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Committees weigh in on restructuring

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In October 2002, the Commission on Health Science, Education and Training, appointed by Gov. James E. McGreevey and headed by Dr. P. Roy Vagelos, released a report recommending a restructuring of New Jersey's three public research universities — Rutgers, the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), and the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT).

The commission proposed combining these existing institutions to form three autonomous, comprehensive universities in the north, central and southern parts of the state overseen by a chancellor and board of regents in Trenton.

In December 2002 the governor convened the Review, Planning and Implementation Steering Committee, again chaired by Vagelos, to flesh out the proposal. This committee, in turn, established several subcommittees, including ones on the north, central and southern campuses, to begin addressing issues raised by the proposed restructuring.

The subcommittee reports were presented in draft form to the steering committee on Oct. 23, and highlights of the regional reports are detailed below.

"The prospect of restructuring New Jersey's research universities into three comprehensive institutions that include the health science disciplines, together with all the other schools and colleges, offers significant opportunities for enhancing both education and research," said President Richard L. McCormick. "The draft reports that have recently emerged from the three university committees in the north, central, and south confirm this sense of great opportunity and promise, although important risks and concerns remain — notably details of the governance of the research universities and the provision of adequate funding to all three proposed universities. I want to thank all the authors of the draft reports and to encourage everyone at Rutgers to read them."

The reports, which focus on academic considerations, offer detailed visions for creating three dynamic institutions with specific reference to the unique circumstances in different parts of the state. The resulting proposals vary from campus to campus, and some coordination of recommendations will be needed before the steering committee is ready to present these plans to the governor.

Two overriding concerns, however, are evident in all three reports. The first is governance. While the commission's proposal envisioned a strong centralized administration based in Trenton, McCormick has stated that operational authority must reside with the presidents and boards at the university level. The regional reports reflect this need for strong local control.

The other issue is funding. The plans outlined in these preliminary reports require a major infusion of funds, both initially during the transition period and also on a continuing basis to ensure that the new institutions are competitive with the best in the nation and are able to realize the benefits of their new structures and affiliations. A separate statewide committee on funding and financing is exploring this issue.

The three reports remain draft documents, available for review and comment. They may be

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accessed on a Web site established for this purpose through President McCormick's office:
<http://ruweb.rutgers.edu/restructure/>.

The site contains a link to a comment page, through which comments can be submitted. In addition, the president has invited individuals or groups — schools, colleges, departments, programs, staff, student organizations or any Rutgers constituency — to submit written material by direct mail to his office. Open forums on each campus will be organized for the university community at which comments or questions can be offered.

The ultimate restructuring proposal, which will include plans for the key element of governance and funding, will be shared through the university's academic governance structure, including the senate. Final approval rests with the university's board of governors and board of trustees.

University Committee-South

The southern committee's 31-page report strongly endorsed the governor's proposal to reorganize and restructure New Jersey's university system into three regional research institutions. The committee was composed of faculty, staff and students from key stakeholder institutions: Rutgers–Camden, the School of Osteopathic Medicine at Stratford (part of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey), Robert Wood Johnson Medical School–Camden and Cooper University Hospital. In addition, it included Donald Farish, president of Rowan University, and a representative from the Community Planning and Advocacy Council. Provost Roger Dennis and R. Michael Gallagher, dean of UMDNJ–School of Osteopathic Medicine (SOM), served as chairs.

"Through this document, the committee offers a shared vision of a free-standing research university in southern New Jersey, and the programs that it would develop to meet higher education demands in our region and our nation," Dennis said in an e-mail to the Rutgers–Camden community.

The report states that the academic communities of RWJMS–Camden, Rutgers–Camden and SOM–Stratford embrace the vision of establishing a South Jersey public research university. "Across the nation, every vibrant region has a superb research university as a dominant anchoring institution. Such universities support the educational, cultural, social and economic needs of their regions," the report states, adding that, "South Jersey needs a constant flow of science and technology research that can be adapted for commercial purposes. That requires a sizeable mass of scholars producing these innovations and, collectively, becoming a magnet for attracting new enterprises."

To achieve the goal of building a world-class research university while meeting the regional demand for medical education, the report calls for creating partially integrated, but separate allopathic and osteopathic medical schools, together capable of admitting 180 students annually.

The current Robert Wood Johnson Medical School campus would be expanded to a four-year, degree-granting institution and the student body would grow from 52 to 80 a year. The committee recommended adding research capacity in a wide range of disciplines, including systems biology, information technology security, geriatric medicine, nutraceuticals and more. At the same time, the university would strengthen its public policy, business, humanities, social sciences and law programs.

