

# Constitution

*Of the*

## Rutgers University Student Assembly

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## **Preamble**

We, the undergraduate students of Rutgers New Brunswick/Piscataway hereby establish through this constitution a federation of student government to ensure the vitality of student participation in the governance of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. To provide campus-wide advocacy on behalf of student concerns and effectively disburse student activity fees, we establish the Rutgers University Student Assembly (hereafter referred to as the Assembly). To offer maximal opportunity for student leadership, provide localized student representation, and encourage vibrant campus life, we further establish Campus Councils on each geographic campus at Rutgers New Brunswick/Piscataway.

Continuing in a tradition of student government dating back to 1894, the Assembly, Campus Councils, and Professional School Councils will serve as the official voice of the student body.

## **Article I. Structure of Student Government**

### ***Section 1.01 Local Councils***

Each campus or professional school council shall determine its rules and proceedings. The Assembly shall adopt no by-law or motion limiting the power or scope of the campus and professional school councils.

#### **1. Campus Councils**

Each individual campus will have a campus council, with an executive board, and elected representatives to serve on the Assembly. The Campus Councils shall be composed of membership from their respective campuses and will have legislative power for that jurisdiction. Each of the Campus Councils shall receive an equal number of University Senate seats representing the School of Arts and Sciences. The primary role of the campus councils will be to represent the student body for that particular campus.

The Assembly may designate specific campus councils as residential college councils.

#### **2. Professional Schools**

The Professional schools shall have a representative council, independent of the campus councils, having legislative powers and an executive board, and elected representatives to serve on the Assembly. Membership shall be comprised of the professional school constituency. At the discretion of profession schools and campus councils these councils may determine their preferred government structure.

Throughout this Constitution, the term ‘professional schools’ is assumed to include University College, a subset of the School of Arts and Sciences that provides additional services for non-traditional students, in all cases except for those dealing with allocations. A representative council for University College should exist with the same representation on the Assembly and University Senate as professional school councils.

## ***Section 1.02 Rutgers University Student Assembly***

### **1. Legislative Body**

The Assembly shall be composed of members elected by campus councils and professional schools. In the case that there are number of School of Arts and Sciences University Senate seats that do not equally distribute to the Campus Councils, the remainder of these seats shall be filled by voting members of the Assembly through an internal election, which should be open to all School of Arts and Sciences undergraduate students. The Assembly general body will have legislative power representing the students of Rutgers New Brunswick/Piscataway.

### **2. Executive Board**

The Assembly Executive Board shall be composed of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary and Recording Secretary. The Executive Board shall manage the operation of the Assembly. The assembly shall also be responsible for electing a Parliamentarian, who shall advise, but not serve on the Executive Committee. Additional positions may only be created by a 2/3-majority vote of all voting members of the Assembly.

## ***Section 1.03 Council of Presidents***

There shall exist a Council of Presidents consisting of the presidents of the campus councils and professional schools. The Chair of the Assembly shall preside over the meetings of the Council of Presidents. The Council of Presidents will be responsible for setting the agenda for the Assembly, and shall meet prior to each meeting of the Assembly. The Chair of the Assembly shall not be a president of a campus or professional school council.

## **Article II. Powers of the Assembly**

### ***Section 2.01 Meeting Procedures***

The Assembly shall hold regular public meetings during the fall and spring semesters. Special meetings will be held at the request of the assembly chair, a staff advisor, the Council of Presidents, or 10% of the voting members of the Assembly, with 5 days prior notice.. Meetings may enter closed session by a 2/3-majority vote of the members present. Only members of the Assembly and invited guests, determined by a 2/3-majority vote of the members present, may attend closed session meetings.

The Assembly may only conduct business with a quorum present, which is defined as a majority of all voting members. No resolution or motion shall carry unless there is at least a majority of the voting members present agreeing thereto, excluding abstentions. Voting by proxy shall be prohibited.

Additional meeting procedures may be outlined in the standing rules. Meetings of the Assembly shall adhere to the current version of Robert's Rules of Order and to the Constitution and Standing Rules of the Assembly. Should the rules set forth in the Constitution or the Standing

Rules differ from Robert's Rules of Order, precedence shall be defined in the following order: 1. Constitution; 2. Standing Rules; 3. Robert's Rules of Order.

