

## **2023-2024 Academic Standards, Regulations and Admissions Committee**

ASRAC committee members focused on Curriculum Educational Development and Approval policies with several NB and Newark schools along with course expiration policies on all three campuses. There was considerable faculty concerns from SEBS school regarding a 30 Percent threshold examination for hybrid and online courses. New courses were not getting approved unless they could show proof of this examination requirement.

ASRAC met with SEBS Dean and Curriculum and Education Policy Director in reference to the curriculum approval process for Online and Hybrid courses. The policy was recently reviewed and voted on by faculty, but concerns were centered on the main added revision- Exams should not exceed 30% of the grade for fully online courses. ASRAC members feel this is an infringement of their academic freedom and faculty should decide on assessment of the course.

After careful consideration and deliberation, a formal response was made to the Dean to be taken under advisement.

ASRAC committee members believe that one of the requirements of this policy and the way it has been implemented is a violation of the academic freedom rights of SEBS faculty. Based on our discussions and literature review, we have some recommendations that will correct this issue.

ASRAC members opposed the 7<sup>th</sup> bullet outlined in <https://sebscourseapproval.rutgers.edu/policies/online-and-hybrid-course-policy-guidelines/>, "Exams should not exceed 30% of the grade for fully online courses". We recommended that this statement be deleted and instead allow faculty members to provide an outline and justification for their planned course assessment. Inclusion of the 7<sup>th</sup> bullet may imply that the 30% rule is a requirement for approval of a course rather than a guideline.

If advice about assessments needs to be provided it should be part of Best Practices; not as a bullet point in a list of requirements. So, we suggest that a statement can be added to the "Evaluation and Academic Integrity" section.

Here are our suggested modifications.

Best practices for online assessments suggest frequent low stakes quizzes, mastery assignments, and other types of formative assessments that promote student learning and reduce violations of academic integrity. Best practices also suggest reducing the weight of high stakes exams (midterm and final) consistent with course content. "

We have not heard back from Dean of SEBS after two follow-up emails and will resume discussions in September. And possibly submit a formal Charge.

### **Response to Charge S-2324**

#### **Title- Investigate Sunsetting of Academic Credit Across Campuses and Review Any Proposed Changes**

**Description-**Review how course credits earned at Rutgers can be sun downed across all Rutgers campuses, recognizing many students are unable to complete a desired academic degree in the usual time sequence. Report and explain the rationale for any proposed changes and offer possible recommendations concerning changes to policy of earned credit toward graduation, with consideration of potential complexities with respect to professional/graduate studies that are externally accredited.

Concern has been expressed that some Rutgers students who have stopped-out of their program for either personal, financial, public service, or medical reasons and wish to return their respective schools to complete

their degree, have encountered some issues with their transcript evaluation within a period of time wherein the current curriculum may have changed and rendered some courses obsolete, elongating the student's time to graduation. Certain majors like information technology, computer science, and management information systems along with accountancy have a higher rate of curricula updates which render courses outdated within a seven-year period. Other prior completed courses, such as those in mathematics, are rendered problematic not due to course or topic changes but rather students' current cognitive grasp of material especially when it is integral to other courses within the major. When a Rutgers student returns to his/her school, the re-enrollment process is initiated through dedicated webpages for each school.

The general criteria include:<sup>1</sup>

- You must have stepped out for at least one fall or spring academic term (not including summer or winter session). You must have been in good academic standing with your Rutgers school prior to not enrolling.
- You must have completed a minimum of one fall and/or spring academic term as a matriculated student at Rutgers University. (Not including summer or winter sessions.)
- You must have been in good academic standing with your school prior to not enrolling for at least one (1) semester or more.

