the resources of a research university.
- To ensure that the diversity that is so central a hallmark of the Campus is maintained.

In order to achieve these goals, we believe that the differences in admissions standards among the arts and sciences colleges need to be eliminated, while maintaining diversity, that there needs to be a single, internally non-competitive admissions process for arts and sciences students, and that the Rutgers undergraduate application should give a more accurate picture of what we expect of our students. Therefore, we make the following four recommendations.

Recommendation 2: *We strongly support the Task Force recommendation that there be a single minimum standard for regular admission for all traditional-age arts and sciences applicants to Rutgers-New Brunswick, regardless of the residential college with which the student wishes to affiliate; this minimum standard should be modified appropriately for transfer, EOF, and non-traditional-age students, as well as for students with special skills.*

Recommendation 3: We strongly support the New Brunswick Faculty Council recommendation that "the criteria used in admission decisions should be sufficiently flexible to maintain the diversity of the student body and not exclude talented applicants whose potential is not adequately measured by standard test scores."

Recommendation 4: We recommend that there be a single New Brunswick arts and sciences admissions process in which all applicants apply to and, if successful, are admitted to the School of Arts and Sciences and admit-coming students are then assigned to a residential college based on an appropriate combination of their preferences and the need to ensure that each residential college has a reasonably representative mixture of students in terms of demographic characteristics and academic background and interests.

Recommendation 5: We strongly support the Task Force Admissions and Recruitment recommendation 12; namely, that the "Rutgers undergraduate application must indicate our expectations for our students; it should ask about special academic work (e.g., honors, AP, etc.); it should ask about extra-curricular participation; and it should require a writing sample."

Undergraduate Recruiting Materials

We also believe that in order to eliminate confusion and send out a clear, positive, and accurate message about what it means to be an undergraduate at Rutgers-New Brunswick, it is necessary to redesign our undergraduate recruiting materials, both print and electronic.

Recommendation 6: We support the recommendation of the Task Force that New Brunswick undergraduate recruiting materials, both print and online, should be redesigned so that they

- *define "public research university" in easily understood terms that make clear the advantages all undergraduates derive from attending a research university.*
- *place primary emphasis on curricular, research, co-curricular, and student-life programs and opportunities available to all undergraduates in New Brunswick, particularly programs for first-year students.*
- *portray all schools, colleges, campuses, and programs in a manner that removes all internal competitiveness and takes great care not to market one unit or program at the possible expense of others.*

Admission and Support of Transfer Students

We considered the recommendations concerning transfer students of both the Admissions and Recruitment Working Group and the Special Student Populations Subgroup of the Curriculum Working Group. While we agree with a number of the specific recommendations of both groups, we believe that there should be further consideration of the needs of transfer students.

Recommendation 7: *Since we do not believe that the Task Force considered the many issues concerning recruitment, admission, retention, and support of transfer students in a sufficiently comprehensive manner, we second the recommendation of the New Brunswick Faculty Council that the new task force to be set up to consider how best to meet the needs of non-traditional students also be charged with considering how best to meet the needs of transfer students.*

Recruitment and Admission of Honors Students

We are in general agreement with the Task Force recommendations concerning honors programs and wish to single out several of them for particular support.

Recommendation 8: *We strongly endorse the following Task Force recommendations concerning honors programs:*

- *A single general honors program for all qualified undergraduate students at Rutgers- New Brunswick should be established in order to ensure that the full range of honors opportunities on the Campus are available to all honors students and to give our honors offerings the visibility and coherence that the current fragmented system of college and school honors programs lacks.*
- *Local honors communities should continue to exist on our various campuses to provide the local advising, mentoring, and co-curricular activities that students value so very highly in our current college and school honors programs.*
- *The New Brunswick general honors program should adopt the “requirements model,” with a strong emphasis on research, with uniform requirements for all arts and sciences honors students, and modified requirements, as necessary, for professional school students.*
- *The general honors program should have somewhat flexible admissions criteria; i.e., criteria not based solely on quantitative indicators, to allow students with diverse sets of talents and accomplishments to participate in the program.*
- *Faculty should be engaged in every aspect of the honors recruitment process and all honors students in New Brunswick should have a faculty mentor assigned soon after they indicate they will attend the University.*

Recruitment of Out-of-State Students

We believe that our very low percentage of out-of-state students, compared with other public AAUs, gives our New Jersey students little opportunity to get to know students from other parts of the country, gives us a reputation as a very local institution, and is financially disadvantageous. We therefore support the Task Force recommendation to recruit more out-of-state students.

Recommendation 9: *We strongly support the recommendation to develop a comprehensive plan to recruit and enroll more out-of-state students, particularly US students from outside the Northeast and Middle Atlantic regions because we believe that increasing the percentage of out-of-state students in the Rutgers-New Brunswick student body will*

- *increase the currently extremely low geographic diversity of the undergraduate student body and expose our students to worlds beyond New Jersey and nearby states.*

- *help to compensate for some of the flow of high-achieving students out of New Jersey to attend college in other parts of the country.*
- *increase the national visibility and reputation of Rutgers*
- *be financially advantageous to the university.*

Faculty Role in Admissions

We strongly support the Task Force recommendations concerning a greatly enhanced role for faculty in undergraduate admissions at the policy-making level.

Recommendation 10: *We strongly support the Task Force Admissions and Recruitment recommendations that*

- *faculty members should play a major collaborative role with the campus and central administrations in establishing admissions policies, determining standards for admission, and setting enrollment goals at the school and campus levels.*
- *there should be an active faculty admissions committee for the School of Arts and Sciences and for each professional school in New Brunswick; these committees should exercise the powers and responsibilities laid out in Admissions and Recruitment recommendation 4.*
- *a New Brunswick-wide primarily faculty Admissions Committee, reporting to the Vice-President for Undergraduate Education, should be established with roughly the composition and powers proposed in Admissions and Recruitment recommendation 5.*