



**University Senate Meeting
Administrative Report Presented by the EVPAA
Friday, September 22, 2023**

I would like to welcome back our returning Senators, and give a special welcome to our newest Senators. As many of you know, I have been sharing the administrative report to the Senate Executive Committee.

Also per the University Senate Handbook, the president or the president's designated representative regularly provides similar information to the full Senate at its meetings, and responds to questions at these same meetings. I am happy to serve as the President's representative to these meetings, and to respond to your questions along with my Cabinet colleagues.

The University Senate is a vital part of the work we do together across Rutgers, and together with the Faculty Councils of each chancellor-led unit, serves as the foundation for shared governance. Shared governance is a critical part of every institution, and it is hard work. I look forward to working with you to meet our common goals.

It is my hope that we will embark this academic year with a renewed commitment to work together toward these goals, and that we will use our time here to amplify what is already the best of Rutgers, and to further improve all that we do to serve our students and support our faculty and staff.

We have been through a great deal in the last few years, and we have worked very hard to overcome the challenges together, and we will continue to do so. We also have experienced remarkable successes, and that is the story we want to tell together, and communicate to the outside world. Our shared goal must be to understand what is at stake for all of us in an increasingly competitive higher education environment, and we should strive to work together to build an institution that will continue to attract the very best faculty, staff and students to our campuses.

As I assume this responsibility of presenting the Administrative Report each month, I also want to be sure that I address many of the topics that are important to you as Senators. For this first meeting, I have asked the chancellors and the President's cabinet for updates that may be valuable for you to know about.

As you may know, the Senate Handbook also mentions that we will respond at Senate meetings to questions that have been previously submitted:

*“Senators are urged to submit written questions about matters of concern to them or their constituents. These should be sent or brought to the Senate office for delivery to us, and should be received at least one week prior to the Senate meeting. We will then be prepared to answer these questions during the administrative report at the next Senate meeting. This procedure **does not preclude** questions from the **floor** at Senate meetings. “*

Going forward, we have added a feedback link to the [EVPAA website](#) where you may submit suggestions for the topics you most want to hear about in advance of each meeting. I hope that many of you will take advantage of this opportunity, so that we can have even more productive discussions at these meetings and address our most important challenges.

I am also working with your Senate leadership and staff members in the office of the EVPAA to ensure that we are tracking and responding to **open Senate charges**, and I plan to provide updates on those at our next meeting.

Before I get to the good news, I do want to mention the possibility of a topic that may impact our research operations: **a federal government shutdown in October.**

The Office for Research (OfR) and University Finance and Administration (UFA) are planning for the effects that such an action will have on research.

The faculty may have received a joint communication that outlines important details to prepare for a government shutdown. Additional guidance will be sent to faculty and staff when more is known, and we will continue to monitor the situation, along with our peers, and communicate with you as needed.

The bottom line is to support Rutgers research as much as possible, both to reduce the disruption to ongoing work and to be sure that we ramp up as quickly as possible after any shutdown is resolved.

Now, on to some of the great work going on at Rutgers. I always like to share information about the exceptional work taking place across the institution, and I have heard from many of you that you appreciate hearing what your colleagues are doing.

At the beginning of the Fall semester, I shared with the institution recently a [note](#) that captured the **breadth of academic excellence at Rutgers.**

Next, I would like to share a few updates from across the institution in the area of **Student Success.** Because of our limited time, I am only sharing a sample with you today. But they are examples of the ways that we are coming together to advance our work and increase access and outcomes for all students on all campuses.

Rutgers-Newark is marking the one-year anniversary of the **Fiserv-Rutgers Program for Inclusive Innovation** through a partnership with this fintech global firm. Fiserv already has hired 28 Rutgers-

Newark new alumni, and dedicated professional development pathways are being built in partnership with the Rutgers-Newark Office of Veterans Affairs. Curricula across the campus already are infusing Fiserv insights and expertise, and the first cohort of 31 Fiserv Scholars has been selected.

A key focus of the new Rutgers-Camden Strategic Plan is the concept of **Student Centeredness**, and focuses on the areas of **Mental Health, Food Insecurity, Shelter Insecurity and Student Success**. Just this week, the Scarlet Raptor's Nest food pantry was relocated and renovated to address food and shelter insecurity. These efforts work in tandem with academic support initiatives to form a comprehensive system that support student success for all.

In New Brunswick, **student success** is the animating spirit behind the Academic Master Plan and is embodied in a bold new AMP initiative called **Discovery Advantage**. The goal is to simplify how we admit and onboard our students, the ways we support them throughout their student experience, and how we prepare them for success after Rutgers.

I am always proud to highlight the excellence of our **Rutgers University Libraries**, which contribute in so many ways to the success of our students and faculty and add to our reputation as an outstanding public university. I want to focus on one particular Libraries program that is a special source of pride.

The **Rutgers University Libraries Open and Affordable Textbooks (OAT)** Program is an incentive program that awards research funds to Rutgers faculty who make their courses more affordable for their students by using low-cost materials, library content, or open educational resources (OER). To date, the program has given over 200 OAT awards to faculty. So far, approximately **44,000 students have saved over \$6.5 million**.

Before I close, I want to share some good news regarding the recently released US News & World Report rankings. The newly released U.S. News rankings are great for all three campuses:

- **Camden is #98 among National Universities, up from 127 last year.**
 - Camden is #49 among all Public Universities.
- **Newark went to #82 among National Universities, up from 115 last year.**
 - Newark is #40 among all Public Universities.
- **New Brunswick moved from 55 to #40 among National Universities.**
 - We are ahead of Purdue, Ohio State, Maryland, and Penn State:
 - And we are now #15 among Public Universities (up four spots from last year)

We also improved our rankings while keeping true to our commitment to access:

- Our graduation rates for Pell-grant recipients are all in the **Top 25**: Newark at #7, New Brunswick at #21, and Camden at #25.

- All are in the Top 50 nationally for social mobility.
- All also moved up the rankings as great for veterans.

The new methodologies place a greater emphasis on outcome measures and serving people from diverse backgrounds, which for a long time have been fundamental to our mission.

There is more great news on health education - we just received the US News & World Report rankings for **Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)** programs. We are ranked #31 out of 656 BSN programs that were ranked, putting us in the *top 5%* and the **#1 BSN** program in NJ.

In closing, I want to thank you for taking part in the important work of the University Senate. We take pride in our values as a university, including our recognition of the value of shared governance.

So, thank you very much for stepping forward to be **Senators**.

And **thank you** for all you do outside of the Senate to contribute to a university that is increasingly being recognized in the region, the nation and the world for the work you all do, and is serving a diverse, determined, and outstanding student body.