

**UNIVERSITY SENATE COMMUNICATIONS DISCUSSION MEETING
MINUTES
Wednesday September 16, 2026**

DATE: September 16, 2026

TIME AND PLACE: 2:00 p.m., Remote via Zoom

ATTENDING: P. Boxer (Senate Vice Chair), T. Cooper (University Senate Executive Secretary), R. Gigliotti (Chief of Staff – President’s Office), A. Haley (Senate Chair), M. Smith (University Senate Administrative Assistant), K. Manning (Senior Vice President for University Communications and Marketing), M. Norin (Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer).

A meeting was held on Wednesday September 16, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. Zoom. The meeting was convened by Ralph Gigliotti, Chair Haley, and Vice Chair Boxer to discuss the university Senate’s communication with its constituencies.

The following is a list of action items and topics discussed during the meeting:

- **Question (COF Gigliotti):** What are the communication challenges, opportunities, and where are there areas in which increased collaboration can be established?
- Chair Haley described a central, basic pillar of shared governance to be a mechanism for the governing body to have direct communication with its constituency.
- General communication within the Senate was described to come from the Senate office via Executive Secretary and Administrative Assistant through listservs and email.
 - Listservs were created years ago for Senators to be able to communicate with each other.
- Chair Haley reached out to several school Senates within in the Big10 and found that about 2/3rds of the Senates have the ability to independently communicate out about their work directly to their constituents.
 - It is noted that most Senates are primarily faculty Senates, as Rutgers is unique in the Senate representing multiple constituencies (faculty, staff, students, and alumni).
- The New Brunswick Faculty Council worked with Chancellor Conway to develop a similar method for council communications, but there were questions from faculty about who the emails were coming from (i.e. it was unclear if it was messaging coming from the Chancellor’s office, NBFC, etc).
- Vice Chair Boxer noted that in SAS-N, anyone can request to have an email sent out to all constituencies but there have been complications of message approval due to content concerns from administration.
- The purpose of the Senate having direct email communication with all constituencies is to communicate what the Senate has accomplished, to improve clarity and transparency with what the Senate currently doing, increase awareness of the Senate’s role at the university, and provide the service of shared governance for anyone in the community to come to the Senate with topics of interest.
- Historically, university-wide email distribution requests have been limited to presidential messages, compliance-based messages, and emergency coded messages.

- From a structural perspective, there is some layering across the listservs that exist down to each CLU. Typical hierarchical structure to the list:
 - All faculty/ staff list.
 - Chancellor lists to their own constituencies.
 - Specific list to students.
 - Specific list to faculty.
 - Specific list to staff.
 - Each school has a list.
- Each list must have an owner and then the configurations are defaulted to be moderated mostly for cyber risks and potentially content, depending on the list. Open lists with no moderation lead to spamming.
- Current methods of outreach include Rutgers Today features for the Senate that are sent out monthly on the Tuesday following the Senate meeting.
 - Rutgers Today does not typically go to students but does reach alumni.
 - There is a way for Rutgers Today to be sent to students in a special edition feature.
 - Rutgers Today has the highest amount of traffic specifically amongst alumni.
 - Rutgers today is not opt- in unless some deletes or blocks it as a Rutgers employee. Other people can subscribe to receive it even if they are a Rutgers employee.
- Chair Haley noted that it is a governance issue for the university to claim that there is an existing functional shared governance process, when there isn't a method for the Senate (which is substantiated by university policy) to directly communicate with its constituencies.
- **Question (COF Gigliotti):** When the Senate is trying to solicit input from constituents, don't the Senators go back to their units and representatives within the CLUs to get the feedback from their constituencies?
 - It can be done this way, but it's a large effort for each unit especially since it is unclear on who the list owners are in each unit. Every Senator would need access to the list to get feedback from constituencies. Lecturers and those who hold multiple constituencies may get missed in these lists.
- The research SVP Manning's office has done shows that because people receive a lot of emails from a lot of different places, email fatigue is trending. People are overwhelmed with information and it's coming from too many places.
 - The office is trying to look at different ways to improve the fatigue and improve information streamlining.
- **Question(SVP Manning):** If the Senate is advisory to the President, who is the right entity to reach out to the constituencies?
 - The Board of Governors represents a similar body and they do not utilize direct email with constituencies.
 - What is the appropriate direction of communication?
 - The Senate is advisory to the President, so the President should advise the community on what the Senate is doing.
 - The Senate could also be advising the community directly on what the Senate is advising the President.
- The My Rutgers portal has potential to be an information housing unit where individual channels can be established that link to particular pages/communities (such as the Senate).
 - The students have their own separate portal but could configure accordingly.

- Email is viewed to be the main preference for faculty and staff, which was also concurred by a survey that polled faculty and staff preferences. As a faculty or staff member, a portal is not ideal for the first line of communication.
- There is an effort to develop a weekly digest that cuts down on emails and would assist in navigating people to the portal for more information on the featured topics in the digest.
- While it is not a substitution for direct email access, the Senate could be open to a Rutgers Today placement that can be crafted by the Senate with a monthly message that goes to faculty and staff with an overview of Senate work and link to Senate page.
- The main administrative concern on why direct email to constituents isn't plausible:
 - The President's Office must be judicious as an enterprise with the number of emails that are going out to the entire population of over 100,000 people.
 - This is purposeful so that the emails with emergency implications that are released are taken seriously.
- Generally, the President has not been inclined to see university wide emails being used frequently by anyone.
- There was an idea to have CLU's send out emails to their constituencies.
 - An issue following this idea was noted that Chancellors have said they do not have discretion to send out emails to the unit, as it needs to be approved by the President's office.

Next Steps

- Chief of Staff Gigliotti will have conversation with the President regarding the topics discussed during today's meeting.
- Chair Haley, Vice Chair Boxer, and the Senate office is asked to prepare a summary proposal and what was learned from other schools and their communication establishments
- SVP Manning, SVP Norin, and Chief of Staff Gigliotti will look further into the various options discussed today such as Rutgers Today features, My Rutgers portal channels, and discuss with the President.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

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