

Report of the University Structure and Governance Committee (USGC) on Charge S-1904

Charge S-1904: Review of Proposed Resolution on Rutgers' Faculty Councils Inclusion in the University Policy Library: Consider and recommend appropriate policy changes relating to the role and status of Faculty Councils at Rutgers.

Background

Shared governance at Rutgers has evolved over the latter half of the twentieth century from a Faculty Senate in 1950, to include at present faculty (full- and part-time, tenured and non-tenured), administrators, students, alumni, and staff. These are the current constituencies that comprise today's Rutgers University Senate. The Senate is the duly recognized shared governance body that represents all our major campuses. The Senate is a robust and dynamic body that considers issues of broad educational impact and advises the university president on issues that the Senate deems to be of relevance to the entire institution. While the Senate investigates issues of importance to the entire university, each campus has its own unique culture, and thus its own issues. The individual campuses informally developed further shared governance with the creation of Faculty Councils specific to each of them (though with varying names). However, while the University Senate is codified in University Policy 50.2, the Faculty Councils have no such official standing. The faculty members of the university have a unique and critical role in the life of Rutgers and should have the legitimacy found in being a part of the University regulations and policies.

Considerations

The chairs of the various Faculty Councils have asked the Senate to recommend their inclusion in the University Policy Library. The chairs of the Faculty Councils on each campus (Rutgers – Camden, Rutgers – Newark, Rutgers – New Brunswick, and Rutgers – RBHS) have worked together to affirm that the Faculty Councils have a key role in campus shared governance and should have the legitimacy indicated by inclusion in the policy library. The chairs have communicated and harmonized their roles on each campus so that a consistent policy on each campus enables a uniformity of representation. They state:



“We, the Chairs of the four Rutgers Faculty Councils, ask the University Senate to consider supporting our request that the following subsection be added to section 50 of the University Policy Library in order to provide official University recognition to the Faculty Councils.”

They further state:

- A. The Faculty Councils of Rutgers University – New Brunswick, Rutgers University – Newark, Rutgers University – Camden, and Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS) are shared governance bodies at the Chancellor level. All the Councils consist of faculty members elected by faculty.*
- B. Each Council operates under By-Laws that specify, among other things, the Council’s role, purposes, powers, membership, modes of election, governance, and fundamental procedures. Each Council’s By-Laws also specify the procedure for amending those by-laws.*
- C. Each Council provides advice and recommendations to the Chancellor on a wide variety of matters of concern to faculty and is the principal officially designated faculty body from which the Chancellor seeks advice on such matters.*
- D. Each Council also performs such other functions as are set out in its by-laws.*
- E. The Chancellors shall provide each Council with the access, information, cooperation, and resources necessary for it to fulfill its responsibilities.*
- F. The Faculty Councils complement rather than supplant faculty governance bodies of individual units, the University Senate, and other standing and ad hoc advisory committees established by the Rutgers administration, the University Senate, and other authorities. Each Faculty Council Chair or designee serves as a liaison to the University Senate and reports on Council activities at Senate meetings.*

They provide the following as their rationale:

The four Faculty Councils: Camden, Newark, New Brunswick, and RBHS, form an important part of shared governance at Rutgers University:

- Each Faculty Council is the principal officially designated faculty body from which the given Chancellor seeks and receives advice and recommendations on matters of concern to the faculty.*
- Since the Senate, the principal shared governance body on the presidential level, includes student, staff, and administrative representatives, in addition to faculty, the Faculty Councils are the highest-level elected faculty-only governance bodies in the University. As such, the Councils can provide unique faculty perspectives on issues of interest to the Rutgers community.*
- The Faculty Councils work cooperatively with the University Senate. Council Chairs or their designees serve as liaisons to the Senate and report on Council activities at Senate meetings. A number of Faculty Council members are also very active members of the Senate. Individual Faculty Councils may refer issues of University-wide interest to the Senate for consideration while the Senate may refer issues of more local interest to the appropriate Faculty Council. Given the importance of the Faculty Councils to shared governance at Rutgers, we argue that the existence and roles of the Councils should be recognized by the Rutgers Central Administration and Board of Governors via inclusion in the University Policy Library.*

From the beginning of its discussions, the University Structure and Governance Committee (USGC) has been sympathetic to the view that, in contrast to the Senate's position, Faculty Councils are weakened by the absence of any formal requirement at the University that they exist, or official expression of their rights and duties as regards advising the Chancellors of their respective campuses. In practice, of course, they do exist; and they do advise their Chancellors. As the campuses have exercised increasing degrees of autonomy in recent times, the relevance of local advice from informed members of the community with relevant experience and expertise relating to the issues arising and the circumstances in which they do so, has seemed ever more pertinent. At the same time, it is important to be able to recognize when issues arising on one campus need to be addressed across the university—sometimes, though not always, in a consistent manner. An enhanced role for Faculty Councils, then, should not in any way diminish the value of the Rutgers University Senate as “the sole institution that represents the entire community of faculty, students, staff, administrators and alumni to the president of Rutgers University (hereinafter referred to as “the president”) and to its Board of Governors (see Preamble, Handbook of the Rutgers University Senate).” Recommendations from the Rutgers University Senate are not limited to matters that must be acted upon by the central administration of the University, and are often passed on by the President to the Chancellors for action on their campuses as required.