ASRAC was charged to explore the current policies on each campus with its respective schools (except RBHS) as to how specific courses are rendered outdated /or expired. ASRAC members (some of whom are in decanal positions handling admissions for their respective schools) discussed their respective school policies and shared their experiences within their own programs. We learned that both Newark and New Brunswick campuses allow for students to retest in their math course if the course exceeds 7 or more years. This can be accomplished through the Accuplacer test or through administering a math course final and achieving a B or better grade. In contrast, Rutgers Business School has its entire business core and major eligibility courses expired between 7-10 years. Rutgers SEBS re-enrolled students who have completed 60 or more-degree credits will follow their original graduation requirements versus the re-enrolled students with fewer than 60-degree credits will complete the SEBS core and major requirements in effect at their re-enrollment.

It was decided to have staff members familiar with these review processes from the Newark and New Brunswick campus schools attend one of our scheduled meetings to outline their policy and rationale for having students repeat specific courses. Since we have representation from RU-SASN, SEBS, and RBS, our February 16, 2024, meeting was augmented by the attendance of Dr. Cristal Harry- RU-SCJ; Dr. Alyssa Sofman, RU-SPAA; and Assistant Dean Milagros Arroyo from RU-NB SAS who each spoke about the relevant policies in their respective schools.

This area has been recognized by senior university officeholders, including recently by Rutgers University-NB Chancellor Francine Conway, who emphasized in her presentation to the full Rutgers University Board of Trustees, the need to further prioritize on-time graduation maximizing flexibility with course requirements and high-impact learning opportunities in a welcoming and equitable environment (public session; 12/07/23).

### **Discussion and Considerations-**

Dean Sofman from RU-N SPAA shared the following about SPAA's policy, "if a student has been out for 7+ years, we would first see if the curriculum has changed. If it had, part of our re-enrollment policy stipulates that we can update them to the new curriculum. We would then determine if any of the courses previously taken fit into the new curriculum and award them the equivalency, but they otherwise must complete what is outstanding."

Dean Cristal Harry RUSCJ expressed similar review of courses exceeding a 7-year period regarding a curriculum change, but cautioned this happens rarely and SCJ is looking to keep students on track for graduation with few delays.

Dean Milagros Arroyo from SAS-NB noted that there was not a policy outdated any courses, with different applications for different types of students seeking reenrollment. The main goal is to get the re-enrolled students to an advisor as quickly as possible with a specific degree course plan and timeline.

In comparison to the general admission pool, the re-enrollment applications are very small (0.25% or less) and do not appear to present an unfair burden to the departments. ASRAC agrees with the current policies on each campus, that final review of student's application for review of the validity of their courses should be placed on department level faculty rather than administrative decisions.

### **Summary and Synthesis**

1. It appears Rutgers University already has well thought out policies and protocols in place for reviewing and assessing outdated student coursework. Rationale provided by the respective schools, were deemed necessary and reasonable for degree completion.
2. However, it is the ASRAC's recommendation that each school should publicize their policy on their website with easy-to-follow directions and instructions to students who stop-out and want to return to complete their degrees so that they have a realistic expectation of completing their degree within a specific timeframe.
3. Simultaneously, publishing the Rutgers' promise for the prioritization of flexibility to achieve on-time graduation and impactful opportunities is key in building on current academic progress to best prepare students.

### **ASRAC Recommendations-**

1. Individual school's websites should be updated, when necessary, with its current policy on this subject and should provide easy-to-follow directions for re-enrollment, and credit evaluation.
2. Individual schools should set up a designated contact person in each school's academic dean's office with email for follow-up and next steps.
3. Sufficient funds should be allocated for website updates and staff personnel involved in this process.
4. Updates should emphasize the University's continuing commitment to non-traditional students and that helping and encouraging these students to complete their degrees remains a high priority.