In its report, the committee envisions a public research university with four academic areas: arts and sciences, business, law and medicine, each to be led by a dean reporting to a provost. In the arts and sciences area, the report calls for creating new Ph.D. programs in computational biology, computational sciences, public policy/public affairs and childhood studies. It also advocates expanding many master's-level programs.

By far, the report says, the largest area of enrollment growth would take place at the undergraduate level. The committee envisions an enrollment of 10,000 to 12,000 students, slightly more than the present enrollment at Rutgers–Newark. To reach this goal, the report advocates starting with a five-year period of quick growth, bringing the campus to 8,500 students and ensuring that the new university would be self-sustaining.

The university also would significantly enhance existing strengths in business education through the development of master's degrees in international business, accounting, finance and management information systems, plus an expanded range of executive training and MBA offerings.

The law school would create a Center for Intellectual Property that would include training in such fields as patent law and biotechnology. Another new program would involve the law of health care delivery.

The cost of sustaining a 12,000-student university would be significant. To be successful, the new university must receive substantial investments over a 10-year period, the report found.

The report estimates the capital investment for new classrooms, office buildings, dormitories, recreational facilities and other facilities at more than \$250 million. In terms of operating costs, arts and sciences faculty is projected to double in size — from 141 in 2003–04 to 282 in 2014 — to support programmatic growth. And finally, the report estimates the cost of adjunct faculty and departmental, technological and related support at \$10 million above the current funding level.

"This is a vision of southern New Jersey worth realizing," the committee notes. "It offers fresh avenues for growth and the promise of continued vitality for our children. We have the opportunity to redirect our regional economy toward the knowledge industry of the 21st century. Expanding the research and enrollment capacities of our higher education institutions will spark the necessary catalyst for driving that economic engine."

University Committee-North

A top-tier research university encompassing at least 14 colleges and schools and advanced research centers would serve not only as a major state center of education, but also would enhance health care services in northern New Jersey and spur the revitalization of Newark, the state's largest city.

That's the broad conclusion drawn by the Newark-based committee in a 73-page report issued Oct. 23. The 20-member committee devoted a year to reviewing the governor's proposal, working under the direction of Provost Steven J. Diner; Joel Bloom, vice president for academic and students services at the NJIT; and Cecile A. Feldman, dean of the dental school at UMDNJ. The 20-member committee included faculty, staff and students at Rutgers-Newark, NJIT, UMDNJ and the United Way of Essex and West Hudson.

"The University Committee-North sees significant benefits and opportunities in the proposed restructuring of Newark's research universities," the report says. "This will create a top-tier, autonomous, unified, comprehensive research university in Newark, beginning with about 22,000 students and 10,000 faculty and staff, including the staff at The University Hospital." The university would have \$199 million in external funding annually and 31 Ph.D. programs and would award 150 Ph.D. degrees annually, allowing it to meet criteria for the top Carnegie classification.

Besides offering first-rate programs in technology and the liberal arts and sciences, the university would serve as "a powerful economic driver" in its role as a major employer, developer and technology center. It would enable The University Hospital to attract top-flight faculty whose research would further enhance health care. And, it would foster the creation of a unified set of programs within the Newark Public School System "aimed at widening the pipeline for K–12 minority students to enter college," the report notes.

Among the report's key recommendations:

- ▶ creating a single graduate school to replace the three administrative structures in graduate education
- ▶ consolidating the Rutgers Business School and NJIT's School of Management
- ▶ consolidating the Rutgers College of Nursing and the UMDNJ School of Nursing
- ▶ serving as a major state center for studying biomedical disease, particularly infectious disease, neuroscience, trauma, health security, elimination of health disparities and clinical trials management
- ▶ serving as a major state center for technology and engineering, especially in bioengineering, information technology and telecommunications, and sustainable systems and R&D infrastructure
- ▶ combining the arts and science colleges at Rutgers–Newark and NJIT into a new College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and
- ▶ offering a master's in social work at the new university.

The report also advocates retaining the structure of a single Rutgers Business School, based in Newark and serving Newark and New Brunswick; a Newark-based nursing college with statewide programs; establishing an autonomous program in public health; and maintaining the health-related programs now based at UMDNJ's Newark campus.

Among its recommendations, the committee supports increasing the proportion of students housed on campus from the current level of 11 percent to at least 25 percent and encouraging housing construction for faculty and staff. It also called for vigorously pursuing a new physical master plan for further development of University Heights Science Park.

