



February 9, 2026

William F. Tate, IV, President,
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
*CC: Ralph Gigliotti, Kimberly Lewis, Keena Arbuthnot, Bill Castner, Henry Velez, Kenneth Cop,
Tonya Smith-Jackson, Rutgers University Senate Executive Committee*

Re: Rutgers University Free Expression Guidelines/RUPD Response

Dear President Tate,

During our scheduled Rutgers Senate Executive Committee (EC) meeting on February 6, 2026, a senator reported a matter that gravely concerns us and we now seek your considered response.

In short, we were advised that officers of the Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) attended a protest taking place at the Chancellor's Building (CLJ) on February 4, 2026. Specifically, that said RUPD officers blocked entry into the CLJ building and directed those gathered away from the area. The Chief Financial Officer subsequently appeared to receive a letter prepared by the President of the University Senate Assembly (URA) for the Chancellor.

The concerns raised focused on two related matters. First, the deployment of RUPD during a lawful on-campus protest, particularly with respect to the safety of Rutgers–Newark staff and whether the level of police involvement was necessary or appropriate. Second, the continued reliance on the [Rutgers University Free Expression Guidelines](#), noting that these are not approved as University Policy. We understand that these guidelines were created to help ensure safety for all participants; however, concerns have been raised regarding why they are posted on a university policy website despite not having been formally adopted as an official policy.

These issues were shared with the Rutgers Senate Executive Committee for awareness and further consideration, particularly given the importance of clearly defined, consistently applied policies governing free expression and protest activity across the University.

We request that a meeting is convened within the next few weeks with all relevant parties included on this correspondence to discuss this matter and develop clear guidance moving forward. As the Rutgers Senate Executive Committee, we seek to allay growing concerns being especially mindful of the heightened sensitivities on university campuses given active immigration enforcement operations underway across the U.S.

Sincerely,

Lucille L. Foster
Chair of the Senate