## 2023-2024 Budget and Finance Committee

CHARGE	STATUS	DUE
S-2002-1 Challenges Related to Parking and Transportation	During the 2022-23 academic year BFC met with VP Henry Velez, Professor Robert Kopp, Co-Director of the University Office of Climate Action, and Professor David Hughes to gather information for S-2002-1, S-2206, S-2207 and S-2208. This allowed for us to access differing interpretations for some of the items valorized by the Rutgers administration, such as solar panel canopies on parking decks, that have not been negotiated as well as they could have been and therefore are problematic from a budgetary perspective. Given how these four charges are related, we created a broad context for our data collection process and analysis; yet, all members of the committee have not aligned on this approach. At our March 2024 meeting we consulted with the new Chief Climate Officer and Senior Director of the Office of Climate Action Angela Oberg. Much more work is needed on these charges.	10/30/24
S-2206 Socially Responsible Investment		03/05/25
S-2207 Office of Climate Action		04/03/24
S-2208 Divestment of Retirement Funds from Fossil Fuels		03/05/25
S-2302 Budgetary Considerations Underlying Potential Merger of the RBHS Subunits Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and New Jersey Medical School into One Medical School	The report for this charge was approved by the Senate on April 26, 2024.	
S-2307 RCM Detailed Recommendations	The report for this charge was approved by the Senate on March 22, 2024..	
S-2308 Conflict of Interest Declarations	The first report for this charge S-2308-1 was approved by the Senate on April 26, 2024, and we anticipate more to come.	
S-2320 Timing and Process for Recommending Tuition, Fees, Housing Charges and Dining Charges	This charge was issued to BFC and the Student Affairs Committee. We conducted a survey, shared a draft report with the Student Affairs Committee and implemented their feedback. Report approved by Senate on April 26, 2024.	
S-2333 Cost Cutting and Budget Deficits	This charge was issued to the <b>Budget and Finance Committee</b> , the <b>Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee</b> , and the <b>Instruction, Curricula, and Advising Committee</b> at the Senate Executive Committee on April 5, 2024. We were notified of it in May after official meetings of the committee had concluded for the academic year.	5/05/25

**2023-2024 Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee**

None submitted.

## 2023-2024 Information Technology Committee

The Senate IT Committee (ITC) completed one charge this year (2023-2024)

Charge	Title	Status
S-2319	Explore Mechanisms, Methods and Processes for Senators to Communicate Senate Work and Information to their Constituents	Presented and approved April 26, 2024

The committee continues to work on S-2325 Explore the Current Virtual Senate Meeting Format and Develop Best Practices and Meeting Format Recommendations.

- Plan to meet with IT for review of Zoom capabilities.
- Plant to meet with structure and governance (Senate Handbook)
- Lengthy discussions about the purview of ITC regarding this charge; suggest technologies not dictate.

Recommendations for future committee charges:

- Explore the need for and possibility of dedicated Testing Centers
- Proctoring: Information distribution and updates

Attendance records can be found here: [2023-2024 ITC.xlsx](#)

## **2023-2024 Instruction, Curricula and Advising Committee**

### **Charge Number S-2301-1: Science Communication Efforts at Rutgers University**

*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.*

This charge was a joint charge with the Research and Graduate and Professional Education Committee. A subcommittee consisting of members from ICAC and RGPEC has been working on the charge throughout the academic year. As the final phase of their investigations, surveys were distributed in March and time was needed to analyze the data and compile a draft report. Since it is a joint charge that report will have to be reviewed by both committees prior to submission. The expectation is that that will happen early in the Fall.

### **Charge Number S-2305-1: Auditing Courses at Rutgers**

*Review course auditing at Rutgers. Make any appropriate recommendations.*

A Subcommittee has made significant progress on the charge, but will need more time to collect survey data. A survey is ready to go in Qualtrics to be distributed in the fall (September) since summer won't yield many responses.

### **Charge Number S-2304-1: Common Hour Exams**

*Review the experiences of students, faculty, and staff with common hour exams at Rutgers University. Make any appropriate recommendations.*

This charge was a joint charge with the Student Affairs Committee. Due to a number of issues stemming from changes in the leadership of the Student Affairs Committee, a new joint subcommittee was only formed in March. They will begin their discussions in the Fall.

