

**The New Brunswick Faculty Council
Report and Recommendations on the Proposals
of the Task Force on Undergraduate Education
December 2, 2005**

Over the course of the fall 2005 semester, the New Brunswick Faculty Council has considered the major recommendations of the report Transforming Undergraduate Education of the Task Force on Undergraduate Education. A number of recommendations on relatively non-controversial aspects of the Task Force proposals were approved at the October 28th NBFC meeting. Since then, the relevant NBFC committees have continued to consider and make recommendations concerning other Task Force proposals, concentrating particularly on those dealing with collegiate structure, admissions and recruitment, the student experience, and the curriculum. A steering committee consisting of the NBFC Executive Cabinet and its committee chairs then combined the various committee recommendations with those approved on October 28th to create the present report which, we hope, presents a coherent set of recommendations for consideration by the full Council. Our specific recommendations are divided into five categories: structure and facilities, admissions and recruitment, the student experience, curriculum, and personnel matters. The recommendations approved on October 28th are so indicated; the new recommendations are indicated by an asterisk and the committee(s) that proposed them is (are) given in brackets.

As will be clear from the specific recommendations, the NBFC supports a large majority of the recommendations of the report of the Task Force on Undergraduate Education. We believe that the Task Force Report gives a thorough analysis of many of the strengths and weaknesses of the undergraduate educational and administrative structure, services and programs on the New Brunswick/ Piscataway Campus at Rutgers, and rightly proposes many important changes and improvements. Since and because of the academic reorganization of campus in 1981, the University has made major strides forward, especially in the areas of graduate education and research, with the combining of like academic departments. We believe that implementation of a number of the Task Force recommendations will similarly enhance the quality and visibility of our undergraduate programs. We should make certain, however, that recommended improvements in undergraduate education do not in any way impede the progress of the University in graduate education and research.

STRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

S1. We strongly support the creation of a single Rutgers School or College of Arts and Sciences as proposed in the Report of the Task Force on Undergraduate Education. We also agree that the available majors and minors for arts & sciences students should be the same at all of the residential colleges (or campuses). [approved by NBFC, October 28, 2005]

The college fellows system has failed to attract all but a few dedicated volunteers and the remaining faculty in those disciplines that offer majors through the arts and sciences colleges (Douglass, Livingston, Rutgers, and University Colleges) have no responsibility and, unless they volunteer to become college fellows, no opportunity to participate in the normal faculty responsibilities of setting academic standards, admissions policies, scholastic standing requirements, honors curricula,

graduation requirements, and degree certifications in those colleges. Also, the individual graduation and other academic requirements vary from college to college sufficiently so that most faculty seem to have given up trying to understand the resulting complicated system well enough to participate in advising of undergraduate students, or even to become aware of undergraduate academic issues on the campus.

S2. We propose the continuation and enhancement of the role of the residential and commuter colleges (or campuses) [Busch, Cook, Douglass, Livingston, Queens, and University], their deans, and decanal staffs in providing local programs and services such as local delivery of pre-major academic advising, co-curricular activities, academic learning communities, student-life programming, and intercollege (or intercampus) intramural sports, under the direction and coordination of the Executive Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Vice President for Undergraduate Education, and the Vice President for Student Affairs.

[approved by NBFC, October 28, 2005]

The undergraduate colleges on the New Brunswick/Piscataway Campus do offer and have historically offered many advantages for undergraduate students in this large, comprehensive, and complex research university. Once here, undergraduate students, at least in the smaller residential colleges, generally seem to identify with and find a home at their respective colleges. The colleges provide many opportunities for small coherent groups, leadership positions, and personalized attention from staff members that enhance the quality of the educational experience. A critical issue is the provision of appropriate budgets for carrying out these programs, a portion of which now come from such areas as gifts and donations and revenues generated in the student centers.

Nevertheless, it is critical that advising policies and procedures, as well as co-curricular and student life programs be coordinated and equitably implemented throughout the New Brunswick/Piscataway Campus; this must be done by the Executive Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Vice President for Undergraduate Education, and the Vice President for Student Affairs.

