

**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY SENATE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MINUTES
September 6, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT: R. Brown, Boxer, Esposito, Foster (Chair), Godoy, Haley, Kiss, Lescht, Olivera, Pierce, Roth, Salas-de la Cruz, Schroth, Simonds

ALSO ATTENDING: *F. Conway (New Brunswick Chancellor), M. Gower (Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Finance and Administration), V. Hewitt (University Senate Executive Secretary), P. Moghe (Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs), K. O'Halloran (Vice President for Academic Planning & Administration, EVPAA), W. Purcell (BOT Faculty Representative), S. Searcy (BOG Student Representative), M. Smith (University Senate Administrative Assistant), A. Truschke (Senator), N. Yusuf (BOT Graduate Student Representative)*

The regular meeting of the University Senate Executive Committee was held on Friday, September 6, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. remotely via Zoom.

Chair's Report– Lucille Foster, Senate Chair

Chair Foster called the September 6, 2024 Senate Executive Committee meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

Secretary's Report– Vicki Hewitt, Senate Executive Secretary

- The September 6, 2024 Executive Committee Agenda was approved.
- The [June 7, 2024 Senate Executive Committee Minutes](#) were approved.
- The [July 12, 2024 Senate Executive Committee Special Meeting Minutes](#) were approved.
- One administrative response was received:
 - Response to [S-2203: Examining the Efficacy of the GRE](#)
- Communications announced:
 - New Senator Orientation: Fri. Sept. 13 from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
 - Senate Socials: Fri. Nov. 8 and Fri. April 11 from 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.
 - Academic Freedom Panel: Wed. Oct. 16 from 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
 - Recent Actions and Announcements listserv
 - Website Roster Updates

Administrative Report – Prabhas Moghe, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Moghe provided the Administrative Report consisting of the following topics:

- Newark Chancellor Search
- Update on Sponsored Award Funding

- Improvements to eCOI+ Conflict of Interest system and eIACUC Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee system
- Online University Education Services (OUES) Launch
- New Jersey Equal Opportunity Fund (EOF) – improving pathways for EOF students to graduate education
- Staff Development: Rutgers Leadership Academy and OneRED Leadership Program

Dr. Moghe then answered questions on the following topics:

- New Guidelines on Free Expression
- Search committee for Newark Chancellor

Discussion – Francine Conway, New Brunswick Chancellor

Discussion – J. Michael Gower, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

Re-engagement with the President and Engagement with the Board of Governors

The Senate Chair and BOG Representatives will invite the BOG Chair to meet with the Executive Committee.

Allocation of the Board of Governors Representatives’ Seats

This was postponed to the October Executive Committee meeting.

[Free Expression at Rutgers University, Guidelines for Free Expression at Rutgers University, Open Letter to President Holloway Regarding Rutgers’ New Restrictions on Free Expression](#)

The Senate Chair will discuss this issue with the President’s Chief of Staff in their upcoming meeting.

Committee Chairs: Invitation to the October EC Meeting; Connect to EC Representatives; Drop-In Meetings

A drop-in meeting for the committee chairs will be scheduled for October.

Interpretation of [Senate Handbook](#), Article III: Senate Meetings, Voting, #4

A motion to amend this section to “Senators may not be placed on the initial ballot for more than one position in any single election” passed with unanimous consent.

Nominations for University Senate Parliamentarian

Senator Pierce will serve as parliamentarian for the September and October Senate meetings, in anticipation of a change to the Senate rules concerning eligibility for the role.

[Resolution on Caste-Based Discrimination at Rutgers](#) – Submitted by Senator Audrey Truschke, School of Arts and Sciences - Newark, Faculty

The Executive Committee docketed this resolution for the September Senate agenda.

Standing Committees/Panels

Proposed Charge:

Automatic Textbooks Billing – Hakim Hines, Non-Senator

Charge: *The University Senate should explore the nature and impact of automatic textbook billing by investigating the following issues: 1) Why automatic textbook billing was initiated; 2) Whether and the university and professors can better inform students about enrollment in automatic textbook billing; and 3) What steps can be taken to transform this program from “opt out” (automatic charges) to “opt in” (voluntary charges).*

Rationale: With the consent of university bookstores and bursars, publishers are leveraging the automatic textbook enrollment system to increase their profits, while preventing students from choosing other vendors. Tuition is already a significant burden for students, and textbooks add to this financial strain. While integrating textbook costs into the tuition bill might seem convenient, it has been poorly implemented. Students are often unaware of their inclusion in the Automatic Textbook Billing program unless they have a conscientious professor who informs them. Even then, opting out is a cumbersome process that still results in initial charges and delayed refunds while preventing the students to use other vendors that provide low-cost alternatives. The Senate should investigate the Automatic Textbook Billing on campus to prevent single vendors from profiting, regardless of the positive cause, and to give students the opportunity to perhaps use these funds with vendors that provide low-cost alternatives and/or use the remaining funds for tuition. Another alternative is to give the option of opting out of the entire program during initial enrollment, or transforming the program from “opt out” to “opt in.”

[Automatic Textbook Billing: Limited Choice, Uncertain Savings](#)

[College Textbooks: Tips for Saving Money in the New School Year](#)

Outcome: The Student Affairs Committee was issued this charge with a deadline of January 2025.

Proposed Charge:

Institutional Neutrality – Wayne Eastman, Rutgers Business School: Newark/NB, Faculty, and Cynthia Saltzman, Lecturer-Camden, Faculty

Charge: *Should Rutgers adopt a policy of institutional neutrality similar to the principles set forth in the University of Chicago’s Kalven Report, which would require the University, schools, academic units, and departments to refrain from taking stances on controversial political issues, so as to protect the right of individuals in the university community to pursue the fullest extent of inquiry and debate? Such a restriction, it should be noted, would not preclude individuals from taking positions on such issues.*

Should the Executive Committee again fail to recommend consideration of the proposed charge, we plan to introduce it as a resolution to be discussed and voted on at some point in the coming year. Ryan Ansloan of FIRE has indicated that he would be happy to speak to a committee or to the Senate as a whole on behalf of the proposal and its consistency with free speech principles.

Rationale: The problems of imposed orthodoxy associated with official position-taking on controversial political topics outside the mission of a university are significant, and have rightly attracted considerable attention recently. Though the specifics have varied from university to university, a substantial number of schools, including peer AAU schools, have adopted versions of institutional neutrality, with a number doing so in 2023 or 2024.* Whether the majority of the Senate is in favor of our doing so or not, discussion and debate on the topic followed by a Senate vote is eminently worth having, either subsequent to an investigation following the proposed charge or, alternatively, through a resolution.

*A partial list of adopting schools–

1. Claremont McKenna College
2. The University of North Carolina System
3. Vanderbilt University
4. The University of Wyoming
5. Columbia University
6. Utah State University
7. College of the Holy Cross
8. Harvard University
9. Syracuse University
10. Stanford University
11. Purdue University

<https://www.thefire.org/research-learn/adoptions-official-position-institutional-neutrality>

Outcome: The Executive Committee amended the charge proposal by removing:

- The second paragraph of the Charge
- The last sentence of the first paragraph of the Rationale
- The final sentence of the Rationale.

The University Structure and Governance Committee was issued this charge with a deadline of December 2024.

Committee Report and Recommendations:

Ad Hoc Committee on University Senate Parliamentarian – Jon Oliver, Chair

[Report on S-2332: University Senate Parliamentarian](#)

The committee was charged as follows:

Currently, the Parliamentarian must be a Senator. To maintain neutrality in the role and allow a Parliamentarian senator to speak on the Senate floor, consider whether changing the qualifications of the Parliamentarian to allow the appointment of a non-Senator, such as a professional hired for the role or a former Senator, and/or allowing for a Deputy Parliamentarian would better allow Senators to participate in Senate business and enhance the functioning of the Senate.

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

Open Charge Request:

The Ad Hoc Committee on Continued Assessment of Ongoing Merger Process of New Jersey Medical School and Robert Wood Johnson Medical School requests to be discharged:

S-2314-1: Continued Assessment of Ongoing Merger Process of New Jersey Medical School and Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Outcome: S-2314-1 was discharged. Senators from New Jersey Medical School and Robert Wood Johnson Medical School will be asked to volunteer to serve on the medical schools' merger committee.

Old Business

Open Charge Request:

S-2323: Definition of Environmentally and Socially Responsible Materials and Products (University Policy 20.1.11 Procurement and Payment Policy)

USGC requested clarification on why it had been assigned this charge.

Outcome: S-2323 was discharged. Chair Foster will consult with the University Policy Manager to determine how to move forward.

New Business

One item of New Business was added to the agenda with unanimous consent: discussion of the potential ramifications from the lawsuit to pay current and former college athletes. Chair Foster will ask for recommendations for an appropriate individual to speak to the Executive Committee on this topic.

Adjournment

The Executive Committee adjourned at 3:38 p.m.

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