

## Rutgers University Senate

### Report of the University Structure and Governance Committee on Charge S-1014: Review New Brunswick Student Senate Membership

**Charge:** As recommended in the Senate's February 2007 Partial Response on Charge S-0603, Senate Membership, New Brunswick, review the student-Senator distribution to evaluate whether it currently provides adequate representation and participation in governance for all populations of students in New Brunswick/Piscataway. Respond to Senate Executive Committee by April 2011.

**Background:** The University Structure and Governance Committee (USGC) was previously charged as follows:

**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.

The USGC concluded that the standard formula of one representative per 900 full-time-equivalent students should be applied to student senators for the new School of Arts and Sciences-New Brunswick (SAS). However, responding to sensitivities at the time, and noting that the SAS included many students who had been admitted by, and would graduate from, constituent schools and colleges, the USGC recommended transitional arrangements to ensure that the student senators elected included representatives from each of these constituent schools and colleges. The recommendations eventually adopted by the Senate were:

**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, subject to 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 an open, internal election by the Rutgers University Student Assembly, or at large across all campuses, as determined by the Student Assembly.

**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.

**Recommendation 3:** Changes to the University Senate bylaws on entitlements and election of New Brunswick faculty and students should be postponed.

The purpose of the current charge is to re-evaluate these recommendations.

**Considerations:** The USGC invited testimony from the president of the Rutgers University Student Assembly (RUSA), and from the former RUSA election chair. It received written testimony, and was advised of current RUSA arrangements by several student senators who are members of the USGC. It was apparent that RUSA election arrangements had never explicitly sought to follow Recommendation 1 above, and do not currently do so. However, these arrangements were transitional, and the USGC does not consider there are strong reasons to continue them at this time. There was, however, some debate as to whether the potentially different needs of non-traditional students should make them an exception to this. The prevailing view was that the needs of non-traditional students could be properly represented even by students who were not themselves non-traditional, and that although it would be acceptable to draw attention to the need for this to be borne in mind, it would not be appropriate for the Senate to legislate different arrangements for any sub-group within the SAS. Following several discussions over the course of three meetings, the conclusions reached by the USGC were:

- The total number of student senators should continue to be determined using the formula of one representative per 900 full-time-equivalent students, as defined in the Senate Bylaws.
- It is no longer necessary or appropriate for the Senate to impose requirements on the composition of the group of student senators representing the SAS.
- It is not appropriate for the Senate to legislate which student body is responsible for election of student senators to represent the SAS. In the case of other groups of student representatives, the Senate has not legislated which groups or bodies are responsible for elections. The Executive Secretary of the Senate notifies deans of their entitlements for both faculty and student Senate representatives, and the deans are responsible for ensuring that elections take place. Consistent with this, the USGC concluded that the Senate should not continue to identify specifically which student body is responsible for student elections of senators within the SAS, but that this is an internal matter for the SAS.

**Recommendation:** The University Structure and Governance Committee recommends adoption of the following resolution by the University Senate:

**Be it resolved that:**

1. The total number of SAS student senators should be determined using the existing formula of one representative per 900 full-time-equivalent students, as defined in the Senate Bylaws.
2. Consistent with practice for other units, the executive dean of the SAS should be advised of the total entitlement for SAS student senators, and should make appropriate election arrangements with students. In doing so, the executive dean should bear in mind the importance of ensuring that the needs of non-traditional students are appropriately represented by the senators elected.

**University Structure and Governance Committee, 2010–2011**

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