*** S3. In opposition to the Task force recommendations, we recommend that the proposed new arts and sciences academic unit be called the "Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences" and that the successors to the current arts and sciences colleges be called "Residential Colleges," with the exception of University College, which could be called a "Commuter College" or some other suitable name.** [Admissions & Recruitment Committee; Budget & Planning Committee]

We believe that the name "Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences" is consistent with the terminology elsewhere on the Campus, where "Schools" are the undergraduate, degree-granting units, and introducing "College" here would lead to some confusion. Further, since there is a "Camden College of Arts and Sciences" and a "Newark College of Arts and Sciences", if we were to have a "College of Arts and Sciences", it really should be the "New Brunswick College of Arts and Sciences", to clarify the difference from those units.

While there seems to be no ideal name for the successors to the present arts and sciences colleges, the name "Residential College" is, perhaps, the most truthful in describing what we wish the colleges to become. Certainly "Campus" seems inappropriate, since it connotes merely a geographical place and does not indicate the academic, co-curricular, and student-life aspects of the colleges which we wish to maintain, besides being confusing with the several other uses of that term within the University. We also believe that "Residential Colleges" will help in student

recruitment, alumni/alumnae support, and University recognition. There are many other fine universities presently having residential colleges, and indeed a number of large universities are now considering how to introduce undergraduate residential colleges to help students find places for themselves within the context of these large institutions.

*** S4. We recommend that the academic authority for undergraduate academic affairs, such as admissions criteria, general education requirements, scholastic standing, honors curricula, and degree certification for arts and sciences students be vested within the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences in a faculty body, to be known as the "Undergraduate Academic Assembly", to consist of the faculty of the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences plus those faculty from professional disciplines offering undergraduate majors and minors to students in the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences. [Budget & Planning Committee]**

This recommendation is identical to that in the Task Force Report, except that we believe that a suitable name is needed for the undergraduate A&S governing faculty body.

*** S5. We recommend that the residential colleges should have the ability to add voluntary academic certificate programs leading to recognition (in addition to the diploma from the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences or from one of the professional schools), with the approval of the Undergraduate Assembly of the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences (or the faculty body of the appropriate professional school). All residential college programs and courses should be open to all undergraduate students and no student should be required to take an academic course or program because of where they live. Appropriate budgets for these programs should be provided. [Budget & Planning Committee]**

We believe that certain programs, such as those in women's leadership at Douglass College, are important and can be maintained by the establishment of certificate programs.

*** S6. We recommend that the residential college deans report to the Executive Dean of Arts and Sciences, and endorse the recommendation of the Task Force Report that the Executive Dean of Arts and Sciences and the Vice President for Undergraduate Education report to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, while the Vice President for Student Affairs report to the Vice President for Undergraduate Education. In addition, we propose that the Undergraduate Academic Council of Deans of the Schools and Residential Colleges be a standing body of the Office of the Vice President for Undergraduate Education. [Budget & Planning Committee]**

We believe that the academic pre-major advising, coordinated locally by the deans of the residential colleges, must be strongly directed and coordinated campus-wide by the A&S Dean, since essentially all of this advising is for Arts and Sciences students (as the professional schools do their own academic advising). We also believe that such functions as personal counseling of students, provision of co-curricular and student-life programming, and institution and maintenance of learning communities are often strongly and inextricably tied to academic affairs and that such functions need, therefore, to be seamlessly and coherently working together with academic advising and other academic services, both at the residential college level and within the School of Arts and Sciences. We should not be creating artificial barriers, at this juncture, between student affairs and academic affairs. The Vice Presidents for Student Affairs and Undergraduate Education should coordinate these activities Campus-wide.

*** S7. We recommend that, wherever the Vice President for Student Affairs reports, he or she have at least a "dotted-line" relation to the Vice President for Research and Graduate Education to ensure that the needs of graduate students in such areas as housing, facilities, career services, and student services is met, and not neglected or reduced, in the new administrative structure and efforts to enhance undergraduate education. [Graduate & Professional Education/Research Committee]**

The need for adequate access to suitable housing and other facilities and services is essential for the continued success of our graduate programs.

