

**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY SENATE  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
December 5, 2025**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Andrews, Asch, Foster (Chair), Boxer, Davis, Gordy, Haley, Kiss, Ntiwunka-Ifeanyi, Pierce, Purcell, Schwartz, Scott,

**ALSO ATTENDING:** *T. Cooper (University Senate Executive Secretary) M. Smith (University Senate Administrative Assistant), F. Conway (Rutgers-New Brunswick Chancellor)*

The regular meeting of the University Senate Executive Committee (EC) was held on Friday, December 5, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. remotely via Zoom.

**Chair's Report**– Lucille Foster, Senate Chair

Chair Foster called the December 5, 2025 Senate EC meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.. A Chair's report was not presented given a full agenda.

**Secretary's Report**– Taryn Cooper, Senate Executive Secretary

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of the [November 7, 2025 Senate Executive Committee Minutes](#)
- Communications
  - Website Updates- The IT team is working on changes to the committee rosters, reverse chronological order of charges/resolutions, and constituency inconsistencies for Senators on the Senate website

**Listserv Communications**

Senator Ashleie Gordy spoke on concerns regarding the Senator listserv to include repetitive emails, confusion, and non-Senators being included. The Executive Secretary confirmed that all emails added to the Senator listserv are active Senators, but there is no way to limit if a non-Senator address is included. The EC also determined to have an additional meeting time allotted between EC meetings for emergencies to limit voting by email as much as possible. This will be set up starting in January 2026.

**Discussion- Chancellor Francine Conway, Rutgers-New Brunswick**

Chancellor Conway engaged the EC by answering questions regarding the following topics:

- Creating multiple committees on campus regarding shared governance
- How Rutgers navigates compliance with federal guidelines
- What does rebranding look like for DEI related offices and positions

**Senate Engagement in Policy Development Process**

Morgan now has a spreadsheet with all upcoming dates and times for the policy development committee meetings to assist in ensuring elected Senate representatives are informed and engaged moving forward.

### **USGC [Policy on Policies Resolution](#)**

The EC approved without objection to add the resolution to the agenda for the December Senate meeting.

### **USGC [Elections Proposal Resolution](#)**

The EC approved without objection to add the resolution to the agenda for the December Senate meeting. The agenda item proposed by Senator Rob Scott to determine a formal date to request results of SAS Senate elections in the Spring has been included in this discussion and resolution proposal.

### **Rutgers School of Medicine (RSM) Bylaws Process**

The Executive Secretary will invite Dean Amy Murtha to the January 2026 EC meeting to discuss the bylaws process.

### **Standing Committees/Panels**

#### **Committee Report and Recommendations**

**Instruction, Curricula, and Advising Committee/ Student Affairs Committee-  
Senator Natalie Borisovets (ICAC), Taryn Cooper (Former ICAC), Senator Lisa  
Siebenaler Easley (SAC), Senator Consuella Askew (SAC)**

#### **[Report on S-2330-1 Expanding Access to University Libraries Across Campuses](#)**

ICAC and SAC were jointly charged as follows:

*Investigate current University library hours across all campuses. Determine if those hours are adequately meeting student needs (access to collections; access to study spaces; access to technology) on each campus. Make recommendations as appropriate.*

**Outcome:** The EC docketed this report for the December Senate agenda.

#### **Proposed Charge:**

**[School to School Transfer Issues](#)** – Senator Martha Haviland, Faculty-New Brunswick and Non-Senator Sofia Pinto-Figueroa, Staff-Newark

**Charge:** Examine (i) the existing policies, procedures, and practices that govern school-to-school and campus-to-campus transfers within the university, and (ii) the challenges that currently enrolled undergraduate students face when seeking to transfer to another Rutgers program outside of their school of enrollment. Recommend strategies and considerations, as appropriate, to ensure that the transfer process is transparent, accessible, and easily understood by all students.