### ***Section 2.02 Internal Elections***

These elections procedures shall be used to elect executive officers, Core and Standing committee chairs, officers of the Allocations Board, representatives to university-wide committees, and other positions requiring official consent of the Assembly:

1. Nominations for the available position may be made by any voting member of the Assembly.
2. Candidates will be asked to leave the meeting and return individually to address the Assembly.
3. When addressing the Assembly, candidates shall give a speech and answer all questions presented by the voting members of the Assembly. The speech shall not exceed two minutes, unless the speaker's time is extended by a 2/3-majority vote of members present. All questions must be appropriate under federal, state, local, and University laws and regulations.
4. After all candidates have addressed the Assembly, they shall remain outside of the meeting while voting members hold discussion on the candidates.
5. Following discussion, voting members shall cast their votes by secret ballot.
6. To win, a candidate must receive a majority of all votes cast. In the case that no candidate receives a majority, a runoff election shall be held between the two candidates who received the highest plurality of votes.

### ***Section 2.03 Disciplinary Procedures***

The Assembly may determine the rules and proceedings by which it will punish its members for disorderly behavior, and by a 2/3-majority vote of all voting members of the Assembly, expel a member. Behavioral discipline may be used to compel members to attend meetings. University Senators who are internally elected through the Assembly and expelled from the Assembly must also vacate their University Senate seat.

## **Article III. Membership and Responsibilities**

### ***Section 3.01 Voting Members***

The Assembly shall consist of the following voting members:

1. Campus Council Representatives
  - a. Each of the Campus Councils will send a number of representatives equal to the number Assembly Core Committees plus one
2. Professional School Council Representatives
  - a. Professional Schools will send one representative per 900 students enrolled in the school, or major fraction thereof, plus one
  - b. Representation shall be made available to any new Professional School Councils that form after the inauguration of the Assembly
3. Cultural Umbrella Organization Representatives

- a. One representative from each recognized cultural umbrella organization shall sit on the Assembly, and these representatives will be determined as outlined in the Assembly Standing Rules
4. Special Population Representatives
  - a. One representative from each special population, as outlined in the Assembly Standing Rules, shall sit on the Assembly
5. University Senate Officer Representatives
  - a. The following University Senate representatives will sit on the Assembly, provided they are undergraduate students from the New Brunswick/Piscataway campus. If one of these representatives is not an undergraduate New Brunswick/Piscataway student, that position will be suspended from the Assembly for that given year
    - i. Student Representative to the Board of Governors
    - ii. Undergraduate Representative to the Board of Trustees
    - iii. Undergraduate Member of the Senate Executive Committee

### ***Section 3.02 Non-Voting Ex-Officio Members***

1. All Deans of Students shall be non-voting ex-officio members of the Assembly

### ***Section 3.03 Responsibilities of Members***

1. Campus Council Representatives
  - a. Represent the interests of their campus, by being the liaison between their campus council and the Assembly.
  - b. Serve on an Assembly committee and the analogous committee of their campus council
  - c. Represent the interests of the entire New Brunswick/Piscataway undergraduate community.
2. Other Representatives
  - a. Represent the interests of their specific constituents by keeping them informed and maintaining constant communication with the Assembly, as well as bringing these interests to the Assembly
  - b. Actively participate in a committee of the Assembly
  - c. Represent the interests of the entire New Brunswick/Piscataway undergraduate community.

### ***Section 3.04 Responsibilities of the Executive Board***

The Executive Board shall consist of five positions:

- Chair
  - Vice Chair
  - Recording Secretary
  - Corresponding Secretary
  - Treasurer
1. Chair of the Assembly

- a. Serve as the official representative of the Assembly
  - b. Has the power to call special meetings of the Assembly and create subsidiary and ad-hoc committees when necessary
  - c. Preside over meetings of the Assembly, the Executive Board, and the Council of Presidents
  - d. Charge the Assembly committees
  - e. Serve as an ex-officio member of all Assembly committees, excluding the Internal Affairs Committee
  - f. File an annual report with the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Office of the Vice President for Undergraduate Education
2. Vice Chair of the Assembly
- a. Assist the Chair where appropriate, including with reports, meetings, and the facilitation of Assembly meetings
  - b. Serve as presiding officer, in the absence of the Chair
  - c. Responsible for overseeing the Assembly committees
  - d. Recommend committee placement of Assembly members to the Executive Board
3. Recording Secretary
- a. Keep the minutes of Executive Board and Assembly meetings
  - b. Maintain a list of Assembly members and committee members and make the list available upon request
  - c. Facilitate internal communication of the Assembly
  - d. See that notices of all Assembly meetings, resolutions, and proposed amendments to this constitution are made available publicly
  - e. Responsible for attendance records
  - f. Responsible for distribution of all paperwork for the Assembly
4. Corresponding Secretary
- a. Assume the responsibilities of the Recording Secretary in his/her absence
  - b. Attend a meeting of each campus and professional school council at least once each semester
  - c. Maintain all correspondence with media and other external parties
5. Treasurer
- a. Develop and submit a semester budget for the Assembly to the Allocations Board
  - b. Serve as a liaison on the Allocations Board
  - c. Keep an accurate account of all funds of the Assembly and submit a regular report to the Assembly
  - g. Oversee distribution and management of funds within the Assembly in accordance with the Allocations Board Guidelines
  - d. Guide and support campus council treasurers

