

Rutgers University Senate

Instruction, Curricula, and Advising Committee

S-1807: Rutgers Bootcamps: Investigate the [Rutgers Bootcamps](#) and make any necessary recommendations to clarify or modify its relationship to our other academic programs that grant degrees or certificates. Consider the process that led to the relationship between Rutgers and [Trilogy Education Services](#), including the role of the faculty in this process. Also investigate the financial arrangements between Rutgers and Trilogy Education Services and the disposition of the funds received from the relationship. Respond to the Senate Executive Committee by January 2020. [Issued June 2018. Reissue March 2019]

In 2015, Rutgers, through the Division of Continuing Studies, entered into an agreement with Trilogy Education Services [TES] (<https://www.trilogyed.com/>), a New York based company that offers non-credit certificate training programs, in the form of “bootcamps,” through affiliate universities. Trilogy describes itself as a “workforce accelerator” that partners “with the world’s leading universities to help companies bridge their digital skills gaps.”

Currently Rutgers Continuing Studies is offering two bootcamps in conjunction with Trilogy: a Coding Bootcamp (<https://bootcamp.rutgers.edu/coding/>), and a Data Science Bootcamp (<https://bootcamp.rutgers.edu/data/>). Students can select a 24-week part-time program that meets two nights a week plus four hours on Saturdays, or a full-time 12-week program that meets for five hours a day Mondays through Fridays. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age with a high school diploma or GED. Classes meet in facilities in Somerset and Jersey City. These are non-credit certificate programs; successful participants receive a “Certificate of Completion.”



In their initial discussion, the Committee formulated a number of questions that it thought critical for determining the actual nature of the agreement between Rutgers and Trilogy. These were presented to Rich Novak and to Jim Morris, the Associate Vice President of Continuing Studies and the person principally responsible for overseeing the program. In addition to responding to

our concerns, Novak and Morris also provided us with a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Rutgers and Trilogy.

Trilogy Partners

TES has programs set up with over 40 university partners; the core group includes Rutgers, Northwestern, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Minnesota, Georgia Tech, and the University of California—Irvine. Trinity partners generally meet in the spring at the annual conference of the University Continuing and Professional Education Association (UPCEA). Schools have the final authority as to what is in a course; all content tweaks proposed by the faculties of the various institutions are reviewed and vetted by the University partners prior to roll out. All use the same curriculum, although there is the opportunity for customizations where requested.

The Program

The program, as defined in the MOU (August 31, 2016) Section 2.1,

“will be based on TES’ intensive coding boot camp and shall include approximately 240-260 contact hours as mutually agreed. It shall consist of face-to-face instruction conducted in facilities identified by RU and evaluated by both Parties. In-class instruction also shall be augmented by video-based instruction and electronic support from instructors and teaching assistants. Details about Program content shall be identified in the course design phase, and program content, materials and instructional team members will be reviewed and approved by RU staff and designated subject matter experts (SMEs).”

The Content

As indicated in the MOU section above, the program is “based on TES’ intensive coding boot camp.” Rutgers has participated in the development of the content of the Coding Bootcamp both before and after the draft course content was proposed. When the Coding Bootcamp was first proposed in 2015, Continuing Studies determined that the content was most closely aligned with the “Advanced Web Design Technologies” course (04:547:320) taught by the Information Technology and Informatics program (ITI) at the School of Communication & Information (SCI). The SCI ITT program director delegated the instructor of that course to do the initial review; subsequent content reviews were done by SCI faculty or the ITT program director.

As one of the early institutions working with Trilogy on the Data Science Bootcamp, Rutgers engaged in extensive discussions on the framework and desired outcomes for the program. This included several changes to Trilogy’s original concept, including focusing on the overall field of Data Science (rather than analytics or “Big Data”) and, after consultation with a faculty member in Electrical and Computer Engineering, adding expanded visualization components. In

addition, the ITI program at SCI has expressed interest in providing ongoing program review in exchange for scholarships to select graduating seniors to provide a win-win scenario for students seeking employment in this field.