In this regard, it should be noted also that while the Faculty Councils have the advantages that accrue from their members (along with their experience and expertise), the issues they address, the solutions they devise, and the administrations they advise, all being relevant primarily to the campus in question, unlike the Rutgers University Senate they speak for the faculty alone.

The USGC views the Faculty Councils as partners in shared governance at Rutgers, along with the many student governance associations, and with shared governance in various forms at school and departmental levels. Just as some issues may be best addressed at campus level, so also some issues pertain primarily to faculty or to student concerns, and may be addressed most directly and most effectively by Faculty Councils or student governing associations. While the Rutgers University Senate should maintain its position as the senior body for shared governance at Rutgers, it is not the case that all issues are most effectively resolved by bringing them to the Senate.

In considering this charge, the USGC resolved early on that it supported the request from the Faculty Councils, and discussion focused on how this should best be done, what ancillary questions this raised, and how they should be resolved. Some of the questions considered include:

- Should Faculty Councils be added to the existing policy (50.2) that establishes the Rutgers University Senate, or added as a separate policy?
- Policy 50.2 not only establishes the Senate, but also defines its membership, voting rights, and membership terms; creates its officers and Executive Committee; and lays down its Duties, Powers, and Procedures—if Faculty Councils are to be established by this (or a similar) policy, should such matters (including membership eligibility, requirements for members to be elected, etc.) be similarly defined, or should they be left to the individual Faculty Councils themselves? At present, these bodies are constituted under their own Bylaws in considerably different ways.
- If Faculty Councils are established by University Policy, should such a policy also specify their responsibilities in relation to advising Chancellors, as policy 50.2 does for the Senate with regard to advising the president and the Board of Governors?
- If four Faculty Councils are established by University Policy, should such a policy also address communication and collaboration between them?
- What should be included in such a policy with regard to the relationship, if any, between the Faculty Councils and the Rutgers University Senate?
- How can we best ensure that recommendations from the Rutgers University Senate are effective in raising the status and enhancing the value of the Faculty Councils, without being perceived as diminishing the authority and relevance of the Senate?

Several members of various Faculty Councils, including two who were involved in drafting their original request to the Senate, are members of the USGC, and argued for a light touch, essentially hewing closely to the text originally proposed by the Faculty Councils, and avoiding attempts to impose consistency or unanimity on bodies that had already evolved in ways that suited the circumstances on the different campuses, or placing any additional requirements on them. The view expressed was that each Faculty Council should be able to decide on its own structure and write its own Bylaws.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Rutgers University Senate recommends

1. that a new policy 50.5 be created, with the name “Faculty Councils,” in the University Policy Library, and a statement of policy: “The Faculty Councils of Camden, Newark, New Brunswick and RBHS are campus-wide shared governance bodies consisting of representatives of Rutgers faculty on each of the four major geographic campuses. The Faculty Councils meet on their respective campuses to consider matters of general campus interest, and to make recommendations to the responsible Chancellor.”
2. that each Faculty Council operate under Bylaws that specify that Council’s role, purpose, powers, membership, modes of election, governance, and fundamental procedures and processes for amendments; these Bylaws shall be consistent with this and other provisions of the University Policy Library.
3. that the chairs of the Faculty Councils from Rutgers – Camden, Rutgers – Newark, Rutgers – New Brunswick, and Rutgers – RBHS shall meet regularly with the Senate chair to exchange information and collaborate when appropriate to provide advice to the President of the University.
4. that, if approved by the Senate, policy 50.5 shall include the following:

50.5 Membership and Organization of the Campus Faculty Councils

A. DEFINITIONS

- a. The campus Faculty Councils play an important role in the life and vibrancy of each campus. Each Faculty Council is designed to work with their individual Chancellor on each campus. The Faculty Councils will act locally on their campus in areas and issues of faculty and educational affairs. They will advise the University Senate in the Senate’s role as the shared governance body of the university.
- b. The term "faculty member" as used with respect to eligibility to vote for a representative and/or to be elected to the Campus Faculty Council shall refer to full-time faculty and part-time faculty members of that campus as defined in Section 60.5.2 A and B, and Section 50.2.1 of the University Policy Library, respectively.

B. MEMBERSHIP AND PROCEDURES

- a. The voting members of the campus Faculty Councils shall be the faculty elected by and from the faculty members of the faculties, colleges, and schools, on each campus.

- b. Each Faculty Council operates under Bylaws that specify that Council's role, purpose, powers, membership, modes of election, governance, and fundamental procedures and processes for amendments; these Bylaws shall be consistent with this and other provisions in the University Policy Library.
- c. The Chancellors and Provosts of Rutgers Camden, Rutgers – Newark, Rutgers – New Brunswick, and Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences, shall be *ex-officio* members of their respective campus Faculty Council.

C. OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- a. The elected officers of the campus Faculty Council shall be determined by the Bylaws of each council.

D. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Each campus Faculty Council shall concern itself with all academic and non-academic matters pertaining to the mission of its respective campus. The campus Faculty Council shall advise the Chancellor of that campus on matters of broad educational and research policy.
- b. Each Council provides advice and recommendations to the Chancellor on a wide variety of matters of concern to faculty and is the principal officially designated faculty body from which the Chancellor seeks advice on such matters.
- c. The Faculty Councils shall through their chairs advise the Rutgers University Senate on issues that span more than one campus.
- d. Each Council also performs such other functions as are set out in its Bylaws.



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