## **Article IV. Committees of the Assembly**

### ***Section 4.01 Required Committees***

The Rutgers University Student Assembly committees shall be structured as follows:

1. Core Committees

These committees exist on both the Assembly and campus councils. Assembly members must serve on the campus committee that matches their Assembly committee. The Core Committees are Academic Affairs, Legislative Affairs, Public Relations, and University Affairs.

2. Standing Committees

The Assembly may create additional committees, which are called Standing Committees. Membership of these committees does not need to correspond with campus council committee membership. These committees may be created by a 2/3-majority vote of all voting members of the Assembly and should be enumerated in the Standing Rules. At minimum, there shall exist a mandatory standing committee on Internal Affairs.

The Internal Affairs Committee shall be responsible for all investigations of the Assembly, and when necessary, impeach members of the Assembly. To remove a member from office, the Assembly shall follow the procedures outlined in the Standing Rules.

Committee membership shall be open to all Rutgers University students, with the exception of the Internal Affairs Committee, which shall be open to voting members of the Assembly who are not members of the Executive Board.

## **Article V. Allocations Boards**

### ***Section 5.01 Purpose of the Assembly Allocations Board***

The Assembly Allocations Board will be the primary allocating board that distributes funding each semester to organizations registered with the Assembly. It shall have auditing power over these organizations, and it shall allocate funds for special events to these organizations.

The Assembly Allocations Board will allocate funds to any registered student organization at Rutgers University or any special event fulfilling special event status, but shall not allocate to any organization affiliated with a professional school council funding board.

The budget prepared by the Allocations Board will be submitted to the Assembly for approval. The Assembly may only vote on the budget as a whole, no line item veto may be used. Once approved, the groups are notified within one week of their total allocation for the following semester.

### ***Section 5.02 Assembly Allocations Board Membership***

The Assembly Allocations Board shall consist of the following voting members:



1. Five officers of the Allocations Board
2. One representative from each campus council
3. One representative from each professional school council that receives funding through the Allocations Board
4. Ten at-large Rutgers University students, selected through an application process

Of the twenty voting members, at least one member shall be a student enrolled in a professional school.

The officers of the Allocations Board shall include the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Auditor, and Treasurer. A selection committee consisting of a Faculty/Staff Member, the outgoing executive board, and a member of the assembly shall recommend candidates for these positions. If a campus or professional council representative is selected to be an officer, that person shall vacate their campus or professional council representative position. All officers must be confirmed by a majority vote of the Assembly.

The chair of the Allocations Board may not serve as an executive member of another student organization. Members of the Allocations Board who are also members of another student organization shall abstain discussing or voting on that organization's budget.

The treasurer of the Assembly shall participate as an ex-officio non-voting member of the Assembly Allocations Board.

### ***Section 5.03 Allocations Guidelines***

The Assembly Allocations Board shall create a Guidelines document to facilitate the allocation of student fees to registered student organizations affiliated with the Assembly. These Guidelines, and any amendment to them, shall be approved by a 2/3-majority vote of all voting members of the Assembly before taking effect.

### ***Section 5.04 Professional School Allocations***

The professional school councils shall receive eighty percent of the student activity fee of the students enrolled in that professional school, after any direct disbursements referenda fees are subtracted. The remaining twenty percent shall be given to the Assembly Allocations Board for distribution. Professional school councils shall have the ability to waive this allocation, and instead have the student activity fee of students in the respective professional school allocated to the Assembly Allocations Board.

Student organizations must choose to affiliate and receive allocations from either the Assembly Allocations Board or a professional school council's funding board. Organizations may not change their affiliation more than once per academic year and cannot affiliate with both the Assembly Allocations Board and the professional school council's funding board.

Each Professional School organization must register with Rutgers University, through the Rutgers online registration process; however, the respective professional school will approve/deny that organization's application for registration.