*** S8. We endorse the third option of the Task Force Report for the organization of the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (or other name to be determined) and Cook College; namely,**

- **that the School will decide which of its majors are professional majors and which are arts and sciences majors; students interested in its professional majors will be admitted to the School in the first year, while students interested in the School's arts and sciences majors will be admitted to the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences in the first year and then admitted to the arts and sciences majors of the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at the time they declare the major.**
- **that Cook College should separately become one of the residential colleges, but give priority in housing to students majoring in one of the disciplines offered by the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences and its faculty. [Executive Cabinet]**

In other words, we recommend that the School, as a professional school, admit its own professional students, and its faculty determine their academic requirements and policies, for majors in those disciplines that are determined to be professional. Such majors would be available only to students of the professional school. In addition, the present Cook faculty would determine which of the majors offered by their disciplines are to be considered arts and science majors, and hence available only to students in the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences, and subject to its academic requirements and policies. In addition, we recommend that an easy procedure be set up for A&S students to transfer to the School of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, if they should wish to choose one of its professional majors (such as a student in Biological Sciences who wishes to transfer to Animal Sciences). It should, of course, be possible for some A&S majors to be jointly run by relevant faculty from more than one school.

S9. We strongly endorse the recommendations of the Campus Planning and Facilities section of the Task Force Report for involvement of the university community in decision making regarding campus planning and for the creation of structures to guarantee this involvement. We find the remaining recommendations of this section of the Task Force Report well considered and endorse them as well. [approved by NBFC, October 28, 2005]

The recommendation for faculty involvement in campus planning is in accord with the importance that the New Brunswick Faculty Council attaches to collegial decision making and has the full support of the Council. Further, the Council believes that, in pursuing this goal, the University administration should draw on the existing representative structure of the New Brunswick Faculty Council in constituting the implementation committee(s).

ADMISSIONS AND RECRUITMENT

AR1. We support common admission standards for all traditional-age arts and sciences applicants, appropriately modified for transfer, EOF, and non-traditional students. [approved by NBFC, October 28, 2005]

*** AR2. We propose that the criteria used in admission decisions should be sufficiently flexible to maintain the diversity of the student body and not exclude talented applicants whose potential is not adequately measured by standard test scores.** [Admissions & Recruitment Committee]

The standards for separate admissions to Cook, Douglass, Livingston, Rutgers, and University Colleges have, over the years, gotten seriously out of balance, which the faculty view as damaging, unstable, and misrepresentative since the same faculty teach the students in all of these colleges. It is essential that we ensure the attraction of an excellent body of students prepared to use the resources of a major research university, while maintaining the diversity of students that has been a hallmark of Rutgers University.

*** AR3. We recommend a single admissions process for all arts and sciences applicants, in which all admit-coming applicants will be assigned to a residential college or campus based upon a combination of their preferences and the desire to have a strong student body as well as a reasonable mix of students at each residential college or campus. We recommend that the specific procedure for doing this be developed by the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences, together with the staff of the Admissions Office, and the Vice President for Undergraduate Education.** [Admissions & Recruitment Committee]

We believe that there needs to be not only a single admissions standard, but also a single admissions process which admits student into the School of Arts and Sciences and then allows students to choose or be assigned to a particular residential college or campus. There are many possibilities, such as, for example, all first-year students could be given their first choice, or all honors students or some other groups could be given their first choice, and other assignments could be made by lottery, or by some judicious matching of second and third choices with the appropriate mix of students on each residential college or campus. These decisions are clearly important for attracting the best student body and for properly filling the enrollment goals. Clearly, advice from the experts in the area of admissions is needed to help make these decisions.

*** AR4. In order to eliminate the harmful confusion resulting from the present, internally competitive recruitment process, we recommend that New Brunswick recruitment materials, print and electronic, be redesigned so that they primarily stress the outstanding opportunities that all undergraduates (School-of-Arts-and-Sciences as well as professional-school students) enjoy at Rutgers, including the high-quality faculty and academic programs, research opportunities, core curriculum, choice of majors and minors, learning/living communities, honors programs, internship and externship programs, and campus diversity, as well as the more intimate and supporting residential and commuter communities within the New Brunswick campus.** [Admissions & Recruitment Committee]

As the Task Force Report notes, the Constituency Research Project Report made it clear that Rutgers has failed to communicate clearly to prospective students and their families, or the general public, the outstanding opportunities that the New Brunswick/Piscataway Campus offers to its undergraduate students. One of the important factors has been the confusion generated by the four undergraduate, degree-granting colleges with a single faculty but different admissions standards, degree requirements, etc., which have produced mutually, highly competitive recruiting materials. The recruiting materials should emphasize Rutgers-New Brunswick first, with its component academic units second.