**Rationale:** Applicants to Rutgers University may select multiple schools for admission consideration. Many students are not admitted to their first-choice school, and in some cases, applicants to schools at Rutgers–New Brunswick may be considered for admission to schools on the Rutgers–Newark or Rutgers–Camden campuses. Students who enroll at a school other than their top choice may do so with the expectation that they will have an opportunity to apply for a transfer after completing a semester or more at Rutgers. While many students remain at their initially enrolled school throughout their academic careers, others may seek to transfer to another school – either to pursue a specific academic program not offered at their current school or to better align with their academic or career goals. These transfers may occur within a campus (inter-school or intra-campus transfers) or between campuses (inter-campus transfers). Anecdotal reports from students, including student-athletes, suggest that the transfer process, particularly for school-to-school transfers within Rutgers–New Brunswick and campus-to-campus transfers to Rutgers–New Brunswick, can present challenges. Reported issues include a perceived lack of transparency regarding transfer criteria, limited clarity about decision-making processes, and instances of transfer denials without detailed explanations. At the same time, it is recognized that individual schools and campuses operate within constraints such as enrollment capacity, accreditation standards, and resource limitations that may affect their ability to accept all qualified transfer applicants. A clear understanding of these processes and constraints, and the identification of potential areas for improved communication and consistency, can help ensure that transfer policies support both institutional goals and student success across Rutgers University.

**Outcome:** ABIDE and ASRAC were jointly issued this charge with a deadline of December 2026.

### **Proposed Charge:**

**Review and Clarification of the Educational Benefits (Tuition Remission) Policy for Rutgers Employees-** Chazz Fellenz, Non-Senator, Staff, Newark

**Charge:** I would like for the committee to examine the current policy [60.2.1 Educational Benefits](#), specifically the section governing tuition remission eligibility for graduate and professional programs. The review should focus on: Clarifying which programs are considered eligible or ineligible, particularly in relation to online and hybrid degree programs created after July 1, 2013. Assessing whether the policy language is transparent and easily understood by employees, especially newer staff. Evaluating whether the policy’s intent, to support and encourage continuing education and professional development among Rutgers employees, remains aligned with the university’s evolving academic landscape, which now includes a wide range of online and hybrid offerings.

Recommending updates or supplemental guidance to ensure consistency, accessibility, and equity across all campuses and employee groups. Consideration for removal of programs created prior to July 1, 2013.

**Rationale:** Tuition remission remains one of Rutgers University’s most valued employee benefits, offering staff and faculty the opportunity to pursue further education and professional growth within the institution. However, the current Educational Benefits policy includes a clause limiting eligibility to “academic programs that were established by and contained within Rutgers University prior to July 1, 2013.” As written, this language can be confusing for employees, particularly newer staff, who may not have the means to determine which programs were established before or after that date, or whether online or hybrid programs qualify. Recently, a staff member enrolled in an online master’s program, believing it would be covered, only to later discover it was ineligible under this clause, resulting in a financial hold mid-semester. Despite the fact that the in-person program is the same exact program, just in person. This situation highlights the need to revisit the clarity and intent of the policy to prevent similar hardships and to ensure that tuition remission continues to serve as an equitable and accessible benefit in an era of increasingly digital academic offerings. A Senate review and recommendation process could help strengthen transparency, consistency, and employee confidence in this important benefit.

**Outcome:** The EC declined to charge this item to a committee as this is more of a contractual topic within the unions. The EC suggested that the proposer request a policy review through the Policy Development Committee. The Executive Secretary will follow up with the proposer on how to submit a request for a policy review.

**Proposed Charge:**

**Forced Merger of Criminal Justice and Sociology Department (Rutgers, NB) –Non-Senator, Michael Welch, Faculty-New Brunswick**

**Charge:** Attached is a memo (17 May 2025) that I sent to Executive Dean Wade (and Area Dean Robin Leichenko), concerning the (coerced) merger between Criminal Justice and the Department of Sociology. As of 10 October (2025), I have not received a response from either of them. Also attached is an update on other related developments (12 October 2025). The essence of the problem revolves around a proposal that was prepared in bad faith without sufficient transparency, leaving CJ faculty uninformed about the plans to merge with Sociology. Moreover, the merger was developed while Professor Michael Welch (founding member of CJ), was overseas on sabbatical at the University of Sydney in year 2024. Complicating matters, CJ faculty were unaware that Alec Walen had assumed the role of “Deputy Director of Strategic Planning.” Walen is neither a Social or Behavioral Scientist. Actually, he is on faculty at the Law School at Rutgers, Camden.

**Merger report; 2.) Update.**

**Rationale:** This charge requests that the Senate thoroughly investigate the matter. So as to reconcile the objections of the Criminal Justice faculty who oppose the merger, we recommend that the Senate declare the merger invalid until alternative plans can be explored. For years, I have recommended to the Executive Dean to have the CJ major evaluated by the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, our leading advisory group. The ACJS recommends that all CJ Departments in the nation be assessed every five years. That last time ACJS evaluated the undergraduate program at Rutgers (NB) was in 1996. At stake is a host of problems that have an enormous negative impact on CJ faculty and staff as well as our 600 undergraduate students majoring in Criminal Justice (Rutgers, NB).