### **Charge Number S-2330: Expanding Access to University Libraries Across Campuses**

*After discussions with Chief Kenneth Cop, Vice President for University Libraries Consuella Askew, and library faculty, the three greatest concerns for keeping libraries open later involve public safety, staffing, and sanitation. All three of these concerns can be properly addressed with increased budgeting that will allocate the funds to increase staff, safety officers, and custodial services. We must show a need for libraries across all Rutgers campuses to be open as often as possible with complete equitable access (same days, same hours) across all Rutgers campuses. Thus, I charge that the University Senate create a survey for each campus (New Brunswick, Camden, and Newark) to explore this need. This survey is to be student-led and disseminated by its student leaders among their respective campuses. Questions should also be personalized to each campus and with an eye to equity.*

The Committee has issues with the formulation of this charge, and will be submitting a suggested rewording.

### **Charge Number S-2333: Cost Cutting and Budget Deficits**

*Identify cost cutting measures that are being imposed on departments by their schools. Investigate the budgetary rationales for these cuts and their impact on the quality of academic programs.*

This charge was issued to ICAC, Budget and Finance, and to Faculty and Personnel Affairs. It came in at the end of the semester and has not been discussed by the committee.



## **2023-2024 Research and Graduate & Professional Education Committee**

S-2301-1: This charge is worked on in collaboration with ICAC. We had several joint meetings to discuss the subject matter. ICAC has sent out a university-wide survey and is currently analyzing the results. The plan is that ICAC prepares a draft response to the charge and that RGPEC provides edits and amendments. The response to the charge should be finalized in early fall.

S-2331: This is a brand-new charge that had just been issued. This charge will be a focus of RGPEC activities in the coming Academic Year.

## **2023-2024 Student Affairs Committee**

### **Status on Charges**

#### **1. S-2115-2 (Academic Freedom) – Due 10/9/2024**

SAC discussed and reviewed a proposed start to a draft report for this charge.

SAC will continue to work on this charge to make progress on illuminating attacks on the academic freedom of students and faculty. We will also reach out to the Faculty and Personnel Affairs Committee this coming term for further collaboration on this charge.

#### **2. S-2204-2 (Impact of CourseAtlas) – Due 4/3/2024**

There were very few updates on this charge during SAC's March meeting. The due date for this charge has also passed making this a possible discharged charge. An extension on this charge may be needed for continued work this coming term if there is still interest from the committee.

#### **3. S-2304-1 (Common Hour Exams) – Due 12/4/2024**

SAC has discussed the current issues regarding common hour exams from interference with religious observances to unsafe conditions late at night on campus. SAC has met with the Instruction Curricula and Advising Committee (ICA) to develop a subcommittee regarding this charge. SAC will continue to collaborate with ICA to make progress on this charge.

#### **4. S-2321 (Poor Student Busing and Employee Transportation Services) – Due 10/30/2024**

Minimal status updates on this charge as this is a new charge issued to SAC. An SAC member expressed interest in running this charge and is working on the charge. More progress and updates to come in the following meetings. Also, SAC would like to add the issue of university parking fees within this charge, if possible.

#### **5. S-2330 (Expanding Access to University Libraries Across Campuses) – Due 3/5/2025**

The greatest concerns for extending library hours can be addressed with increased budgeting. This charge calls for demonstrating the need for extended library hours. SAC has drafted questions regarding this and is in the process of creating a survey that will be disseminated to students to gauge the need of extending library hours.

### **Recommendations for Future Committee Charges**

Recommendation for future committee charges involve the recent protests on RU campuses.

### **Additional Information**

#### **1. S-2320-1: Timing and Process for Recommending Tuition, Fees, Housing Charges, and Dining Charges**

SAC and SAC Co-Chairs reviewed and shared comments and concerns regarding the report drafted by the Budget and Finance Committee (BFC). Ultimately, SAC approved the report. SAC concurs with BFC's report and does not plan to submit a separate report on this charge.

2. An updated list of committee members is needed for attendance. The current excel sheet used for attendance has some names of committee members not listed. Information on committee members' attendance at committee meetings for Spring of 2024 has been submitted by email.

**2023-2024 University Structure and Governance Committee**

None submitted.