

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY SENATE  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
M I N U T E S  
October 8, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Boikess, Foster, Gillett, Giraud, Oliver (Chair), Schwartz, Simonds, Struble, Thompson, White, Willett

ALSO ATTENDING: P. Moghe (EVP Academic Affairs)

The regular meeting of the University Senate Executive Committee was held on Friday, October 8, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. remotely via Zoom.

1. Chairs Report – Jon Oliver, Senate Chair

Senate and Executive Committee Chair Jon Oliver called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. He thanked everyone for being there and for being patient as he fills in as the Interim Executive Secretary because Morgan Smith is out. Chair Oliver then expressed the importance of the Ad Hoc committees continuing their work.

2. Secretary's Report – Morgan Smith, Interim Executive Secretary

- The October 8, 2021 meeting agenda was approved with the following addition:
  - Discussion of the Joint Chair's issue
- The September 10, 2021 Senate Executive Committee Meeting Minutes were approved
- 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

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Prabhas Moghe presented an administrative report, which included comments on:

- The dedication of the Academic Success Center and the Behavioral Health Center,
- Mark Robson to Deliver [Daniel Goldstein Memorial Award Lecture](#),
- Details on [commencement](#) for all schools,
- President Holloway's official inauguration on November 5,

- The Climate Action Plan and the initiative for the University to be carbon neutral by 2040 including the implementation of a Climate Action Office,
- The Board of Governors officially remove alumni Joseph Bradley from Bradley Hall in Rutgers Newark,
- [Partnership](#) with NYU for 12 million dollars to advance research on cardiometabolic disease and mental health of Asian adults,
- Strategic planning and investment in faculty diversity,
- Recognition for the New Tenured Track Faculty and details on the promotion rates among faculty as well
- The PTL engagement and [support](#) project

He then answered questions on the following topics:

- The plans on evaluating teaching effectiveness
- Clinical faculty promotions
- Vaccination rate data
- Issues behind non-tenured track RBHS Faculty promotions

#### 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 any 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](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.

The charge was discussed, and it was voted that "any" be added to the charge language. It now states: *"Identify and investigate any recent attacks on the academic freedom of our faculty and students with a particular focus on the University's response to these attacks."*

*The Executive Committee went over this amended proposed charge and it was decided that it will be assigned to FPAC with a due date of March 2022, and suggested they work in tandem with SAC with a due date of January 2022.*

#### 5. New Business:

The Executive Committee briefly discussed the topic on the appointment of Joint Chairs in NJMS and it was decided that Chair Oliver will reach out to Brian Strom to discuss it further at the December EC meeting.

It was also decided that the November 5<sup>th</sup> EC meeting be moved to November 4<sup>th</sup> because of President Holloway's inauguration.

#### 6. University Senate October 22, 2021 Agenda

- Regular Senate Meeting

- Election of Senators
- Chair Oliver will reach out and see who will deliver the Administrative Report

## 7. Adjournment

The Executive Committee adjourned at 2:01 pm