**Outcome:** The EC declined to charge this item to a committee as this is a grievance process. The Executive Secretary will follow up with the proposer with the SAS bylaws and suggest the appeals process.

**Proposed Charge:**

**Review and Standardize the Election Processes for University Senators Across All Constituencies-** Senator Tuğrul Özel, Faculty- New Brunswick

**Charge:** The University Senate is charged with examining the election processes used across all academic units (departments, divisions, schools, and colleges) to select university senators. Specifically, the Senate committee shall: 1) Determine whether university senators in each academic unit are elected by the eligible university senators through a verifiable and transparent election process, or whether any units rely on appointment practices by unit heads or administrators. 2) Assess the degree of compliance with University Policy 50.2.1 and any relevant governing documents requiring that senators be chosen by election. 3) Identify inconsistencies, gaps, or deviations in how elections are conducted, including absence of formal procedures, lack of transparency, or administrative influence. 4) Develop recommendations for a standardized, university-wide procedure to ensure that all university senators are elected through: – A true, fair, and democratic election; – Conducted or overseen by an impartial Ombuds entity, designated by the University Senate (e.g., the Senate Parliamentarian or the Senate Executive Secretary); – Implemented uniformly across all units. 5) Propose mechanisms for verification and accountability, including: – Annual certification of election results by the designated Ombudsman; – A repository for documented election procedures for every academic unit; – Clear consequences or remediation steps for units not in compliance. Expected Outcome: 1) A written report to the Senate Executive Committee detailing: – Findings regarding current election practices; – Identification of units where senators are appointed rather than elected; – Recommended policy revisions or new procedures to enforce fair elections; – A proposed University-wide standard for Senator elections, including the formal role of an independent Ombudsman.

**Rationale:** The Rutgers University Senate derives its legitimacy, representativeness, and shared-governance authority from the democratic election of faculty senators by their peers. However, concerns have been raised that in some academic units, faculty senators may be appointed by department chairs, program directors, or other administrative

leaders rather than being elected through a transparent, documented, and fair electoral process. Such practices—whether isolated or widespread—undermine the principles of shared governance, faculty autonomy, and the Senate’s foundational commitment to institutional democracy. To safeguard representative governance and ensure consistency across Rutgers’ diverse academic units, a formal review is needed to determine whether all faculty senators are, in fact, elected by faculty constituents through a legitimate election supervised by a neutral party.

**Outcome:** The EC voted to amend the charge title to remove ‘academic units’ and replace with ‘constituencies’ and to take out ‘faculty’. The EC voted to amend the charge language to replace ‘faculty Senators’ to ‘University Senators’. USGC was issued the amended charge with a deadline of December 2026.

### **Proposed Charge:**

**Responses to threats and harassment-** Senator Troy Shinbrot, Faculty- New Brunswick

**Charge:** The following is a draft of a charge to be submitted to the RU Senate EC dealing with Threats & Harassment. This includes more than the usual amount of background material; hopefully this may be helpful for completing a resolution expeditiously. ALSO, it may be desirable to break this up into multiple charges: I leave that to the EC, but urge that significant elements not be removed without discussion. Finally, in view of the broad importance and interest to Senators in multiple different committees, it would be helpful if whatever Committee is assigned allows active participation from members of other committees.

[LINK TO CHARGE HERE.](#)

**Rationale:** Rutgers community members have been personally identified by multiple external groups, some identified and some anonymous, and have been threatened based on their scholarly speech and writing. Action is needed to protect the rights of free expression and academic freedom without fear of reprisal or personal attack.

**Outcome:** The EC declined to charge this item as it would be duplicative of efforts occurring across the University. The EC suggested that the proposer rewrite a version of the charge that focuses on developing a policy on doxxing.

### **Open Charge Request**

FPAC requests an extension on:

[S-2317-3 Prevalence, Procedures, and Challenges of Faculty Occupancy of Dual Leadership Roles](#)

The current deadline is 12/3/2025. FPAC is working on a report that they hope to submit soon, but they are still waiting on data from UHR.

**Outcome:** The EC extended the deadline to be June 2026.

**Old Business**

There was none.

**New Business**

There was none.

**Adjournment**

The Executive Committee adjourned at 2:35 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Taryn Cooper, Executive Secretary of the University Senate