The Instructors

Bootcamps are taught by industry professionals with subject matter expertise in the programming languages covered in the programs. Trilogy recruits and proposes instructors for review and approval by Rutgers. As stated in the MOU 3.3:

TES will recruit instructors for the program subject to RU review and approval of any instructor, in any format, in any Program bearing the RU name or brand. Instructors will be hired as 'at will' employees for programs, and they will be subject to evaluation by RU before they will be selected for reappointment or receive new appointments.

The Students

Bootcamps are part of an open enrollment program; the only requirement is that applicants must be at least 18 years of age with a high school diploma or GED. A large percentage of those who apply are career changers, therefore there is no attempt to target any specific demographic or profession. Based on those reporting, of the participants in the Rutgers Bootcamps:

- about 50% have a bachelor's degree
- about 28% have high school diploma or GED
- about 16% have an associates degree
- about 16% have a graduate degree or graduate course work

These are primarily adult learners--more than 60% are over 30--and come from fairly diverse backgrounds. Of those who self-identified, more than 55% identified as a member of a minority group.

Cost

As stated in the MOU 5.3:

The Parties agree that the optimal price for the Program will be determined by mutual agreement between the Parties. Any amendment to the optimal price point will only be made if agreed upon in writing by both parties.

Currently, the Rutgers part-time program costs \$10,995 and the full-time program costs \$11,995. This seems to be in the lower-to-mid range of the partner institutions:

Georgia Tech: \$10,000

Northwestern: \$11,495
University of Pennsylvania: \$11,995 (Part time)
Columbia: \$12,995
Harvard: \$12,996
University of Pennsylvania: \$13,995 (Full time)

Revenues

Revenues are split between Rutgers Continuing Studies and Trilogy on a 50/50 basis. As indicated in MOU 6.2:

If the difference between revenues received and direct costs paid by TES exceeds 50% of contribution margin from the Program, RU-DOCS will invoice TES for the amount needed to ensure that 50% of Program contribution margin is received by RU-DOCS. That invoice will be paid by TES within 45 days. If the difference between revenues received and direct costs paid by RU-DOCS exceeds 50% of contribution margin of the Program, TES will invoice RU-DOCS for the amount needed to ensure that 50% of Program contribution margin is received by TES. That invoice will be paid by RU-DOCS within 45 days.

Certificate Programs at Rutgers

There are many certificate programs offered not just by Continuing Studies but by individual Schools, departments, and centers across Rutgers. They run the gambit from half day no-credit workshops to graduate certificate programs requiring a sequence of four full-term courses. Many are online programs, some are on-campus, some meet off-campus. Many are approved for Continuing Education (CE) hours by various agencies. For example, the Joint Accreditation Interprofessional Continuing Education council sets standards, reviews programs, and authorizes RBHS to offer CE programs. The Rutgers School of Social Work offers workshops for CE hours in accordance with the standards set by the New Jersey Board of Social Work Examiners and laid out in the New Jersey Administrative Code 13:44G-6. For departments and programs running non-CE credit certificate programs, there does not appear to be any official oversight. The Rutgers Continuing Education Coordinating Council (<https://cecc.rutgers.edu/>) offers information, updates, and opportunities for discussion for continuing education departments across the University, although it does not appear that many are taking advantage of that opportunity.

In many ways, the Rutgers Bootcamps seem to be model programs. They are designed to teach a particular set of vocational, technical skills that are currently in demand by employers. There is curricular review and input not only from Rutgers academic faculty, but from experts at other universities. Participation requires a significant number of contact hours. Classes meet in person. Instructors are industry professionals with subject matter expertise, and are interviewed, hired, and evaluated by the University.

The Rutgers Bootcamps could be considered as a “best practices” model for non-credit certificate programs at Rutgers. Indeed, the Committee considered making that a recommendation. However, the Bootcamps also appear to be unique in many ways. Trilogy’s role in creating the baseline bootcamps and bringing in the academic partners is clearly not the norm. And the intent, focus, and duration of Rutgers’ non-credit certificate programs varies so much that no one model can serve as the best example for all. They are, however, to be commended.

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