

UNIVERSITY SENATE
Executive Committee

A G E N D A

October 8, 2021 – 12:00 noon

1. **Chair’s Report**– Jon Oliver, Senate Chair

2. **Secretary’s Report**– Morgan Smith, Interim Senate Executive Secretary

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of the [September 10, 2021 Senate Executive Committee Meeting Minutes](#)
- Student elections have been moved to the October Senate meeting
- Communications:
 - African American Policy Forum Resolution on “Defending Academic Freedom to Teach Race and Gender Justice and Critical Race Theory.”
 - President Holloway’s [Response](#) to the Executive Committee Resolution on Mandatory Vaccinations
 - The following policies have been updated/added in the University Policy Library:
 - [University Policy 60.1.34: Rutgers University Disability and Reasonable Accommodation Policy](#)

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

4. **Standing Committees/Panels**

Issues/Proposed Charges:

Proposed Charge to the Faculty and Personnel Committee (FPAC) on Academic Freedom –
Submitted by Robert Boikess, SAS-NB (F)

***Charge:** Identify and investigate recent attacks on the academic freedom of our faculty and students with a particular focus on the University’s response to these attacks*

Background: In recent years there has been an increase in politically motivated attacks on faculty and students that are violations of their academic freedom rights. These attacks, which are international in scope, have been coming primarily from right wing groups and autocratic governments. What academic freedom is and is not is explained in this article by Cary Nelson, a former National President of AAUP. (<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2010/12/21/defining-academic-freedom>). Of course, academic freedom must be defended regardless of the origin of the attacks.

A member of our faculty, Professor Audrey Truschke of the Newark History department, has been the target of such attacks for more than five years in the form of violent threats

to her and her family. The attacks have been so serious and so persistent that she is often accompanied by armed security guards when she presents her scholarship in public. Professor Truschke studies medieval Indian history and apparently the facts of her studies are inconsistent with the narrative being promulgated by a right-wing Hindu nationalistic ideology known as Hindutva.

In the last six months these attacks have escalated in a number of ways. She is a defendant in a lawsuit filed by a right-wing Hindu group in the U.S. challenging much of her scholarly narrative. Another faculty member at Rutgers has recently experienced suppression of her right to present her scholarship.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_utK6JqPji8 Not surprisingly, faculty in related fields at Rutgers have rallied to support Professor Truschke. Thirteen South Asian descent signatories of a letter of support for her have recently been the targets of telephoned death threats.

When the attack on Professor Truschke's academic freedom became public knowledge this past March, the University issued a strong public statement of support for her. (<https://thewire.in/rights/audrey-truschke-and-the-blitzkrieg-from-the-hindu-right>) Three days later it issued an apology to the Hindu community for any hurt that statement might have caused. This apology was reported with great approval by the Hindu nationalist media. (<https://www.opindia.com/2021/03/rutgers-university-issues-second-statement-hindu-students-audrey-truschke>) Since March, despite the escalation of the attacks on Professor Truschke and other members of the Rutgers Faculty, the University has not expressed any public support for her. Quite the contrary. The University has an indemnification policy in place to protect and defend faculty members who are defendants in lawsuits arising from their scholarship, teaching, or service at Rutgers. Since some of what Professor Truschke said is on social media (a platform recommended by the American Historical Society for dissemination of scholarship), the Office of General Council has ruled that what she was expressing were her personal opinions and therefore Rutgers will not indemnify her.

5. New Business

6. University Senate October 22, 2021 Agenda

- Regular Senate Meeting
- Election of Student Senators:
 - Executive Committee
 - Board Representatives

7. Adjournment