

**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY SENATE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
January 6, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bachmann, Boikess, Cooper, Foster, Giraud, Oliver, Olivera, Roth, Schwartz, Simonds (Chair), Struble, Szatrowski, Thompson, Van Stine

ALSO ATTENDING: *L. Adamo (Senator), F. Amjad (BOT Undergraduate Student Representative), F. Conway (New Brunswick Chancellor-Provost), V. Hewitt (University Senate Executive Secretary), T. Ozel (BOT Faculty Representative), S. Rabinowitz (BOG Faculty Representative), M. Smith (University Senate Administrative Assistant)*

The regular meeting of the University Senate Executive Committee was held on Friday, January 6, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. remotely via Zoom.

Chair's Report– Adrienne Simonds, Senate Chair

Chair Simonds called the January 6, 2023 Senate Executive Committee meeting to order at 12:04 p.m. She suggested the Executive Committee consider charging an ad hoc committee to review the proposal for a merged medical school, which is expected to be received later this month. She asked Executive Committee members to either self-nominate or nominate others who have experienced mergers at Rutgers to this ad hoc committee.

Secretary's Report– Vicki Hewitt, Senate Executive Secretary

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of the [Dec. 2, 2022 Senate Executive Committee Minutes](#)
- Policy Updates
 - [University Policy 80.1.4 Endorsements, Sponsorships, and Advertising in and on University Assets and Communications Materials](#)
 - [University Policy 80.1.5 University Visual Identity](#)
 - [University Policy 20.1.22 Tobacco Free Policy](#)

Discussion with Dr. Francine Conway, New Brunswick Chancellor-Provost

Administrative Requests for Follow-Up

None.

Standing Committees/Panels

RECONSIDER Proposed Charge:

Science Communication Efforts at Rutgers University – Submitted by Senator Lauren Adamo, School of Arts and Sciences-NB, Faculty

Charge: *To review the barriers to incorporating science communication training into STEM and relevant STEM-related majors, and build upon efforts by the Rutgers Science Communication Initiative to promote science and research communication training, programs and outreach. We are looking to identify and advance a list of preliminary measures that will raise awareness of the current limitations in the field of science communication across the entire Rutgers research community.*

Rationale: Science is not finished until it is communicated (Walport, 2013). However, communication training is not a key component of training of scientists, and so the act of communicating science to non-scientists is more likely to be done poorly or not at all. Unfortunately, in the 15 years since Dr. Alan Leschner (then CEO of AAAS; Rutgers alumnus) said in a 2007 *Science* editorial that communications training should be added to the scientific training agenda, there is still a lack of skills development for scientists to be effective communicators. Since that time, concerns about how we communicate science, and the failures when we do it poorly, have increased nationally and internationally. Institutions and groups, including the

- National Academy of Sciences,
- Public Communication of Science and Technology,
- American Association for the Advancement of Science,
- Wellcome Trust,
- UK Office of Science and Technology Science and the Public,
- UK House of Lords, National Science Foundation,
- Association of Science and Technology Centers,
- and journals such as *Public Understanding of Science*, *Science Communication*, *Science*, and *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*

repeatedly address this issue through conferences, workshops, articles and special issues.

Generally advocated in order to generate a scientifically literate public who can participate in democratic processes, however, it has come to be recognized that content alone is insufficient to make a scientifically literate public. Incorporating science communication skills-based programs before graduating from formal education is critical to create “competent outsiders”, that is, someone who can access and use science as needed (Feinstein, Allen & Jenkins, 2013). To achieve this goal, what is required is formal training in science communication, not only to promote the ability of scientists to actively communicate their work to other scientists, but also to the general public (Feinstein, 2011; Ryder, 2001), all of which promotes science cognition and participation in decision-making processes for non-scientists. It builds an interactive network with the community and supports further recognition of Rutgers programs outside academic spaces.

This proposed charge recognizes that incorporating science and research communication training into STEM and STEM-affiliated majors will lead to foundational literacy and successful outcomes in STEM (content knowledge, interest in science and scientific identity). It will also elevate Rutgers to the level of excellence expected from a university of its size and national ranking.

