



**COMMITTEE ON  
ACADEMIC UNIT ORGANIZATION**

**INTERIM REPORT  
SPRING 2016**



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this interim report is to provide an update on the activities of the Committee on Academic Unit Organization (henceforth referred to simply as the AUOC).

The AUOC is charged with examining how best to organize Rutgers as we respond to the evolving demands of universities. This charge is being executed in two phases. Phase I involves data collection, analysis, and assessment. This includes a review of Rutgers specific information as well as data on relevant peer institutions. Phase II involves the development and planning of specific initiatives that will (i) advance the goal of optimizing the organization of academic units to promote excellence in research and scholarship, teaching, and service and outreach activities; and (ii) prepare Rutgers to manage the anticipated changes in higher education. This AUOC Interim Report marks the transition from Phase I to Phase II. The AUOC Final Report will detail specific recommended initiatives and mark the end of Phase II.

The AUOC addressed the Phase I objectives through two major approaches. First, the entire committee reviewed multiple documents about the current and past organization of the University and also met with a series of current and past Rutgers academic leaders including the President and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, all four Chancellors, and selected deans and administrators. The committee as a whole identified key areas of concern. Second, the AUOC subdivided into the following four working subcommittees to engage in further data gathering and analysis within specific domains of concern, and to begin to generate recommendations for enhancing academic unit organization:

## **COMMUNITY/OUTREACH:**

This subcommittee was charged with understanding Rutgers' unique status as a land grant institution with three large urban campuses, including strengths and opportunities in relation to the university's community and outreach initiatives, partnerships with local industry, and our relationship with New Jersey.

## **INTEGRATION:**

This subcommittee was charged with examining the current relationships between legacy Rutgers and RBHS and comparing this to the organization at aspirational peer institutions, with a focus on how to foster Rutgers' strengths in academics, research, and training and how to best promote faculty interactions across units.

## **INTERDISCIPLINARITY/CENTERS & INSTITUTES:**

This subcommittee was charged with broadly investigating how interdisciplinary work and faculty collaboration is fostered at Rutgers and elsewhere, with the additional specific focus on understanding how centers, bureaus, and institutes are organized at Rutgers and aspirational peer institutions and how these units can help promote interdisciplinarity.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING:**

This subcommittee was charged with examining the strategic planning documents of our campuses, as well as other relevant current and past university-wide committees and efforts, with a specific focus of identifying common elements, challenges, and opportunities. This subcommittee also collected information on anticipated future challenges to institutions of higher education.

In the work of the subcommittees and the AUOC as a whole, the following recurring themes were identified:

1. Our structure is unique. Historically, Rutgers has frequently grown by acquisition of other independent institutions. This has led to a very different structure than many of our peers that grew according to a central plan. While this contributes richly to our history, it also is the root of a number of organizational oddities and potentially redundant structures. Any reorganization will need to balance a respect for our history with the need for forward progress.
2. We are often less than the sum of our parts. Current academic and administrative structures encourage a high degree of unhealthy internal competition between academic units. The time, energy, and funds spent on internal competition lessen our competitiveness with our aspirational peers. Our focus should be on external, not internal, competition.
3. “One Rutgers” is a meaningful goal. Rutgers academic units represent phenomenal depth and breadth; however, accessing all of this academic richness is frequently challenging for students and faculty alike. From simple lack of awareness or information sharing through significant academic and administrative barriers to cross unit enrollment and collaboration, access to the whole of Rutgers by any individual student or faculty member is often severely restricted. Greater access to all of Rutgers by all members of the Rutgers community is important.
4. Geography matters. The distributed nature of our University, while providing unique opportunities, also poses significant challenges. While technology can overcome some of the geographic challenges, certain research and educational ventures always will be constrained by proximity.

5. Academic unit performance is strongly influenced by factors that are beyond the purview of the AUOC. While changes to the organization of the academic units at Rutgers can enhance our success in key areas, these units are operating in an administrative environment that greatly impacts their functioning. Administrative structures, policies, and procedures must reflect and support the academic mission of the University.
6. The next 10 years will bring unprecedented change to all institutions of higher education. These changes are driven by the impact of new communication, research, and teaching technologies, as well as by a shift in student demand from obtaining a comprehensive education to simply being trained to do a given job. Rutgers must develop a sustainable economic model for higher education, and be prepared for expected dramatic changes in the demographic composition, needs and demands of our future students. A key concern is to ensure that Rutgers remains relevant to students who will have a wide range of different options available to them to pursue their educational goals.

The data and analyses from the subcommittees are being used to guide discussion of the full AUOC as we transition from Phase I to Phase II. During Phase II we will develop a set of specific recommendations that address the key issues identified by the subcommittees and are informed by successful experiences at relevant peer institutions.

