

Executive Committee

A G E N D A

March 4, 2022 – 12:00 noon

<https://rutgers.zoom.us/j/98742479183?pwd=bTJPKytBRG9LQXZ6R2prU2k3NnlwZz09&from=addon>

Chair's Report– Jon Oliver, Senate Chair

Secretary's Report– Morgan Smith, Senate Interim Executive Secretary

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of the [February 4, 2022 Senate Executive Committee Minutes](#)

Administrative Report– Prabhas Moghe, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Discussion about NB Academic Master Plan – New Brunswick Chancellor-Provost Francine Conway

Standing Committees/Panels

Issues/Proposed Charges:

Proposed Charge to University Structure and Governance Committee (USGC) on Honors College Student Senators – Submitted by Senator Brian Everett, Camden (Staff)

***Charge:** Investigate and recommend how Honors College Students from each campus can best be represented in the Senate. The creation of the Honors Colleges on each campus has created a new unit and community that students live, learn and participate in within the University. Student entitlements to the Senate are based on their academic association and Honors College Students can participate based on those associations if elected via their student governing associations. However, since student Senators are not specifically elected from the Honors College they may not be able to properly represent the needs of the Honors College community.*

Background: Honors Colleges are often tasked with recruiting and retaining a university's highest achieving students. Such students are often the most likely to apply for fellowships and related academic prizes. We should allow each campus' Honors College to elect its own student senator in order to advocate for needs and values important to them. Additionally, some honors college populations at Rutgers rival or exceed academic units who receive faculty and student representation in the senate. In Camden, Honors College students often dominate SGA and senate elections, so providing a unique senate role for honors college students would encourage participation in shared governance by non-honors college students.

Proposed Charge to Academic Standards, Regulations and Admissions Committee (ASRAC) on Examining the Efficacy of the GRE: Should Rutgers Join the #GRExit –
Submitted by Senator Ashley Bernstein, SGS-NB (Student)

Charge: *Examine the effectiveness of the Graduate Records Examination (GRE) and its impact on Rutgers University's graduate programs. Determine whether the GRE should be removed or significantly de-emphasized from Rutgers' graduate admissions requirements.*

Background: The Graduate Records Examinations (GRE) is required or recommended in order to apply to many graduate programs at Rutgers University as well as other universities around the country. The exam is often touted as being a good predictor of graduate student success, however years of research shows that is not the case. The exam does not predict graduate school success and is actively discriminatory towards many groups of students, including but not limited to female-identifying individuals, ethnic minorities, socioeconomically disadvantaged students, and disabled students. The time, money, and resources required to do well on the exam, as well as the ability to sit for the exam, are all detrimental and can be a deterrent to potential applicants. The only literature that shows positive correlation with the exam is sponsored by the ETS, the company that administers the GRE, and thus is extremely biased.

Furthermore, the GRE does not test for the skills actually necessary for doing well in graduate school. The ability to think critically, plan for experiments, write and prepare papers and figures, find and evaluate sources, and do literature searches are all skills that cannot be tested on a timed exam but are more likely to assist in earning a degree than memorizing some vocabulary words. For degree areas that math is useful for, the quantitative section is well below the level actually needed, and it is completely unnecessary for degree areas that do not regularly utilize math. The format of the questions is unique to the exam, thus requiring the taker to study and learn how to take the GRE for the test and the test only. This studying has no benefit to any endeavor, past or future, other than taking the exam.

The GRE/ETS shows its business-forward for-profit model clearly. While you can send scores for free on the day of the test to up to four schools, there's a \$27 fee for sending scores to any other institutions or on any other day. However there are several issues with this. First, students aren't encouraged to bring the necessary information for these schools into the testing room. When taking the test in 2016 I needed to beg to leave the room to call the schools to get the information I needed. Secondly, Students usually take the exam several months prior to actually applying to schools. That means they could use a send-scores-for-free slot up on a school to which they don't end up applying. And finally, Students that don't send scores on the day of can use a program called "scoreselect" which allows them to control what exam results are sent to specific universities. This means that students that can pay the \$27/school fee without worry are in more control of how their application is seen, privileging the wealthy again over the socioeconomically disadvantaged.

Rutgers University and President Holloway are both committed to increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion and thus access to education at Rutgers. Requiring an exam that is counter to this is actively detrimental to the “beloved community” at Rutgers.