Outcome: Following the December Executive Committee meeting, a motion was made to reconsider this charge. The Executive Committee amended the charge to: “Review efforts in science communication initiatives across the University and provide recommendations for any measures and limitations to raise awareness of the current limitations in the field of science communication across the entire Rutgers research community.” The Instruction, Curricula, and Advising Committee and the Research and Graduate & Professional Education Committee were issued this charge with a deadline of November 2023.

Proposed Charge:

Budgetary Considerations Underlying Potential Merger of the RBHS Subunits Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and New Jersey Medical School into One Medical School – Senator John Pintar, School of Graduate Studies, Faculty

Charge: *We are requesting this charge to investigate budgetary issues that will accompany the potential merger of the two medical schools that are currently already part of Rutgers: Robert Wood Johnson Medical School (RWJMS) and New Jersey Medical School (NJMS). As of Nov. 18th, 2022, no financial information regarding this merger has been relayed to the Senate or even to administrators overseeing the University Budget. For example, Mr. Moore, representing Rutgers administration, in response to a question from Dr. Shinbrot regarding financial aspects of the merger on Nov. 18th replied “I do not have information on the merger that is being discussed,” and an OPRA requesting background information on the merger from Dr. Roth has been repeatedly delayed.*

The Budget and Finance Committee on Nov. 18th agreed that information regarding the estimated immediate and longer-term costs of the merger, the source of funds to provide those costs, and exactly what these costs would entail were highly important and timely issues relevant to this committee. The committee also seeks information (including reports by the Executive Consulting Group that we understand has reported on this question to Rutgers Finance & Administration) regarding previous mergers undertaken by the current Chancellor including, for example, the Nursing School and Graduate School mergers, and how final costs compared to expected costs. This proposed charge was discussed extensively by the whole B&F committee and I volunteered to lead its preparation.

Rationale: Merger of two major Rutgers subunits, currently quite independent and with quite different cultures, curricula organization and independent finances, is likely to be a complex process that requires both clear rationale (currently not yet provided) as well as a reasonably detailed merger plan so that costs may be accurately estimated before approval can be expected.

Our committee does note that several highly relevant budget-related items have been clearly identified by the Chancellor. These questions were included in one of the five subsections (Administration/Leadership) of a detailed set of questions that the Chancellor’s committee expects to address in its response to the initial Senate consideration of the merger (in 2019) that will be submitted to the Rutgers Senate in January. These questions were relayed to the faculty of both RWJMS and NJMS in a Nov. 17th email.

However, unlike three of the subsections that have already had faculty committees appointed to make recommendations on specific merger-related issues, two critical subcommittees (Leadership /Administration; Research) unfortunately do not have appointed committees with faculty representation. It thus appears that whatever the response to the questions relevant to Leadership/Administration will be, this response may come solely from the Chancellor's office with no input from the faculty. Thus, independent consideration of these issues by our committee is essential to evaluate financial aspects of this potential merger. In particular, the Committee would hope the Chancellor's response would emphasize what, if anything, has changed from the Chancellors response to the Senate in 2020 (indicating a no-cost merger) to the present, as it relates to the budget and as developed further in the following paragraph:

In the Senate Questionnaire of 2020, several statements regarding budgetary issues of the merger were submitted by the Chancellor. These include: Q. 28: What impact will the restructuring have on the individual unit budgets. Response: Little immediate budget impact is anticipated; Q. 30, What are the costs involved in the restructuring? Response- Restructuring should have little financial impact. Q. 33 What are the expected long-term savings? Response: Potential administrative cost savings. Q34 If money is being taken from a budget reserve to help cover merger costs, then what are the expected short- and long-term impacts of that diminishment of the budget reserve? Response- Budget reserves will not be impacted. Q 35. What are the costs of not restructuring, if any? Response- Restructuring will not have any costs per se. Q.36: What is the proposed budget for this structural or service change? Response- A separate restructuring budget is not anticipated. Q. 39: What are the financial impacts on the university and the affected units? Response-Integration of the medical schools is not anticipated to increase costs.