To administer the expanded research university, the report recommends an administration consisting of a president, a provost, a senior vice president for administration, deans of the schools and colleges, and directors of research centers and institutes. The dean of the New Jersey Medical School might also serve as senior vice president for health affairs.

With 11 distinct graduate and professional schools, the northern university would be the place for graduate and professional education in New Jersey, the report adds. Some 45 percent of those enrolled in the three Newark-area research universities are currently in post-baccalaureate programs.

As a result of its expansion, the new northern university could receive as much as \$250 million in external funding for research and development by 2008, the committee projected.

The report contains no estimates of the capital or operational costs required to sustain a university community of nearly 40,000. (By 2010, the northern university is expected to grow by about 20%.) The committee recommended hiring a consulting firm to estimate the amount of funding necessary for the transition.

"Bringing these three universities together in Newark provides the core of a potentially world-class research university with an exceptionally broad scope, including schools of medicine, dentistry, engineering, architecture, law, business, nursing, criminal justice, and arts and sciences, from undergraduate through the doctorate level," said Provost Diner "With good leadership and adequate funding, in five to 10 years it could become a world-renowned institution."

University Committee-Central

The University Central committee "enthusiastically and unanimously" endorsed the creation of a comprehensive public research university that includes a full range of medical and life science disciplines in a single institution in New Brunswick.

In its 18-page report, the University Central Committee, chaired by Joseph J. Seneca, university professor at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, and Harold L. Paz, dean of UMDNJ–Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, concluded that restructuring Rutgers and the medical school into a single, autonomous university would provide both institutions "the opportunity to achieve together educational and research goals unreachable if they remain separated."

"Human creativity, human health, human intellect and human expression are all bound together in complex and intricate ways," the report states. "Forming a single, comprehensive public research university that embodies all the elements of a learning community — the sciences, medicine, the professions, the arts, the social sciences, the humanities — offers singular and enormous opportunities for the intellectual engagement of students and faculty in ways that will enrich the teaching, research, health care, and service outcomes of our individual and collective academic work."

The 24-member committee — composed of students, faculty and administrators from Rutgers University, the Robert Wood Johnson School of Medicine and UMDNJ's School of Public Health, as well as members of the larger community — unanimously recommended the name Rutgers at New Brunswick, the State University of New Jersey for the newly formed university in central New Jersey. The committee also recommended that the name of the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, and the names of the other schools and colleges, be retained under the new institution's name.

In its design for the university, the committee mapped out an administrative structure intended to advance the basic missions of teaching, research and community service. The proposed structure, the report said, "incorporates values that will foster the flagship campus in New Jersey's system of public research universities with its diverse program in undergraduate and graduate education, national standing among AAU institutions, breadth of research, and unique land grant and public service missions."

Under the plan, the new organization would have two executive vice presidents reporting to the president, one for academic affairs and the other for administrative services. Deans of faculties and schools would report to the executive vice president for academic affairs. There would be a single graduate school responsible for Ph.D. programs. The dean of the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School would report to the executive vice president for academic affairs, consulting with the university president on clinical and business affairs.

The committee also recommends:

- ▶ creating a new School of Business in New Brunswick.
- ▶ creating a nursing school for the central campus.
- ▶ maintaining the School of Public Health in New Brunswick
- ▶ continuing operation of Robert Wood Johnson Medical School's clinical campus in Camden in association with the Cooper University Hospital facility and The Coriell Institute.

The report, while endorsing the steering committee's vision of a single public research university

in New Brunswick, is also cautious, noting that recommendations "must be tempered by realistic assessments of available resources." A prerequisite for the joint venture is a permanent infusion of capital resources and long-term, increased state support, the report states.

"Successful restructuring will require dedicated revenue streams, and especially, stable, predictable and increased state appropriations," along with enhanced private and corporate giving, increases in research grants and contracts, and sufficient tuition and fee revenues, the report states.

Following the release of the report, Seneca commented: "I am convinced of the compelling and powerful academic benefits that will be realized from fully integrating the life sciences, health sciences and health care into the Rutgers–New Brunswick academic structure. There have been few opportunities," he added, to make threshold leaps in academic excellence in New Jersey. We have such an opportunity now, and assuming that important issues of resources and governance can be resolved, we should seize this moment."

Richard Gorman, Carla Cantor, Phyllis Gottlieb, Michael Sepanic and Helen Paxton contributed to this report.

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