*** AR5. We propose that a new task force be appointed to consider comprehensively the many issues regarding the recruitment, admission, needs, and support of non-traditional and transfer students.** [Admissions & Recruitment Committee]

We support many of the specific Task Force recommendations regarding transfer students, such as having a uniform, transparent set of admission standards and policies, improving orientation, academic support, and advising in the first semester at Rutgers, and adding sections or saving seats for transfer students in required upper-class courses. Nevertheless, we believe that the Task Force Report did not address a number of the important needs of transfer students, and that the proposed new Office of Transfer Student Affairs may not be the best solution. There appear to be significant problems with the academic performance and student experience of transfer students that need to be comprehensively addressed. We recommend that the task force recommended to study the needs of non-traditional students also be charged to address further the needs of transfer students.

*** AR6. We strongly support the Task Force recommendation for the University to develop a comprehensive plan to recruit and enroll more high-achieving, out-of-state students, particularly those from US states outside the Northeast.** [Admissions & Recruitment Committee]

We need to increase the current very low geographic diversity of our undergraduate student body, and expose our students to cultures beyond New Jersey. We are presently a very local university. Attracting more out-of-state students would rather dramatically improve our national visibility and thereby local reputation, and thus help us to keep more of our very best New Jersey high-school graduates from going to college out of state. Also, the larger out-of-state tuition would help with the University budgetary problems, as it has done for many of the best state universities.

*** AR7. We strongly support the Task Force recommendations that faculty members should play a major collaborative role with the administration in establishing undergraduate admissions policies, standards, and enrollment goals at the unit and campus levels. There should be active faculty admissions committees for the School of Arts and Sciences and for each professional school, and a New-Brunswick-wide, primarily faculty Admissions Committee with the composition and powers proposed by the Task Force, appointed by the Vice President for Undergraduate Education, with the advice of the New Brunswick Faculty Council.** [Admissions & Recruitment Committee]

Faculty members need to be much more involved in the undergraduate admissions and recruitment process, particularly at the policy-making level, but also, where appropriate, at the implementation level.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

SE1. We strongly support the proposal that there be a single, coordinated set of undergraduate academic and student-life policies, guidelines, and implementations across the New Brunswick/Piscataway Campus. [approved by NBFC, October 28, 2005]

The confusion and red tape in and among the various colleges due to different policies, guidelines, and requirements in such areas as the formation of student clubs and organizations, use of student centers and recreational facilities, allocation of student fees, reservation of facilities for events, job descriptions and pay scales for student-life staff, implementation of academic integrity policies, and general academic advising are harmful and a substantial part of what has become known as the "Rutgers Screw." In particular, it is critical that there be centralized policies on pre-major advising.

*** SE2. We recommend that the student centers and recreation facilities should be coordinated and managed by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. There should be local campus-center and recreation-center management teams at each center, but there should be a single online system for student center facilities throughout the Campus, which could be accessed from any center, so that students and organizations do not have to run around to the various campuses to reserve facilities.** [Academic Services/Student Affairs Committee]

The bureaucracy and hassles associated with access by student groups and organizations to center facilities has been a major complaint from many quarters.

CURRICULUM

C1. We support the formation of a single general honors program for all colleges and schools on the New Brunswick/Piscataway Campus, with appropriate variation in requirements to meet the needs of the various professional schools as well as of the School or College of Arts and Sciences. We also support the recommendation that honors communities should continue to exist in the various campus communities to provide the local advising, mentoring, and co-curricular activities that students value so highly in our current college honors programs. [approved by NBFC, October 28, 2005]

Having totally separate honors programs in the various colleges and schools has been confusing and certainly not optimized for attracting the very best students to the Campus. The general honors program should ensure that the full range of honors opportunities on the Campus are available to all honors students, which should give the honors program the coherence and visibility it presently lacks. The honors program should be based upon a "requirements" model, with a strong emphasis on research experience. There should be uniform requirements for all Arts and Sciences honors students, and appropriately modified requirements for the various professional schools. There should be flexible admissions criteria to allow outstanding students with diverse talents to enter the program. [Admissions & Recruitment Committee, Academic Regulations and Standards/Teaching Committee]