One hundred percent of student fees of the graduate students or the students of School 31 of the School of Pharmacy will directly be dispersed to the Pharmacy Governing Council's Allocations Board. (The members of School 31 are students within their 5th or 6th year of the pharmacy program.)

## **Article VI. Local Governance**

### ***Section 6.01 Elections***

The Assembly Committee on Elections shall administer Fall and Spring elections for the campus councils. Professional school councils may elect to administer elections independently, or through the Committee on Elections. Campus and professional school councils may independently administer any additional elections to fill vacancies throughout the year.

The Assembly shall create a standard set of Elections Guidelines for use in campus council elections. These elections shall be held concurrently, and allow candidates to ticket. All campus council elections administered by the Assembly shall be determined by a plurality.

Executive Board membership shall be at the discretion of each campus and professional school council. Each campus council shall externally elect a President and Vice President(s) at minimum. The President of each campus council shall have been an elected member or an active participant of any council in any fall and/or spring semester prior to his or her candidacy. Active participation shall be defined as attending at least eighty percent of the meetings of a campus or professional school council committee.

Each campus council shall elect University Senators. The off-campus student receiving the highest number of votes and other students receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected on each campus council to the University Senate. If no off-campus students are elected in this manner, an in-body election open only to off-campus students will be held at the next meeting of the campus council. The professional school councils shall elect a number of Senators proportional to the number of students enrolled in the respective professional school.

The campus councils shall elect Class Representatives from each class year. The campus councils shall determine the number of Class Representatives per class year, which shall not be less than one. For each class year, the off-campus student receiving the highest number of votes and a number of other students receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected as Class Representatives. If no off-campus students are elected in this manner, an in-body election open only to off-campus students will be held at the next meeting of the campus council.

The Assembly may waive the requirement to have an off-campus student as a Class Representative from each class year for specific campus councils. Instead, the two off-campus students receiving the highest number of votes in the Class Representative elections shall be elected as Off-Campus Representatives. If a student is elected as both a Class Representative and an Off-Campus Representative, they shall decline one position, and it shall be given to an

eligible student with the next highest number of votes. If no off-campus students are elected in this manner, an in-body election open only to off-campus students will be held at the next meeting of the respective campus council.

The campus and professional school councils may elect other organizational and special constituency representatives at their discretion. Assembly Representatives may be elected on a schedule at the discretion of the Campus and Professional School Councils.

### ***Section 6.02 Eligibility***

All undergraduate Rutgers New Brunswick/Piscataway students shall be eligible to vote and run for office in the campus councils, unless declared ineligible for campus council elections by the Assembly in the Election Guidelines. All undergraduate students enrolled in the professional schools may vote and run for office in his or her respective professional school council, unless restricted by any Election Guidelines adopted by the professional school council.

The campus councils shall not adopt any by-laws or motions restricting students voting or running for Executive Board, University Senate, Class Representative, or Assembly Representative positions.

You may not concurrently run for or hold office in multiple campus and professional school councils. The Assembly may waive this requirement for specific campus councils, and allow professional school council representatives to concurrently hold office in their respective professional school council and the specific campus council.

You may not concurrently vote in more than one campus council election. Professional school students may vote for candidates in their respective professional school council and the appropriate campus council. Professional school students may not vote for University Senators in the campus council elections.

In the Fall elections, eligible students shall vote and run for office in the campus council for the campus which they currently reside. Off-campus students shall choose one campus council to vote and run for office in.

In the Spring elections, eligible students shall vote and run for office in the campus council for the campus which they will reside on the following year. If a student will be an off-campus student the following year, he or she shall choose one campus council to vote and run for office in. Students on a waiting list for housing shall be considered as off-campus students. Graduating seniors shall not run for office in the Spring campus council elections.

If a residential college student's respective residential college council and campus council are different, the student may vote in both the respective residential college and campus elections, but may not concurrently run for or hold office in multiple councils.

The Douglass Residential College Council shall consist only of women, and any men residing on the Douglass Campus shall be eligible to vote and run for office in the Cook Campus Council.

The Assembly may adopt additional eligibility restrictions for residential college councils, but must ensure that all students deemed eligible by the Elections Guidelines are able to vote, run for, and hold office in a campus council.

### ***Section 6.03 Impeachments***

To remove a member from office, the campus and professional school councils shall follow the procedures in this section, and may adopt additional procedures.

