

Rutgers University Senate
Instruction, Curricula, and Advising Committee

S-1911: White-Labeling: Consider whether or not it would be appropriate for Rutgers to have a policy on white-labeling. Respond to the Senate Executive Committee by November 2019.

“White-Labeling,” purchasing a generic product and repackaging it so as to brand it as your own, is generally associated with supermarkets and big box stores. So Stop and Shop sells products under the “Nature’s Promise” house brand, while Costco uses “Kirkland Signature” as their private label. While associated primarily with grocery products, white-labeling is now being used in a variety of industries, up to and including software and products associated with financial institutions.

At Rutgers, concern was raised about the possibility of white-labeling as a result of an essay published as part of an Inside Higher Education blog (<https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/confessions-community-college-dean/white-labeling>) that expressed concern about the possibility of educational institutions ‘white-labeling’ courses actually being created and taught by outside providers. The essay quoted—apparently out of context—Richard Novak, Rutgers Vice President for Continuing Studies and Distance Education, implying that Rutgers was engaged in white-labeling.

At issue is the arrangement that Rutgers, through the Division of Continuing Studies, has 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. Currently, Rutgers Continuing Studies is offering two such bootcamps in conjunction with Trilogy: a Coding Bootcamp (<https://bootcamp.rutgers.edu/coding/>), and a Data Science Bootcamp (<https://bootcamp.rutgers.edu/data/>). These are non-credit certificate programs.

When issued this charge, the Instruction, Curricula, and Advising Committee (ICA) already had a related charge, S-1807: Rutgers Bootcamps, pending. In dealing with that charge, ICA looked at various aspects of Rutgers Bootcamps, and found it to be an impressive program that could serve as a “best practices” model for non-credit certificate programs at Rutgers. Nor does it fit within any definition of “white-labeling.” Rutgers has significant input and control over various aspects of the program, including the curriculum. A relationship to Trilogy is indicated on Rutgers and other partner institutions bootcamp websites.





This Boot Camp is offered through
Columbia Engineering: <https://engineering.columbia.edu/>

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This program is offered through Georgia Tech Professional
Education <https://pe.gatech.edu/>

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The Coding Boot Camp at Harvard Extension School Provided by Trilogy Education Services

The Committee has found no evidence of white-labeling at Rutgers. We have not been able to identify any other institution of higher learning that has developed a white-labeling policy. Therefore, we see no need for a specific policy at this time.