*** C2. There should be a core curriculum for the School of Arts and Sciences, to be approved as soon as possible by the Undergraduate Assembly of the School of Arts and Sciences.**

[Academic Regulations & Standards/Teaching Committee]

The core curriculum proposed by the Task Force has many admirable features and should serve as a starting point for the development of the arts and sciences core curriculum. The discussion of a new core curriculum should begin immediately in the various units and departments, with logistical support from the administration, and the advice of knowledgeable students, staff and alumni/ae. Final approval must be given by the A&S Undergraduate Assembly.

*** C3. Since the curriculum and graduation requirements of every degree-granting academic unit require the approval the faculty of that unit, we recommend that the New Brunswick Faculty Council, as the representative body of all the faculties in New Brunswick, have the responsibility to propose a New-Brunswick-wide core curriculum, taking into account accreditation requirements of the various professional schools, and, with the help of the administration, to negotiate and orchestrate its approval by all of the undergraduate degree-granting faculties. Upon its approval by all of the degree-granting faculties and its implementation, the New Brunswick Faculty Council would establish a curriculum committee to monitor the needs and success of the curriculum, and from time to time develop and propose modifications, as appropriate. The development of such a curriculum must take into account any implications for the allocation of needed resources.** [Academic Regulations & Standards/Teaching Committee, Graduate & Professional Education/Research Committee]

The creation of a New Brunswick-wide core curriculum would help define the high value of a Rutgers undergraduate degree and hopefully make the University more attractive to prospective students. While it may be difficult, we are optimistic that it will be possible, given sufficient flexibility, to produce an outstanding curriculum and vision that all of the undergraduate academic units can accept. The core curriculum proposed by the Task Force would be a starting point for these discussions and negotiations.

*** C4. We recommend that the Dean and faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences find ways to offer varied and high-quality curricula and courses in the evening, as well as during the day time, so that it would be possible for most majors to be completed by the taking of evening courses. We believe that faculty should consider the teaching of evening courses as part of their normal responsibilities. Since evening classes compete for space with other important evening events, we also recommend that efforts be made to construct additional classroom buildings with suitable space for evening classes, extracurricular activities, guest speakers, and common hour exams, as well as for allowing smaller classes.** [Academic Regulations & Standards/Teaching Committee]

The need for more evening and weekend classes has been evident at University College for a very long time.

PERSONNEL MATTERS

PP1. We propose a substantial increase in the numbers of full-time tenure-track faculty and of TAs, a corresponding decrease in the number of large lecture classes, and the provision of meaningful incentives for faculty to become more involved with undergraduate teaching, advising, curricular development, both within and outside their disciplines, research projects, and co-curricular activities outside the classroom. [approved by NBFC, October 28, 2005]

While the Task Force Report recognized many barriers to faculty participation in undergraduate education, it failed to recognize sufficiently the need for more full-time faculty and TAs, the over-dependence on coads and other contingent faculty, and the need for smaller classes.

In addition, the Task Force Report fell short in addressing the issue of rewards and incentives, an issue that they recognized as being crucial. We think that the issue is central to the success or failure of the proposed transformation of undergraduate education and warn that effective incentives cannot be put into place without the will to bring about some changes in the promotion and FASIP processes and without additional funds. The Council plans to consider this spring semester the specific recommendations proposed by the Personnel Policy Committee to enhance faculty participation in all aspects of undergraduate education.

*** PP2. We recognize the critical role that TAs and GAs play in discussion and laboratory sections of our undergraduate courses, in allowing for smaller class sizes, and in working with undergraduate students in their research projects in our laboratories and elsewhere, and urge an increase in the numbers of TAs and GAs to help enhance our undergraduate programs.** [Graduate & Professional Education/ Research Committee]

Rutgers University is well known to be very understaffed in terms of the numbers of TAs and GAs, compared to other AAU universities. It is essential both for our undergraduate and graduate programs to increase these numbers, especially since we are able to attract such high quality graduate students, when such positions are available. [Graduate & Professional Education/Research Committee]