

Newark Faculty Council  
Minutes of meeting  
October 12, 2020

Attendance

Nancy Cantor  
Sherri-Ann Butterfield  
Ashwani Monga  
John Gunkel  
Amber Carter-Randolph

Guests:

Jonathon Holloway  
Joy McDonald  
Kevin Dowlin

Alex Gates

Ashaki Rouff  
Jane Gilman  
Brandon Paradise  
April Benasich  
Brandon Paradise  
Erich Toncre  
Fran Bartkowski  
Gary Farney  
Haesum Kim  
John Kettle  
Jiahuan Lu  
Joseph Markert  
Ray Williams  
John Kettle  
Tim Raphael  
Krista White  
Mary Rizzo  
Beryl Satter  
Michael Barnett  
Miklos Vasarhelyi

Alexander Gates:

Topics for this meeting are 1) update on COVID, and 2) on new technologies (which Cloud service should we use? Do we use Webex or Zoom or something else? Etc.)

Cantor:

We sent a long email with a lot of detail on the COVID-19 situation. We want to increase to about 10% in-person classes, assuming that this will work with necessary cleaning, social distancing and testing protocols. We have about 25% occupancy in residence halls right now; we will aim for 35-40% occupancy (again, based on health and safety protocols).

Ashwani Monga:

Thanks faculty for doing a great job in the transition to remote learning. We got good feedback from student evaluations, and technical support was excellent.

Be understanding that students will continue to have various issues – technological, space, or other challenges. Spring 2021 remains uncertain; we are looking into which classes should be offered and which can stay remote. The schedule for spring will be announced in November, but if the situation changes, we will change to remote.

John Gunkel:

Be sure to let us know if you have students who are struggling. Do not require students to have their cameras on (we still get complains from students who can't have their cameras on). The Launchpad program has been working well. Laptops have been given out.

Sherri-Ann Butterfield:

Remember that students have different learning abilities. Students need to be referred to Office of Disability Services so they get appropriate services. Staffing on campus will be as needed (research labs, student-facing offices). If you feel you can't come in because of health reasons, contact human resources. For now student-facing offices are opened about 2 days a week. It will decrease or increase as needed.

Dana is open till 6:00; Robeson till 7:00. But some students were using these spaces to take classes, which ran 6 to 9 p.m. Therefore we're working on keeping them open till 9:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and till 6:00 p.m. on Fridays.

We'll be opening more buildings this spring. We're ensuring there will be time for cleaning between each class. We are remaining on swipe access through the spring. We'll have security to help students who are having problems swiping in.

If you find that security isn't good on a building, please let us know. Don't assume we already know.

We have a Health and Safety Restart Committee. Fran Bartkowski is on it. Please give me or Fran feedback if you have any. It's a university-wide committee.

Amber Carter-Randolph:

State restored support to last year's level. Now, instead of \$20 million deficit, we have a \$10 million deficit. We are getting emergency funding from state and federal sources; we also have to pay for a great deal out of that funding. We have had good enrollment, within 2 ½ percent of our goal, but we also have drops to professional school enrollments. We reduced student campus fees by 15% (since students are struggling and are getting fewer/ different services).

Our revenues are better, but not enough to offset new expenses. Newark's \$20 million deficit is now a \$10 million deficit. We are hoping for more students on campus next semester.

We are working on overcoming the deficit. Every expense has to go through the Chancellor's Office. We have a hiring freeze. Special permission needed for hiring of independent contractors. We have a moratorium on discretionary expenses.

Cantor:

We've been working hard to get emergency funding to our students. We are happy that our enrollment only dropped about 2%. The students are trying hard to be here and we're working hard to make it work. The Federal Cares Act did not allow undocumented or international students to get funding, so we are using our own funding for them. We've been working hard to get the Dept of Higher Ed in NJ to support us. We still need to deal with our \$11 million deficit, but we want to move forward with our priorities regardless, including hires, aid to students, research, etc. We've tried to avoid layoffs.

Kevin Dowlin and Joy McDonald:

Joy McDonald:

We are moving from Blackboard to Canvas. Newark Law School and RBS are migrated. We expect most units to be migrated this school year. Arts and Sciences have started migrating. We will be archiving two years' worth of course content will be moved from Blackboard to Canvas. This is happening through a computer program. We should have access to that by the end of the month.

November 8<sup>th</sup> is when live actual courses will be created on Canvas. You can create Sandbox sites already. You can rethink how you are presenting material to your students. We will have limited access to our courses for five years for academic purposes (on BlackBoard).

Canvas has many of the same functionalities as Blackboard. See Canvas's "Equivalencies Chart."

We are hoping to improve rosters' reliability on Canvas. You can cross-list courses on Canvas. Canvas allows granularity in copying. It allows changes in due dates. You can set things up so that the students can "look but not touch" (see but not post). Speedgrader works well. It's easier to add audio-visual feedback. We have an interactive syllabus if you use due-dates. You can use "modules" as well as "due dates." The default is opening to the Module page. You can also use "Pages" as your default. They have a "group" functionality. Canvas creates a site within your site. This gives students more control within their groups.