Proposed Charge to the Executive Committee – Submitted by Senators Sanjib Bhuyan SEBS (F), Anna Haley SSW (F), William Field SAS-NB (F), Tugrul Ozel Engineering (F)

Charge: *Explore the impact of CourseAtlas to benchmark institutional goals of the system, on academic units and departments, on faculty work-life balance, and make recommendations as appropriate.*

Specifically, (i) Investigate to what degree CourseAtlas has achieved the goals it was designed and implemented to achieve, (ii) explore the impact of CourseAtlas on academic units and departments’ ability to manage their own academic programs, (iii) assess the impact of CourseAtlas on the work-life balance of faculty, and (iv) propose feedback mechanisms which allow timely and meaningful faculty input on scheduling changes.

Background: Rutgers University has implemented a new course scheduling software called CourseAtlas (aka Infosilem) since the 2019-20 AY. There have been growing complaints and concerns regarding how CourseAtlas has negatively impacted academic departments’ ability to manage the schedule of courses as well as how this new system has impacted faculty work-life balance, among other things. Faculty senators from RU-NB, RU-Newark, and RU-Camden (RBHS does not use CourseAtlas) have continued to raise questions and express concerns about CourseAtlas, particularly whether this new system has achieved the goals it was set to achieve.

According to the Rutgers-NB Office of Academic Scheduling and Instructional Space (note that CourseAtlas was initiated at RU-NB), CourseAtlas was initiated and implemented to: “modernize[s] our course scheduling by collecting detailed course information, program curricula, classroom inventory, faculty/instructor availability, and projected student enrollment to build course schedules that best fit the needs of our students, faculty, departments, and programs. CourseAtlas will enhance our students' opportunities to take the classes they need when they need them.”

(Source: <https://scheduling.rutgers.edu/courseatlas>; accessed on January 21, 2022).

Based on the information available on the above website, the specific goals of CourseAtlas were as follows:

1. Reduce bottlenecks and course conflicts that impact our students’ time-to-degree;
2. Decrease unnecessary course-related student travel, enabling our students to spend their time in class or studying, as opposed to on the buses;
3. Facilitate curricular planning by schools and departments, ensuring they can offer the courses they require in the appropriate sizes and in the appropriate classrooms;

4. Manage school and University enrollments by enabling growth in disciplines and areas where there is higher student demand;
5. Enable better institutional planning of instructional spaces to ensure our faculty and students are teaching and learning in high-quality classrooms.

Committee Reports:

Discussion of RBHS Faculty Statement on Joint Chairs – Senator Laura Willett, RWJMS (F)

University Structure and Governance Committee (USGC) [Response to S-2112 Free speech Issues at Rutgers and the University Senate's Role](#)

The USGC was charged as follows: Consider the most effective mechanism to enable the University Senate to provide the administration with feedback and advice from the Rutgers University community relating to statement, policy, and implementation on matters of free speech. Look at peer best practices. Make any appropriate recommendations.

University Structure and Governance Committee (USGC) [Response to S-2018 – Senate Procedures for Debate, Amendment and Voting](#)

The USGC was charged as follows: Investigate and make any appropriate recommendations with regard to changes in Senate procedures for debate, amendment, and voting that might improve their efficiency and effectiveness without unduly restricting their democratic nature.

University Structure and Governance Committee (USGC) [Response to S-2019 – Review the Senate's Relationship with the Rutgers Governing Boards](#)

The USGC was charged as follows: Consider and recommend appropriate communication pathways and relationships between the University Senate and Governing Boards of Rutgers. Recommend policy changes, if any, for improved robust communication and input.

Academic Standards, Regulations and Admissions Committee (ASRAC) [Response to S-2101 Units of Credit](#)

The ASRAC was charged as follows: Determine the current viability of University Policy 10.2.4, Section B - Units of Credit and propose changes as appropriate to make the definition consistent with its use in current practice.

Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee (FPAC) [Response to S-1909-1 Search for University Leadership](#)

The FPAC was charged as follows: *Investigate the processes, including those used by the Big 10 and AAU Institutions, to identify senior leaders and recommend best practices at Rutgers.*

Academic Standards, Regulations and Admissions Committee (ASRAC) [Response to S-2012 Procedures Handling Student Complaints Against Rutgers Personnel Regarding Instruction](#)

The ASRAC was charged as follows: *Investigate the procedure for reporting and adjudicating student complaints against Rutgers Personnel, specifically in regard to course instruction and/or concerns about faculty.*

Appointment of Co-Chair to SAC

Discussion of Time Limits

Time Extension Requests from SAC and FPAC - Charge S-2115 Academic Freedom

Old Business

New Business

University Senate March 25, 2022 Agenda

- Regular Senate Meeting via Zoom
- Administrative Report Given by President Jonathan Holloway
- New Brunswick Chancellor Presentation by Francine Conway
- Rutgers Alumni Association Presentation

Adjournment