A non-RBHS senator asked the RBHS Faculty Council to look into faculty reaction to joint chairs for departments at both medical schools.  Laura Willett and Larry Frohman were assigned by the RBHS Faculty Council to ask available faculty in impacted departments to give their feedback.  This is a brief summary:

There are five departments with "joint chairs" of different varieties between the medical schools:  Neurology, Pathology, Radiation Oncology, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry.  The experience of Neurology and Pathology has been longest-lasting and most typical, and should best inform decisions about future joint chairs going forward.

Radiation Oncology had a joint chair prior to Dr. Strom's arrival.  According to the NJMS website, there are only 2 radiation oncology clinicians located at Newark, so they may not have had a "critical mass" for a separate department at that site.  The Neurosurgery department currently seems to be in major trouble - about 50% of the faculty have left (with major clinical impact); no one at New Brunswick was willing to talk about the chair; and the chair has recently been placed on administrative leave.  The Psychiatry "super chair" has been recently appointed, and the faculty said that the situation is too new for them to comment upon intelligently.

The feedback from faculty in Neurology and Pathology at both schools is extremely similar.  Both long-term joint chairs, Drs. Liu and Dhib-Jalbut, have been really well-liked by the faculty, so negative comments were aimed at the joint chair situation itself rather than the individual.  The disadvantages were seen as:  the difficulty of the chair learning the curveballs of two (or three, with University Hospital) very different systems; very divided attention to the sites by the chair; the perceived necessity for a high-level delegate at both sites; and long commute time in order for the chair to have requisite face-time at both sites.  This situation is the source of one NJMS Faculty member bemoaning that even pre-pandemic, the joint chair was only in Newark about two days per month, impacting communication and the benefits of the chair’s leadership. The advantages of collaboration could easily be accomplished without a joint chair or joint departments.  These advantages included research collaborations and sharing of educational resources, particularly in the Zoom age.