

[OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT HOME](#) | [LETTERS TO THE RUTGERS COMMUNITY](#)**Status Report #2 on Proposal to Restructure Higher Education in New Jersey**

June 5, 2003

Members of the Rutgers Community:

On April 1, I provided you with a comprehensive overview of events and issues involved in the proposal to restructure the state's three research universities and introduced you to Rutgers' web site where detailed information concerning the proposal can be found. Since that time the web site has been visited thousands of times, and we continue to receive the comments of many alumni, faculty, students, staff, and friends of the university. I thank you for those comments and appreciate your advice and input. This communication is intended to inform you of activities that have transpired since my earlier [email message](#).

In addressing restructuring, our goal is to realize the very considerable benefits of the proposal while diminishing the risks and concerns. At this point, governance, structure, and funding are the major subjects being addressed through the work of the various internal and external planning committees. At Rutgers, the Board of Trustees'/Board of Governors' Study Group has held a number of meetings since April, and along with the Presidential Advisory Committee I established this spring of faculty, students and administrators, has been assisting me in a thoughtful exploration of the issues and opportunities presented by the restructuring proposal. The University Senate also continues, through its deliberative processes, to study the various aspects of the restructuring and provide me the benefits of its advice.

The Review, Planning and Implementation Steering Committee, appointed by Governor James E. McGreevey, has met three times since my last message. In addition, many of the subcommittees of the Steering Committee are now active. The members of the three university committees (north, central, and south) and the financing and funding systemwide committee have been appointed and are working. Other systemwide issues committees, including those dealing with health affairs, human resources, and information technology/libraries, are in the final stages of being established and will begin their deliberations over the summer.

Although a tremendous amount of activity is now occurring, the pace of that work is tempered by the significant fiscal challenges confronting the state and higher education. Given the need to address this situation, the Steering Committee has provided the three university committees additional time into the early fall to complete initial work. Reports from the university committees and the systemwide issues committees will be reviewed by the Steering Committee and will inform potential legislation.

The Steering Committee, through its strategic planning subcommittee comprising the chair of the Review, Planning and Implementation Steering Committee, the co-chairs of the three university committees, the chair of the New Jersey Commission on Higher Education, and the presidents of Rutgers, NJIT and UMDNJ (presidential designee), has been conceptualizing a mission and vision statement for the proposed research university system. In addition, the Steering Committee has reviewed a variety of governance structures found among research university systems across the nation. Striking an appropriate balance between central governance and local authority is a principal focus of discussion within the Committee.

Turning to the structural issues for a moment, the university committees involving Rutgers, UMDNJ, and NJIT based in Newark, New Brunswick/Piscataway, and Camden/Stratford have been tackling the proposed restructuring from each of their unique regional perspectives. There is great enthusiasm for the process in Newark, where subcommittees have been formed to discuss mission, academic concerns, research and physical master planning. The university committee in Newark is considering such issues as how to combine two business and nursing schools and various academic departments in the three institutions where significant overlap appears to exist. The committee is also considering the relationship of the core science departments to the basic sciences in the Medical and Dental Schools, opportunities to relate engineering to the life sciences, the organization of computational science and computing, the relationship of visual arts to the School of Architecture, the opportunities offered in combined humanities and social science departments, urban programs, and many other issues.

In New Brunswick, the opportunities presented by integrating the medical school within an organizational framework that appropriately balances the biomedical sciences with Rutgers' strengths in the life sciences, the arts, the humanities, the social and environmental sciences, its professional schools, and its land-grant mission are seen clearly by both institutions. The committee is identifying areas in which Rutgers, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, the School of Public Health and their various centers, bureaus and institutes can collaborate more effectively, both in the short- and long-term.

The picture in Camden/Stratford is more complicated given the geographic dispersion of the campuses and their diverse missions. In addition to Rutgers and the School of Osteopathic Medicine, representatives from Rowan University and UMDNJ at Cooper Hospital have joined in the discussions. These two institutions have been included because of their presence in Camden and their strategic importance for higher education in the region. The group has focused extensively on mission and has established subcommittees to analyze issues of administration, accreditation, and physical master planning. The Camden committee also is developing a plan for expanding and creating centers of excellence in research.

A broader issue common to all the university committees is the delivery of programs from a school on one campus (e.g., social work, nursing, business) to other campuses. Answers to these structural questions should precede and inform consideration of an overall governance model for the proposed system.

Finally, let me turn to the issue of funding. The systemwide financing and funding committee, comprising financial and academic officers from the three research universities, industry representatives, and state officials, has met twice to begin the very important task of analyzing and reporting on the questions of resources for the system, potential funding models, transitional costs and accountability issues. It is looking broadly at national models and scrutinizing our local context. In conjunction with the work of the other systemwide issues groups and the three university committees, the financing and funding committee will provide the Steering Committee with a set of recommendations at the end of the summer.

In closing, let me note again that the issues are complex and varied, but the opportunities are also very great. Together, we will all continue to work diligently to mitigate the concerns and seize the benefits of this proposal, and I ask you for your continuing support. In the meantime, you can seek the latest information on our restructuring web site or [email](#) me with your thoughts.

Sincerely,

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