

Report of the University Structure and Governance Committee: partial response to charge S-0603

S-0603: Make recommendations for revision of the Senate membership and bylaws in light of the restructuring of the New Brunswick schools and colleges. Respond to Senate Executive Committee by January 24, 2006.

Overview: The consolidation of the four liberal arts colleges on the New Brunswick/Piscataway Campuses into a single school of arts and sciences will impact many aspects of student life and educational experiences on this campus, and will necessitate changes in many policies and procedures, including governance. Since University Senate student seats are now allocated to each of those colleges, and each of those colleges also has its own governing associations, reorganization in each of those areas is clearly necessary. The organization of the student governing associations into new units representing the new school is most appropriately left to the student governing associations, but the election of student senators, since the pattern of representation is defined in Senate by-laws, should be redefined by the University Senate Structure and Governance Committee. This report considers only election of student senators; reallocation of faculty senators who now represent the colleges will be the subject of a separate report.

In deciding on the appropriate distribution of seats, the committee recognizes several principles outlined by the task force designed to broaden the educational experience of students across the campus. The task force recognized that the ability of students to participate in clubs and organizations should not be limited by the school in which they are enrolled, and that it was important for all students to have opportunities for participation in leadership experiences. Further, the Task Force recognized that within the large School of Arts and Sciences, smaller communities would need to be created at a variety of levels; among the most basic of these are the geographic campuses. These campuses should create a natural community among the students who live there, and the students who major in the departments located there, whether or not they reside on campus. The Task Force recognized the need for special programming/residence options for two sub-populations of students: women who desire a single sex residential experience, and non-traditional students. The needs of these special groups are to be met by the formation of the Douglass Residential College on the Douglass Campus, which will be reserved for women students, and by the continuation of University College as a virtual campus within the School of Arts and Sciences. The representation of students within the University Senate should recognize these communities and special interest groups as well. In considering this matter, the committee considered two proposals, one brought by the combined governing associations of several of the colleges, and the other by the University College Governing association, and the issues raised in both.

Current Distribution of Student Senate Seats

Current University regulations allocate one senate seat per 900 students in degree-granting unit. Based on current enrollments, this distribution is currently:

Cook College	(3)	School of Nursing	(1)
Douglass College	(3)	School of Business	(1)
Livingston College	(4)	MGSA	(1)
University College	(4)	SCILS	(1)
Rutgers College	(11)	SOE (Engineering)	(3)
School of Pharmacy	(1)	<i>Total undergrad</i>	<i>(33)</i>

The student governing associations have proposed a plan for student governments among School of Arts and Sciences students to be based on the geographic campuses. University College students have also proposed the continuation of a University College governing association to continue to represent the views of non-traditional students.

Discussion: Redistribution of Student Senate Seats

The committee agreed that the total number of student senators for each school should follow the one per 900 full-time equivalent students, including the new School of Arts and Sciences. There is some disagreement among members of the committee as to how those seats should be distributed within the School of Arts and Sciences. Some members feel that within the school, distribution should be based on the five geographic campuses, with an equal distribution among those campuses. This conscious departure from a strict population-based approach would ensure that all campuses retain an equal voice in the University Senate. Some committee members felt, however, that this would not guarantee an adequate representation for non-traditional students, who would be members of a “virtual campus” in University College, and that University College should have an equal number of representatives with the geographic campuses.

In making our recommendation, we take into account a number of factors. First, a population based distribution of seats among the campuses, real or virtual, is not practical. Although the total enrollment/entitlement of the School of Arts and Sciences is easily defined, the number of students who will feel an affiliation to each campus community and participate in its governing associations is not clear. This number may not strictly be tied to the number of beds on each campus, or the number of students now enrolled in the liberal arts colleges currently housed there. In particular, we note that the Task Force on Non-Traditional Students has tentatively defined non-traditional students as those who have been out of high school for more than four years, are non-matriculated or post-baccalaureate, or who remain in part-time status for more than two years. This population is likely to be smaller than the current enrollment of University College, which now includes a number of transfer students who do not meet these criteria. What is more important than actual numbers of representatives from each group is that groups of students with unique sets of issues and problems be assured that their point of view be represented in the Senate. We believe that non-traditional students do face issues that are unique, and that they should be assured a voice in the Senate. At the same time, we recognize that this group of students is a relatively small fraction of the total population of the School of Arts and Sciences, and that these students also share many issues with traditional students. We also realize that it is not possible to know at this time exactly how the communities among students, geographic, virtual, school-based or interest based will ultimately develop, and that any distribution decided on now should be considered provisional and subject to review. Therefore the committee recommends a compromise with respect to the number and distribution of Senate seats which we feel will ensure that each community will have some representation within the Senate, with the understanding that any distribution should be reviewed after the campus communities have developed further.

Recommendation 1: The total number of SAS student senators shall be based on the total enrollment of SAS, using the formula of one representative per 900 students, as defined in the Senate By-Laws. The distribution of these representatives among the geographic campuses

and University College shall be determined by the Rutgers University Student Assembly, with the following provisions:

- 1) at least two (2) should represent non-traditional students, and be elected by those students who are affiliated with University College.
- 2) Each geographic campus (Busch, College Avenue, Livingston, Douglass, including the Douglass Residential College, and Cook) where SAS students affiliate should be represented by at least two representatives.
- 3) The remaining representatives should be elected internally through the Rutgers University Student Assembly, [or at large across all the campuses?]

Recommendation 2: After this distribution has been in effect for two academic years, the student governing associations and University Senate should review this distribution to evaluate whether it provides adequate representation and participation in governance for all populations of students in New Brunswick/Piscataway.