We will have ongoing formal workshops for faculty, mostly in free periods. We have office hours every Friday morning at 10:00 am. We are offering individual sessions also that can be booked. RU-N IT provides Canvas support. Also see Teaching and Learning with Technology (TLT) Call Academic Technology Services – 973-353-1713.

Q: Why did we switch to Canvas?

McDonald:

We looked at different options and Canvas was selected. It was a multi-year process to make this choice. We felt it was a waste of time and resources to have so many different tools (BlackBoard, Sakai, etc.).

President Jonathan Holloway:

I was in a meeting with Newark students. It's my first time on the campus (it's been hugely challenging not being able to meet people in person). I've been onboarding since April, but it's all been remote. I've had to go where the fires are. Meanwhile I'm building my own team. I've been meeting with administrators, politicians and donors, which has been essential. Only now am I meeting with students and faculty – the ones I want to meet. I believe in shared faculty governance. I need to help contribute to a new labor/ management culture. I need to engage with our alumni and be the best leader I can be. Rutgers is a fabulous research university, but it under-punches reputationally. I'll be working on that. We got this Mellon-funded institute on racial justice. It should be the first of many opportunities to benefit the faculty.

Rutgers has been a patchwork for a long time. We need to talk about what makes Newark exceptional, but also tell a great Rutgers story that unites the schools and campuses. We have a board of trustees, of overseers, and of governors (a lot of boards). Then we have the University Senate (which includes faculty, staff, students and alumni). We have these Board of Governors' meetings that can be unpleasant because of toxicity in parts of the culture. We should simplify these layers if possible, but it's too early for me to know how to do this. Some is connected to state politics, which is unfortunate.

Q: What has been unexpected for you?

Holloway:

I knew that there was a labor/ management strain, but I didn't realize the extent of it. We have 22 unions here, versus the 3 unions we had at Yale. It has been dispiriting at times. We need to break old habits (on both sides of the labor/ management divide). I've been trying to make sense of all the Boards and their varying responsibilities. I've had to give the same presentation to numerous committees within each of the various Boards. There should be a way to streamline this. I was also saddened to see the deep lack of trust. I know that administration is generally not trusted. But it's at a different level here. I wish there was more of a presumption of good will, but that has to be earned; that is my job.

Q: Newark campus has had a variable relationship with the central administration over the years. How do you see the role of the Newark campus within the university?

Holloway:

I think what Rutgers-Newark is doing as a citizen of Newark is fabulous. It's a model of how an urban-based campus can behave. You've shown a real commitment to diversity, and to who the university does business with locally; a commitment to being an anchor institution. In talking to elected officials, I see the high regard they have for Cantor and her team. Given the tensions of this spring, one might assume that Newark would have exploded. Instead, there's a different spirit in Newark. Rutgers-Newark is part of that new spirit and commitment to building here in Newark. I spoke with a lot of Essex County delegations, business leaders and politicians. I've had to push back against the suspicion that Rutgers is going to abandon Newark. Partly because of University Hospital, but even beyond that.

Rutgers-New Brunswick is the biggest campus, but Rutgers-Newark is vital to us, including in terms of research. It's frustrating to have to continue convincing people that Rutgers-Newark is part of Rutgers. Luckily Nancy Cantor has been on this for years. I'm happy to come back and speak to you again.

John Gunkel:

We've replaced older warning rosters with a single system of progress reports. They go out second or third weeks of the semester, and at the midpoint. It can be customized. This time warnings can go to multiple advisors so they can intervene. Tutoring office can know to intervene. Etc. It's not yet part of Canvas, but we're working on getting it there.

Dowlin:

We are working on updating rosters on Canvas. Starting fall 2021 we won't be using Blackboard at all.

Q: Is there one method to give online exams?

Downlin:

This is a hot discussion right now. We are working on best practices. Expect a midterm announcement on that. We're getting student complaints about online proctoring and exams.

McDonald:

We have types of monitoring and proctoring on Blackboard. We're looking into new ways to safeguard privacy and proctoring. So far, people are using "proctortrack."

Gates:

What do you recommend for Cloud storage? Which is safest or most private? We've had so many (Box, Google, etc.).

Dowlin:

We are pushing two-step authentication. We are trying to use it for our email system. We are under an immense burden of cyberattacks; 20,000 email attacks a day. We've had 2500 email attacks compromised just in the last few weeks. This will be rolled out by December (for early people) and then by February. It's essential.

About Cloud, we've gotten Box to protect student data. It's faster. You can share with colleagues at other university. Box also enables sharing with students. Onedrive recognizes Scarlet mail accounts.

The problem with Dropbox is that you are using personal data to store campus files, if you leave the university, the university loses access to the files. If an associate dean uses Dropbox to run her office, all will disappear when she leaves. Therefore, use Box to communicate with others.

We have 5 options for videoconferencing. All do different things, and they don't overlap, so that's why we have five of them. We have Teams, Cisco Webex (with various subsections), Zoom, Big Blue Button (in Canvas). Help Desk can help us with all the platforms.

Minutes by Beryl Satter