

[OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT HOME](#) | [LETTERS TO THE RUTGERS COMMUNITY](#)**Status Report #3 on Proposal to Restructure Higher Education in New Jersey**

October 31, 2003

Members of the Rutgers Community:

I am writing once again, following the recent release of key committee reports, to keep you informed of issues and developments involved in the proposal to restructure the state's three research universities.

Deliberations on the proposed restructuring are continuing to move forward under the leadership of the Review, Planning and Implementation Steering Committee that was appointed last year by Governor McGreevey. Last week the Steering Committee received the reports of three university committees, each dealing with restructuring issues pertaining to one of our three campuses, North (Newark), Central (New Brunswick/Piscataway), and South (Camden) and their respective partner institutions. The three committees have been at work since early last winter, and I want to sincerely thank the many members of the Rutgers community who participated in these discussions.

These reports are now available on Rutgers' restructuring web site for your review and comment. The next edition of Rutgers *Focus* will feature overviews of the reports. They strongly affirm Rutgers' commitment to the centrality of our undergraduate, graduate, and professional education programs and the collective aspiration of our community to move Rutgers University forward.

The committees were asked to define an academic structure for separate, comprehensive, public research universities at the three regional centers. From that process several common themes have emerged. Among them is the compelling aspiration across our faculty, students, and administration for academic excellence and for reaching the very highest standards of achievement. A second theme is the large and exciting potential for collaborations and new educational, research, and service programs that will occur if the three institutions – Rutgers, UMDNJ, and NJIT – are integrated. The process of integrating the life sciences, health, and health care across three institutions is a challenge. Yet it offers superb educational opportunities for students and faculty in virtually all the disciplines. It can also bring powerful economic benefits for the state and its citizens.

It is not surprising, given the task set for each committee to design a new university, that some differences in recommendations emerged with respect to the structure and locus of several academic units. I am impressed, however, that there are relatively few differences within the Rutgers aspects of these three reports. I commend the committees for their sensitivity and recognition of the goals, histories, and special conditions of our three campuses.

Let me emphasize that these reports are drafts. They reflect the enormous effort of many people over many months. They are not, however, the final design of a three-university, public higher education research system for New Jersey. Rutgers University, through my responsibility as president and through the authority of our Boards, will play a major role in determining the structure and academic content of the campuses with respect to the existing Rutgers units, should the restructuring occur.

In this spirit, I invite comments on the reports from all our university constituencies. We are initiating three mechanisms by which you can communicate your views: (1) the web site on which you can access the reports has a link to a page through which you can send me comments; (2) individuals or groups – including schools, colleges, departments, programs, staff and student organizations, or any Rutgers constituency – may send written comments directly to me; and (3) we are organizing open forums on each campus for all members of the university community during which you will be able to make comments or ask questions. Details concerning the forums will be sent out in short order. Your comments will help shape the final outcome of the restructuring process.

The Review, Planning and Implementation Steering Committee has also received issue papers on funding and finance, health affairs, human resources, and libraries and information technology. Work has begun on

estimating the near-term transition costs as well as the new resources, both operating and capital, that would be required to support the three new universities. The major issues of resource commitments and governance have yet to be resolved. These two issues are vital to the success of restructuring, and it is essential that they be settled satisfactorily if we are to achieve the ultimate goal, a state research university system of the very highest academic rank.

The final plan will be shared through the university's academic governance structure, including the University Senate. Finally, restructuring would have to be approved by our Board of Governors and Board of Trustees, who hold fiduciary responsibility for the university and are entrusted with our legacy. My colleagues and I are fully engaged in these important deliberations, and I will continue to update you on our progress.

Sincerely,

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President
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