In its second year, the AUOC plans to focus efforts on the specific recommendations that are taking shape in the subcommittees and develop them as additional work is done by the subcommittees and collective discussions occur. This work will also include evaluation of specific proposals for the development of new schools at Rutgers. The AUOC will remain open to additional ideas that seem to hold promise in fulfilling our charge. A key source of input will be the recommendations of our sister Committee on Near-

and Long-Term impact of Instructional Technology, as that committee is specifically addressing issues pertaining to rapidly changing teaching technologies.

One particular concept that has taken a good deal of committee time and consideration concerns

undergraduate education at Rutgers. We will continue to consider ways to improve the full college experience, from recruitment and admission through graduation, with special attention to non-traditional students. Summary reports from each of the subcommittees follow this executive summary.

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## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

### CHAIR

**Linda Brzustowicz**

School of Arts and Sciences, New Brunswick

### MEMBERS

**Eric Allender**

School of Arts and Sciences, New Brunswick

**Raymond Birge**

New Jersey Medical School, Newark

**Marc Gartenberg**

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**William Gause**

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**Larry Katz**

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**Jerome Williams**

Rutgers Business School, Newark and New Brunswick

**Lily Young**

School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, New Brunswick

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is dedicated to the memory of our committee Chair Clement A. Price. His love for his colleagues at Rutgers and his compassion for the communities served by Rutgers will always inspire us.

The committee would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions toward this interim report:

**Glen Acheampong** (Graduate Coordinator, Graduate School-Newark '17; Bloustein '17)

**Caroline Axelrod Mendel** (Graduate Coordinator, GSAPP '16)

**Gisele Thomas** (Graduate School-Newark '15)

**Napis Wong** (Senior Director, Office of the Chancellor)

# SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/OUTREACH

**Co-Chair:** Richard Harris

**Co-Chair:** Jerome Williams

Peter Guarnaccia

Larry Katz

Dona Schneider

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The primary question addressed by this subcommittee is: What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to the University's outreach initiatives, broadly conceived? Thus, we considered not only our civic engagement programs, but also our partnerships with business and industry, and our interactions with government, especially our vital relationship with the state of NJ. Drawing upon internal and external data sources and as well as interviews with university leaders, the subcommittee focused on three primary areas:

1. Assessing the current state of outreach at Rutgers;
2. Serving non-traditional students;
3. Advancing the land-grant mission

## **OUTREACH AT RUTGERS: CURRENT STATE**

Outreach is central to the identity of academic units across the entire Rutgers system. President Barchi, in his charge to our Committee, identified an overarching goal to "...cultivate a broad range of partnerships to pool resources and collaborate more effectively with our stakeholders." We note our Committee's charge describes Rutgers as a system of "urban-based universities." This distinctive land grant vision is clearly reflected in the strategic plans of all Rutgers academic units. Outreach, however, entails the entire spectrum of the University's interaction with external constituencies. Indeed, the term "outreach" may be too narrow to capture the varied ways Rutgers connects with the external environment.

While academic units clearly embrace outreach in its various forms, they rarely execute it collaboratively or as part of a broader strategy. Given the prominence of outreach in our strategic plans and the charge to our Committee, this situation seems anomalous. The

oft-repeated commitment to "One Rutgers" tends to ring hollow as academic units across the University pursue additional revenue opportunistically and with little coordination or communication.

While entrepreneurship and independence are essential to a healthy civic engagement culture, a dearth of communication and strategic thinking can make the whole of Rutgers less than the sum of its parts. In fact, a Committee co-chaired by Jerome Kukor & Isabel Nazario highlighted this problem in a 2007 report:

*The term service (from education of the states' citizens, working with state government to improve public policy and programs to actively running child development programs in Camden and a global leadership institute in Newark) is not just a part of the institution's mission, it is what it does every day. The average person in New Jersey may not know the extent to which Rutgers looms large in the state's life and progress. (p. 15)*

It is clear that administrative and budgetary models as well as institutional inertia militate against such collaboration or leveraging resources. Given these factors, our current strategic planning effort provides an opportunity not only to promote the visibility and impact of our outreach, but also to explore ways to leverage it.

## **SERVING NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS**

A September 28, 2011 essay by Frederick Hess in The Atlantic highlighted the significance and the upward trend of nontraditional student (NT) enrollment nationwide.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, NTs comprise a significant share of graduate and professional study as well at Rutgers and across the nation. New Jersey, itself, has a large underserved population of potential NT students (ages 25 to 64 years) with some college experience but no degree. In 2010, this cohort represented fully one-quarter of

all New Jersey residents (871,838 with some college but no degree and 325,716 with an associate degree).<sup>2</sup>

It is worth noting, moreover, that NT performance compares favorably with traditional four-year students. For example, the most recent three years of data show that the average GPAs of NT students at RU-NB outperformed those of traditional students at RU-NB (Table 1). NTs are also the main enrollees for our night, weekend, off campus, and online course offerings.

**Table 1. Average GPAs for Traditional and Non-Traditional Students, RU-NB<sup>3</sup>**

COHORT	YEAR		
	2012	2013	2014
Traditional Students	2.990	3.000	3.024
Non-Traditional Students	2.945	3.489	3.969
Non-Traditional Students 31+ Years	3.058	NA	NA

Programs that reach out to NTs present an important opportunity for Rutgers and especially for the New Brunswick campus, standing now at 6.4% of total undergraduate enrollment compared to 22.2% for Newark and 31.7% for Camden. As chances for doing coursework online and at satellite campuses across the Rutgers system increase, the University is positioned to develop a comprehensive approach to NT outreach, assuring broad access to a Rutgers degree while leveraging our resources throughout the state.

### **ADVANCING RUTGERS' LAND GRANT MISSION**

Through Rutgers Outreach, all New Jersey residents can access university resources and engage in lifelong learning, wherever they live and work.

While the University's dedication to public service originated with Cook College, it has become a core commitment throughout the Rutgers System (New

Brunswick, Newark, Camden and RBHS) to our partnerships with county governments, and other public as well as private and nonprofit organizations. The extension system at Rutgers, centered in SEBS

*...works to fulfill the goals of land-grant institutions by enlarging the land-grant mission to include the study of environmental problems, natural resources, economic and community development, fisheries, nutrition, public health, and youth development--all of which address the diverse needs of a highly developed state.<sup>4</sup>*

As we look to making the land grant mission relevant in the 21st century, the Subcommittee notes that extension-based outreach, coordinated through SEBS, occurs throughout the entire state of New Jersey and there are significant opportunities to align the work of the extension faculty with the public service programming of all academic units, with an emphasis on our civic engagement in Camden, New Brunswick and Newark. Developing more conscious and strategic connections between extension resources and the land grant missions of our academic units ought to be a focus for outreach across the Rutgers System.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2011/09/old-school-colleges-most-important-trend-is-the-rise-of-the-adult-student/245823/>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2011 American Community Survey.

<sup>3</sup> Data Source: Report of the Task Force on Serving Non-Traditional Students at Rutgers New Brunswick, April 2015.

<sup>4</sup> <http://execdeanagriculture.rutgers.edu/ghcook.asp>

# SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTEGRATION

**Co-Chair:** Arnold Rabson

**Co-Chair:** Lily Young

Eric Allender

Raymond Birge

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The Subcommittee on Integration examined the potential opportunities generated by the merger of legacy UMDNJ units into Rutgers and the establishment of Rutgers Biomedical Health Sciences. The primary focus was on the integration of RBHS units with other Rutgers academic units. Important principles that guided their findings included: (1) Geography plays an important role in Biomedical Sciences, particularly laboratory-based research and education, in which direct person-to-person interactions make an enormous difference; (2) Implementation will require faculty input, faculty oversight and faculty buy-in. This could be assured through a series of faculty committees to oversee and govern the implementation of each recommendation; and (3) Implementation of recommendations will require appropriate resources.

The subcommittee is considering the following areas:

1. Enhanced participation of RBHS faculty in the academic life of legacy Rutgers units across the whole state could provide unique and exciting opportunities for research, scholarship and education. In this context, the subcommittee is addressing the following questions: Should RBHS units offer undergraduate courses and potentially undergraduate majors to enhance and enrich undergraduate education on the Piscataway/New Brunswick, Camden and Newark campuses and as a mechanism to foster increased interactions and integration between geographically co-located RBHS and Rutgers academic units? Should RBHS increase joint graduate offerings with legacy Rutgers units?
2. In view of the extensive basic biomedical science academic activities pre-existing at both RBHS and within legacy Rutgers units, the

subcommittee is considering whether there is a role for duplication of departments between RBHS and other Rutgers academic units.

3. There are a number of different models across the country of the organization and interactions of professional biomedical school faculty and the biomedical faculty of undergraduate/graduate schools. The subcommittee is considering different organizational structures and alignments of basic biomedical scientists between RBHS units and the basic biomedical science departments of the geographically proximal units of legacy Rutgers.
4. The merger of legacy UMDNJ with legacy Rutgers provides exciting and truly novel opportunities for expanded educational and scholarly interactions across all three Rutgers geographical campuses and multiple Rutgers units. The committee is considering examples of these novel potential interactions as mechanisms to enhance the integration and truly make the new Rutgers “more than the sum of its parts”.
5. The subcommittee is considering the role of BA-MD programs in providing new opportunities for integration.
6. Modern and transformative science relies on instrumentation, tools and techniques that have become more and more costly. Shared technologies and core facilities provide important focal points for scientific interactions and cross-fertilization. With the merger, cutting-edge technologies can become more widely available to faculty who may not have had prior access to them. The subcommittee is studying the roles of shared technologies and core facilities as mechanisms for integrating research activities across different Rutgers units.

# SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERDISCIPLINARITY/ CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

**Co-Chair:** Richard Lutz

**Co-Chair:** David Dante Troutt

William Gause

Ali Maher

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The Subcommittee on Interdisciplinarity/Centers and Institutes (C&Is) recognizes that C&Is are essential organizational units for strengthening areas of research excellence. Active C&Is can serve as effective platforms for the development of large multi-investigator grants. C&Is provide a structure where faculty can share their common interests, increasing the likelihood of productive collaborations. An important advantage of C&Is is that they can be used to attract philanthropy as donors are often interested in supporting a specific disease or area of research. C&Is can also act as a bridge between faculty in basic and clinical departments and catalyze the development of translational research projects. For C&Is to thrive, productive interactions with conventional departments should be encouraged. Joint recruitments could strengthen both C&Is and departments, and financial agreements (such as shared indirect costs) can incentivize these interactions.

The subcommittee surveyed administrative policies regarding C&Is at Big 10 and AAU schools. The Rutgers University Policy on C&Is (revised in 2013) compares favorably to the best-conceived policies at our peer institutions. However, it appears that many of these policies are not applied systematically, leading to duplication, persistence of some C&Is beyond their useful life, and other problems. At Rutgers, C&Is are defined by size and classified by the manner in which they were created. According to the policy, “An Institute differs from a Center in that it would have a broader mission than a Center, have wider academic interests than is characteristic of a focused research

center, may have several Centers within it, and may include members from other higher education institutions.” Yet, there is a broad range of overlap between C&Is with regard to size and mission. Just as initiation of new C&Is is essential for a thriving research program, there is also a need to close C&Is that are no longer serving a critical purpose. More effort is needed towards closing down unproductive C&Is or absorbing them into larger ones. Under current rules, new C&Is must do a website search to ensure that there is no duplication with existing C&Is. However, the list is not sufficiently descriptive or up-to-date to answer inquiries about potential collaborations. A more actively administered repository would be helpful to a variety of aims. There is also no official process for appealing a decision for dissolution of a Center or Institute. A clearer and more comprehensive set of policies regarding the creation, evaluation, and dissolution of C&Is should be developed.

# SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC PLANNING

**Chair:** Ah-Ng Tony Kong

Joachim Kohn

Maria Soto-Greene

Linda Stamato

Cheryl Wall

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This subcommittee looked at the strategic plans prepared by the four campuses as well as the university's plan in an effort to assist the other subcommittees as ideas surfaced for consideration as well as to look specifically for common elements, challenges and opportunities relating to academic organization in light of the charge to the committee.

This subcommittee recognized that this is the opportune time to create a unique state university. The plans being developed by AUOC match Rutgers Overall Strategic Plan's aspirations: Envisioning tomorrow's university; Building faculty excellence; Transforming the student experience; and Enhancing the university's public prominence.

We looked in particular at the challenges of the future and how these may be addressed by changes in the organization structure of our academic units. Our work in Year 1 has laid the foundation to develop ideas on the structure, operation and function of specific units, with the goal to achieve excellence in research, interactions between students and faculty, hands-on learning, and responsive services for all members of the Rutgers community. Reviewing reports from Harvard Business School and Pew Research Foundation illustrate the urgency of "thinking outside the box" when examining ways to reduce barriers to interdisciplinary, and cross-unit/campus collaborations. The AUOC will also have to identify obstacles to realizing the priorities of the existing strategic plans with a focus on finding a common goal among the plans.

To succeed in its transition into the future, Rutgers will need to embrace a tidal wave of cultural changes. Most importantly, the University must become more nimble, administratively lean, and efficient organization. Decisions need to be made rapidly and consensus building needs to be fast. The Rutgers

administration must inculcate a culture of service and innovation that responds to the needs of faculty, students and other stakeholders. At the same time, the faculty will have to become more collaborative and more open to change. The university will need to promote the development of innovative teaching approaches and an innovative research enterprise. AUOC will need to address and envision an organizational framework for our academic units that will support these critical changes in the next 10 years.