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November 30, 2023

Vicki L. Hewitt, Ed.D.
University Senate
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
335 George Street, Suite 1250
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Dear Dr. Hewitt,

I write in response to University Senate Charge S-2019: Review the Senate's Relationship with the Rutgers Governing Boards. Thank you to the members of the University Structure and Governance Committee for sharing their feedback on a topic so important to the success of our university.

In the report and accompanying resolution, the University Structure and Governance Committee articulately set forth the foundational elements of shared governance, noting that it is, indeed, "a bedrock of American higher education." I couldn't agree more.

The Resolution included with the report reiterates the importance of shared governance at Rutgers and asks the Board of Governors and Board of Trustees to commit to two actions:

- 1) Open membership on all Board committees, with limited reasonable exceptions, to the Senate representatives to the Boards; and
- 2) Reaffirm the right of Senate and student representatives to participate fully in the work and deliberations of the Boards and Board committees with a voice, on par with the members of the Boards.

While I cannot speak for the Board of Governors or the Board of Trustees, or make commitments on their behalf, I can tell you that both governing boards have a strong tradition of upholding the principles of shared governance.

Even before the enactment of the Act of 1956 that designated Rutgers as the State University of New Jersey, our university practiced shared governance with faculty councils for each of the schools and two university-wide bodies: the University Assembly and the University Senate. The University Assembly—composed of university and college officers, officers of the administration, and members of the administrative, teaching, research, extension and professional library staffs of the colleges, schools, and independent branches of the university above the rank of instructor—was called upon by the president or 25 members of that body as needed to discuss and give voice on matters of vital importance to the university. The University Senate (composed of delegates elected by and from the faculties of the colleges, schools, and divisions of the university) was a more traditional faculty organization with the ability to exercise supervision over certain academic matters

and act in an advisory capacity on matters of concern to the University. The University Senate has grown over the years to become more inclusive of the many constituencies at the university, and its advisory role has remained a strong and respected aspect of shared governance here at Rutgers.

One such way the University Senate provides advice is through its representatives on each of the governing boards, a tradition that has served Rutgers well since 1971. In the Spring of 1969, as the university tackled the benefits and drawbacks of increasing enrollment numbers and expanding academic offerings, the chair of the Board of Governors and the chair of the Board of Trustees jointly appointed a Special Committee on the Organizational Structure of the University. The committee considered numerous issues of the time, including the expansion of the Camden and Newark campuses, the efficiency and effectiveness of the central administration, and the criticism that faculty and students did not have a voice on the governing boards. Given the distinct nature of the Act of 1956, which clearly spelled out the parameters of the voting membership on each board, the Special Committee recommended that faculty and student members of the University Senate be appointed by the Senate to each of the governing boards, to serve one-year terms as representatives with a voice at board meetings, but not a vote. This recommendation, as adopted by the Board of Trustees on January 29, 1971, and by the Board of Governors on April 8, 1971, further solidifying the boards' commitment to shared governance. On April 14, 1972, the Board of Governors voted to approve including the Senate representatives of both boards on its committees to further provide the university community's voice during board deliberations.

The Board of Trustees further proved its commitment to shared governance by giving students a voice and a vote on its board, as full members. Unlike the Board of Governors, the Board of Trustees is a self-perpetuating board that chooses the majority of its membership. In response to sentiment that students should be given the vote on the university's governing boards, the Board of Trustees, on June 14, 1991, voted to designate three of its Charter Trustee seats to students, providing them with not just a voice on the Board, but a full six-year term and a vote. At the time, the Nominating Committee accepted student nominations from within the University Senate. Today, the Nominating Committee of the Board of Trustees accepts nominations for Student Charter Trustees from within the university, allowing for self-nominations of interested students and broadening the reach and influence of these important seats at the board table.

I agree with the University Structure and Governance Committee that the Senate representatives play an important role in shared governance at Rutgers and would include the Student Charter Trustees as well. We value the perspective they bring to different board and committee meetings, their informal interactions with individual board members, and the role they play in conveying the perspectives of the University Senate and the student body to the governing boards. Senate representatives are assigned to board committees at the discretion of the Chair, with an eye toward fulfilling the fiduciary duty of the Board and the need for subject-matter expertise on committees. Rutgers' faculty and students have a unique perspective on the academic and student life of the university and, therefore, they are often assigned to the Committee on Academic and Student Affairs where that perspective is vital, but Senate representatives have served, and do serve, on other committees of the Board as well, such as the Committee on Finance and Facilities and the Committee on Audit.

I will also highlight that Senate representatives to the boards are encouraged to engage with board members and the administration during board and committee deliberations, and they have in fact been active participants in discussions at meetings. EVPAA Moghe recently shared with me that Mr. Piazza, Chair of the Committee on Academic and Student Affairs, remarked after the last Committee on Academic and Student Affairs meeting that he was excited about the dialogue that took place between the Senate representatives and the board members on a number of issues. I believe this is strong evidence of the culture of collegiality and civility that the University Structure and Governance Committee referenced, and I have every expectation that this will continue to be the environment in which we work together toward our common goals.

I hope this information conveys the level of commitment Rutgers has made to ensuring that Senate representatives continue to be an important part of our commitment to shared governance. In addition, I am sharing the report and this response with the chairs of the Board of Governors and Board of Trustees. I am grateful for the opportunity to provide this response and thank the University Structure and Governance Committee for its work on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Holloway". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jonathan" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Holloway".

Jonathan Holloway

cc: William Best, Chair of the Board of Governors
Alan Crosta, Jr., Chair of the Board of Trustees
Kimberlee Pastva, Secretary of the University
Prabhas Moghe, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs