



University Senate's Communication with Constituents Through Social Media **Recommendations**

Charge: to explore and recommend how the University Senate can utilize social media platforms (i.e., Instagram) to create and enhance communications to foster awareness and engagement.

I. Why utilize Social Media?

The University Senate has long grappled with its inability to communicate with its constituents effectively as a deliberative body. According to University Policy 50.2.2, the University Senate considers matters of general university interest and makes recommendations to the university administration. However, the vast majority of Senate constituents (students, faculty, staff, etc.) are often unaware of these recommendations or even the existence of the University Senate altogether. Administrators, including the University President, have access to the Rutgers Automated Mass-mailing System (RAMS), which allows them to communicate with all students and employees on “University Business.” Despite constant efforts towards gaining access to this system or even seeking to be recognized by Rutgers Today, the University Senate has yet to find a way to communicate key information to their constituents, such as the resolutions and recommendations that have been adopted, any emergency meetings that are convened, what each constituency is concerned about, etc. Given these delays, Social media provides a more straightforward and direct communication method with the broader Rutgers community (ex., Alumni). [Other](#) university senates utilize social media to communicate directly with constituents. This can be done without the permission of higher administration, as authorization to use campus-wide listservs has been stalled. Given the vast influence of social media on the lives of constituents, social media allows individuals to receive information more quickly without having to navigate the Senate website for everything they need to know what the Senate is up to (if they are not already aware of what the Senate is). From the perspective of student senators, it is often hard to engage with the entire population they represent, and their efforts are mainly concentrated on speaking with the people who come to their respective governing association meetings.

II. What would this look like?

After convening during the Fall 2024 semester, the Ad-Hoc Committee determined that Instagram & Facebook were the best platforms to achieve the following goals:

- **Promote Greater Transparency:** Provide updates on Senate activities, decisions/recommendations, and initiatives. In other words, highlight recent actions of the Executive Committee, general standing committee, and full Senate, as well as any significant responses from the University President or Governing Boards.
- **Provide Better Engagement:** Foster interactions between the Senate and students, faculty, and staff.
- **Awareness:** Introduce and explain what the Rutgers University Senate is, its composition, past actions/accomplishments, schedule of meetings, etc.
- **Feedback:** Serve as a platform for the university community to voice concerns or ask questions.
- Any other goals determined by the University Senate and its Executive Committee.

A visual template can be found [here](#).

In addition, given Facebook and Instagram operate under the same company (Meta), features are available for users to post content on both platforms simultaneously.

III. Recommendations & Logistics

In order to best execute this initiative, the following shall be recommended to the University Senate:

- The Rutgers University Senate will implement Facebook and Instagram within its communication efforts
- Integrating these social media platforms shall not be an alternative to constantly sought access to constituent communication, meaning efforts to access other methods shall continue.
- The Senate Office shall have complete control/access to all proposed social media platforms, with the Chair & Vice-Chair of the University Senate serving as the final step in the approval process before the Senate Office publishes anything to these platforms.
- The Senate EC shall create a Social Media Subcommittee of the EC to create and vet content for final approval of the chair (following any procedures in accordance with the [Senate Handbooks](#)). This subcommittee shall be considered to ensure content creation, communications between the subcommittee, the Senate office, and the Senate Chair & Vice-Chair, and communication with Rutgers Marketing & Communications for any necessary training. Non-EC Senators who wish to contribute to the subcommittee's efforts may do so as a non-voting contributor.
 - Editing and Design platforms such as Canva or Adobe Creative Cloud (which Rutgers provides for free) shall be used to create any content or other platforms deemed necessary by those operating these platforms.

- A [content calendar](#) should be utilized with dates and posts clearly outlined to ensure that posts are timely and receive approval. This shall be maintained by the communications standing committee.
- If these recommendations were to be approved by the entire University Senate, communication efforts on social media may start **right away**.

IV. Conclusion

The University Senate's ability to effectively communicate with its constituents has been crucial. Given that current efforts to achieve this goal have been stalled, other alternative methods must be considered. Although part of the responsibility of university senators is to communicate the senate's activities to their constituents, it is unknown whether information stays consistent. Having a single source of information, such as a social media platform dedicated to the University Senate, not only supports Senators' efforts to communicate with their constituents with consistent details but also allows the Senate to promote itself within the broader Rutgers Community.

Respectfully submitted,

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