In our view, the Senate Budget and Finance committee should examine the answers provided by the Chancellor in 2020 (as above) with those to be submitted to the Senate in Jan. 2023 to reconcile whether the initial submission remains accurate and, if not, detail whether and how any budgetary considerations differ from the current plan being assembled in conjunction with the outside consultant firm specializing in mergers. The Chancellor's prior suggestion to approve the merger without the effort to define significant aspects of its structure beforehand should be re-considered. In view of the short timeline planned for a putative merger, we view expedited consideration of this charge to be a priority for the Senate.

We finally note that other committees that have oversight over faculty/staff issues may well wish to consider whether the status of tenured faculty will be re-evaluated as part of the merger and whether reductions in non-tenured faculty and staff will be needed to offset the costs of the merger.

Outcome: The Executive Committee amended the charge to: "Investigate any relevant financial issues that will emerge if there is a proposed merger of RWJMS and NJMS. Make necessary recommendations to the Senate." The Budget and Finance Committee was issued this charge with a deadline of June 2023.

Proposed Charge:

Conflict of Interest Declarations – Senator Troy Shinbrot, School of Engineering, Faculty

Charge: *Investigate and make recommendations on public declarations of conflicts of interest by politically exposed persons at Rutgers, including members of the BoG and all SVPs involved in significant financial decision making.*

Rationale: Rutgers University has a documented history of conflicts of interest associated with budgetary decisions (See “Higher Education: Vulnerable to Abuse”). It is concerning that our President has filed a public disclosure of interests, but those who make major financial decisions for the university, textbook examples of “Politically Exposed Persons” have not.

As one example, members of the Rutgers Board of Governors are required by Governor Murphy’s Executive Order #2 (“Outlining Ethics and Standards” p11, item (2)) to file conflict of interest forms, but have not done so according to New Jersey’s State Ethics Commission.

Related to this first example, Board member William Tambussi is George Norcross’ personal attorney (NJ Globe, 1/30/2020), and has longstanding interests in Rutgers real estate (Phila Inquirer, 12/22/2019) and other financial (70and73 12/13/2022) and legal (Politico 6/5/2019) matters.

As another example, SVP Gower has a documented history of engaging in conflicted business decisions (Daily Targum 10/1/2013) that available evidence suggests he may be continuing (available on request), yet his disclosure is also not available.

Outcome: The proposed charge was postponed to the February Executive Committee meeting.

Committee Report and Recommendations:

Research and Graduate & Professional Education Committee (RGPEC) – Detlev Boison and Monica Mazurek, Co-Chairs

[Report on S-2110: Research Information Systems](#)

The RGPEC was charged as follows:

Investigate the development of Research Information Systems. Determine best practices and system impacts as well as what office should lead the university to ensure that Rutgers research impact is maximized.

Outcome: The Executive Committee docketed this report for the Jan. 20 Senate agenda.

Committee Report and Recommendations:

Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) – Sean Valverde and Carolyne White, Co-Chairs

[Report on S-2010-1: Evaluation of the RCM Implementation at Rutgers](#)

The BFC was charged as follows:

Evaluate the implementation of the RCM budget model at Rutgers University. Specify recommendations where improvements should be considered.

Outcome: The Executive Committee returned this report to the BFC committee and requested revisions, including formatting changes to highlight the committee's members and recommendations, clarification on athletic debt, and amending the recommendations to: "Be it resolved that the Senate recommends:

The University shall maintain Transparency in budget preparation and reporting needed to ensure that RCM reflects University priorities.

Central and other non-revenue generating units provide important services, but should not be exempt from responsibility for revenues and expenses.

Shared governance of fund transfers should be introduced, involving revenue generating (teaching and research) as well as non-revenue generating (service) units.

All units should have the same access to budgetary information: requests for relevant nonconfidential data should not be delayed or denied."

Old Business

None.

New Business

None.

Adjournment

The Executive Committee adjourned at 3:31 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Vicki Hewitt, Executive Secretary of the University Senate