

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY SENATE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE-SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES
FEBRUARY 23, 2026

MINUTES: Special Meeting of the Executive Committee

DATE: February 23, 2026

TIME AND PLACE: 9:00 a.m., Remote via Zoom

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrews, Asch, Boxer, Davis, Foster (Chair), Gordy, Haley, Pierce, Purcell (Vice Chair) Salas-de la Cruz, Scott, Schwartz

ALSO ATTENDING: *W. Castner (Executive Vice President of Legal Affairs and General Counsel), T. Cooper (University Senate Executive Secretary), K. Cop (Executive Director, Chief of University Police), R. Gigliotti (Chief of Staff - President's Office), J. McGruther (Assistant Deputy General Counsel), M. Smith (University Senate Administrative Assistant), H. Velez (Interim Senior Vice President - Chief Operating Officer)*

A special meeting of the University Senate Executive Committee was held on Monday, February 23, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. remotely via Zoom.

Call to Order – Lucille Foster, Senate Chair

Chair Foster called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Discussion of Freedom of Expression Guidelines:

- Clarify standing of the Free Expression Guidelines under Policy and Standards and process used to establish them.
- WDEA (Workplace Democracy Enhancement Act Statute).
- Request to remove the Free Expression Guidelines from Policy and Standards section.

The following topics emerged from the discussion:

- The guidelines were held to offer a level of specificity that provides for flexibility beyond what might be possible to capture in a policy.
- The guidelines under review are connected to the [50:3.5 Disruptions: Administrative Policy and Response](#).

- The guidelines were developed in 2024, under the previous administration, by IPO with input from OGC.
- The guidelines are intended to protect the safety of constituencies and to provide specifics for protests on campus.
- Material concerns that the guidelines did not follow the proper procedure through the Policy Approval Committee and/or Board of Governors were acknowledged.
- Some content within the guidelines were viewed to be overly restrictive, e.g., permitting, place, and might be held to infringe upon first amendment rights and/or federally protected labor actions.

Next Steps

- While the guidelines will not be rescinded, OGC committed to review them once it has conducted an exercise to learn from peer institutions in this regard. The Chair asked that the guidelines are marked as “under review” during this time.
- OGC would welcome the opportunity to convene a small group in support of this exercise and invite advice and input from the Senate Executive Committee and others as appropriate.
- OGC will also consider if there are parts of the guidelines that might move into the formal policy approval process.

Discussion of RUPD’s Response to February 4, 2026, Event at Newark:

- Distinguishing Rutgers community protests from federally protected labor actions.
- Role of RUPD at Rutgers protests.

The following topics emerged from the discussion:

- Review of the process to hold a demonstration on campus:
 1. Permit process in accordance with [20.1.9 Facilities Use and Scheduling Policy](#).
 2. Coordination with RUPD staff and Student Affairs staff.
 3. RUPD is present to protect safety of community and first amendment speech rights.
 4. If the event becomes unsafe or becomes a disruption, a dispersal order is declared. Who can declare a disruption is outlined in [50:3.5 Disruptions: Administrative Policy and Response](#).
- Labor action is protected federally.

Next Steps

- OGC/RUPD to explore community policing models at peer institutions and advise the university.

Adjournment

The Executive Committee adjourned at 10:08 a.m.

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