



**UNIVERSITY SENATE  
Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee**

**Report and Recommendation on Faculty Orientation Programs**

**1. THE CHARGE**

**S-0911 Faculty Orientation Programs:** Review new faculty orientation programs, including those for part-time lecturers, around the university. How can the process be improved? How do faculty know where and to whom to go for various services and guidance? Are there commonalities across all faculty hires which could be combined into one program/information book? Should there be different programs for tenured vs. nontenured new hires? Respond to Senate Executive Committee by February 2011.

**2. SUMMARY**

The Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee (FPAC) was asked to review the programs designed for orientation of new University faculty. A substantial obstacle that limits new hire access to the libraries, parking permits, Sakai for instructional purposes, and other critical areas is the time it takes to obtain a netID, which is not typically issued until the employee is on payroll. In addition, while information needed to build a new program is essentially available through department web pages and other venues, new faculty may be overwhelmed or frustrated navigating these pages in an effort to obtain the personal and work-related resources they need. Since the introduction of this charge, University Human Resources has taken steps to facilitate the orientation of faculty to the New Brunswick Campus. New faculty now have their netID and library access before arriving to campus. In addition, a new Sakai website was developed that consolidates information essential to building a new program at Rutgers. The "Gateway for New Faculty" contains links to pertinent sites and a secure discussion board to connect with peers. These efforts, as well as plans to enhance the gateway and examine how best to develop a virtual PTL welcome and orientation process, are presented in this report.

**3. REPORT**

The FPAC met and discussed the charge in two sessions, namely on 12/04/2009 and 9/24/2010. During these meetings, the committee heard from the author of the charge Leslie Fishbein, Senator from the School of Arts and Sciences, New Brunswick and member of the FPAC, and Vivian Fernández, Vice President for Faculty and Staff Resources. Ms. Fernández, although a committee member, is not a Senator.

**3.1. *Issue***

When introducing the charge to the FPAC, Senator Fishbein indicated that newly hired faculty face obstacles that limit their access to information that facilitates a smooth orientation process. Of primary concern is the time it takes for new hires to obtain a netID, which is needed for access to the

libraries, parking permits, Sakai, an e-mail address, and to other critical venues. In an e-mail to the FPAC, Senator Fishbein listed other improvements that might be made to facilitate the introduction of faculty hires to the University and their new positions. These include:

- 1) Some attempt to orient faculty members to the Rutgers University Libraries system and to explain what it has to offer, including Refworks.
- 2) Some attempt to make new faculty members aware of Sakai and other course management technology and the availability of the services of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching.
- 3) An immediate introduction to the requirements for Form 1a and a link to the suggestions currently on the New Brunswick Faculty Council web site: <http://nbfc.rutgers.edu/Form1.htm>
- 4) An attempt to supply all new faculty members with a mentor within their own department and another mentor outside of that department.
- 5) Some effort to have new faculty members engage socially/intellectually with one another and those working in related fields.
- 6) Improving technology so that faculty members could be more aware of those doing similar work and/or teaching elsewhere in the University.
- 7) Making new faculty members aware early on of opportunities at Rutgers like the Byrne seminars, the Aresty Research Center, etc.

### 3.II. Solutions to-date

Following introduction of the Charge in 2009, Vice President Fernández has since responded to the committee with steps taken by UHR (in collaboration with Academic Affairs and OIT) to facilitate the introduction of new faculty to the University, make them feel welcome, and ease their transition as they become members of the New Brunswick campus community. These steps include:

- 1) A Faculty Welcome Event was held on August 26, 2010. The goal of the event was to provide an opportunity for new faculty to hear from key campus leaders, and provide an opportunity to meet with various department representatives for everything from arranging for temporary parking privileges to health benefits. The event speakers included Phil Furmanski, Mike Pazzani, Don Smith, Barry Qualls, and Marianne Gaunt. UHR plans to continue this yearly welcoming event.
- 2) UHR developed a website for departments to enter new faculty hire information to allow for contact prior to campus arrival.
- 3) All new faculty member received a personalized email from Phil Furmanski inviting them to the New Faculty Welcome event, and advising them of future communications regarding NET ID.
- 4) All new faculty for which information was provided had a NET ID and Rutgers email in place on the day of the event.
- 5) NET ID and RUID stations were available at the event so that all attendees were able to secure all necessary prerequisites to access library privileges.
- 6) At the event, a new Sakai website consolidating new faculty hire information in a more intuitive manner was introduced (<https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal/site/GNF>). The new website –“Gateway for New Faculty” was developed as a result of feedback received from faculty and academic departments. While university departments, including UHR, offer extensive information on their web sites, the information may initially be overwhelming, and it is sometimes challenging to figure out what steps need to be taken, and which websites contain what resources.

The Gateway for New Faculty was created to facilitate finding this information by providing a collection of useful links. It is an easy-to-use tool featuring links to the most important sites new faculty will need when they first join Rutgers (e.g., personal and work resources, important Rutgers offices, resources for Rutgers students, the University Calendar, and news sources). It contains announcements relevant to new faculty, a secure discussion board to connect with peers, and the ability to expand programs which are interactive in nature. This site is a work in progress and is a first step in creating an intuitive and virtual guide to support faculty transition to Rutgers. UHR will rely on user feedback to continue to enhance the site. All event presentations were video taped and are posted to the website.

Future Plans include:

- 1) UHR plans to develop a process to connect and welcome new faculty upon position acceptance, which will include a series of staggered welcome messages, each focusing on a different aspect of the new faculty transition cycle including:
  - a. Introduction to the Gateway for New Faculty website;
  - b. Establishment of NETID, securing an RUID card, and library privileges prior to physical arrival to the campus;
  - c. Living in New Jersey;
  - d. Employee benefits;
  - e. Important contacts.
- 2) Establishment of an Advisory Committee to provide feedback for:
  - a. The development of a virtual new faculty welcome alternative for those who are unable to attend;
  - b. The development of a virtual PTL welcome and orientation process.
- 3) Explore ways in which to partner with the Camden and Newark campuses to deliver a structured, and to the greatest extent possible, uniform process for transitioning new faculty hires.

### *3.III. Recommendation*

The Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee, by unanimous consent, are satisfied with actions and plans made by the University Human Resources to improve the new faculty orientation process and are pleased to present this report. Although no substantive recommendation for policy change is made by the FPAC at this time, the committee would wish for UHR to consider, as part of future plans, orientation issues such as mentoring (departmental and school), introduction to the requirements for Form 1-a (see 3.I. Issue), and a mechanism for feedback (such as focus groups) from new faculty on the orientation process. No action by the University Senate is required.

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