

July 27, 2023

Dr. Adrienne Simonds
Rutgers University Senate Representative to
the Rutgers University Board of Governors
School of Health Professions
65 Bergen Street
Newark, New Jersey 07101-1709

Dear Dr. Simonds:

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Rutgers Board of Governors, I am writing to you in your capacity as the University Senate's representative to the Board.

We understand that on Friday, July 21, 2023, the Rutgers University Senate Executive Committee adopted a resolution asking President Holloway to pause the establishment of the Rutgers School of Medicine that the Board of Governors approved on July 10, 2023, and further that President Holloway recommit to the principles and values of shared governance by upholding Rutgers University Board of Governor's Policy 50.2.2.

Please know that the Board action to administratively unify the medical schools was taken after considering years of significant input from many parties, including that of the University Senate – input that was expressly reflected in the Board Resolution. When the Board made its informed decision and voted unanimously to merge the administration of the two medical schools, it did so while issuing a mandate to preserve the individual identities of our two schools, protect the interests of the communities we serve, strengthen an institution that provides the citizens of New Jersey with the highest quality state-of-the-art health care education and services, and enhance the profile, ranking, and funding potential of the largest and most sophisticated academic medical center within our state.

This was a formal Board action; there is no decision to "pause," nor does the University President have the authority to interfere with such a governing board decision. Having said that, effectuating the integration and the associated accreditation process will likely take five years to accomplish and there will be ample time for concerns to be raised and addressed regarding the implementation of the Board's decision to administratively merge the two schools. In fact, the resolution obligated RBHS to not only survey such concerns, but to report back to us about the reaction to and resolution of such concerns. We strongly encourage the University community, including the University Senate, to constructively participate in the process.

The Board of Governors took its action in a manner that was fully consistent with all our policies, including 50.2.2, which expressly and specifically gives the Senate an "advis[ory]" role with respect to the "establishment or dissolution of colleges, schools, divisions, institutes, and similar educational units," and aligns directly with the treatment of this issue the last time it arose in 2016 in the context of the merger of the nursing schools. That said, and to be clear: it is appropriate that the Senate provide such advice, we recognize the value of such advice, and we included a number of points made by the Senate in the resolution that we adopted.

While the issues raised in your resolution directly reference our action as the Board of Governors, you did allude to President Holloway's commitment to shared governance. We can say, without hesitation or qualification, that we have not known a Rutgers President more collegial and collaborative by nature, nor a Rutgers President who is more respectful of the faculty and the concept of shared governance, than President Holloway. In fact, his outreach to and engagement with faculty has palpably exceeded that of his modern-day predecessors. It is for this, amongst numerous other reasons, that we invited him to come to Rutgers in the first place, and that our utmost faith and confidence in President Holloway's leadership of Rutgers University continues unabated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill", written in a cursive style.

William E. Best
Chair, Rutgers Board of Governors