The campus and professional school councils shall establish an internal committee to review the membership of the council. After a thorough investigation, this committee has the exclusive power to recommend a member of the council be impeached for omission of duty, violation of the council's governing documents, excessive unexcused absences, misfeasance, or mismanagement of funds. At the committee's discretion, a member of the council may be recommended for expulsion for additional reasons.

The accused member being tried for expulsion shall be tried at a closed meeting of the council, and shall be given an opportunity to defend the charges brought against him or her. Said member shall not have a vote and shall not be counted amongst the number of voting members present. A 2/3-majority vote of all voting members of the council's membership is required to remove a member from office. If the President is the member being considered for expulsion, the highest-ranking Vice President shall run the proceedings.

## **Article VII. Standing Rules**

### ***Section 7.01 Establishment of Standing Rules***

The Assembly shall establish a document of Standing Rules to facilitate its operation. The Standing Rules shall function as an extension of this Constitution. All Standing Rules must be consistent with this Constitution, and where discrepancy exists, this Constitution takes precedence.

### ***Section 7.02 Amending the Standing Rules***

A 2/3-majority vote of the members present shall be required to approve and amend standing rules. Any member may submit an amendment to the standing rules. Amendments must be submitting in writing to the Internal Affairs committee, which will prepare the amendment for the executive committee.

## **Article VIII. General Provisions**

### ***Section 8.01 Federal, State, and Local Laws***

The Assembly shall abide by all laws of the State of New Jersey and the United States as well as any local statutes, which may affect the actions of the Assembly.

## ***Section 8.02 University Regulations***

The Assembly shall abide by all rules and regulations of the University, including those that apply to non-discrimination and equal opportunity.

## **Article IX. Constitutional Amendments**

### ***Section 9.01 Amendment Procedure***

Any member of RUSA may submit an amendment to this constitution. Amendments must be submitted in writing to the Internal Affairs committee, which will prepare the amendment for the executive committee.

Within fifteen days of proposing the amendment, the Assembly must convene with at least five days of public notice. A 2/3-majority of all voting members shall be needed to approve the amendment. Once the Assembly approves the amendment, it must be approved by a popular referendum within 4 weeks.

A popular referendum to amend the constitution shall require the support of a majority of votes cast on each individual question. Ten percent of all eligible voters must vote for the referendum to be legitimate. Eligible voters shall be defined as all students enrolled in the School of Arts and Sciences and any professional school with representation on the Assembly.

### ***Section 9.02 Provisional Amendment Period***

During the first two years following the ratification of this constitution, there shall exist a provisional period for approving amendments. During this provisional period, amendments must be approved by a 2/3-majority vote of all voting members of the Assembly and 2/3 of the voting members of each campus and professional school councils that have members on the Assembly. After this provisional period, this section will expire and amendments must be approved by a popular referendum.

During this provisional amendment period, the Assembly, through the Internal Affairs Committee, should conduct an annual critical assessment of the Assembly's effectiveness in achieving the goals stated in the preamble of this Constitution. This review should include all aspects of the Assembly and Campus Councils, with a specific focus on the following areas:

- Campus Council Membership - During the annual review, the Assembly should review the membership levels of the Campus Councils. The review should focus on whether the elections for these councils are competitive as well as the level of participation on each campus. Adjustments should be made according to recommendations approved by the Assembly upon concluding its annual review.
- Allocations Board - The annual review should look at the effectiveness and membership of the Allocations Board. Efforts should be made to ascertain that the Allocations Board is disbursing student fees in an efficient and fair manner. The membership of the Allocations Board should also be reviewed to make sure qualified candidates are being selected by the process specified in this constitution

and that members who serve in multiple student organizations, as well as on the Allocations Board are properly abstaining from any decisions relating to their other membership.

- Delegation of Responsibility - Since, at the writing of this Constitution, it is difficult to say with certainty what the role of the Assembly will be with respect to Campus Councils, the annual review should consider the relationship between these entities. It should note the kind of issues each body deals with and determine whether there is effective cooperation. In the event that the review identifies conflict between the Assembly and the Campus Councils, recommendations should be suggested to establish more clear domains of power for these bodies.
- Lobbying Strength – The student government also serves a student advocacy role, advocating to both to the administration and to the federal, local and state governments. Therefore the annual review should consider the system’s effectiveness to influence decisions by both the Rutgers administration as well as external legislatures. Should the system proved unproductive, changes should be proposed to strengthen the overall effectiveness of the student government’s lobbying efforts.

### ***Section 9.03 Amendments by Petition***

Two percent (2%) or more of the total combined number of undergraduate Rutgers New Brunswick/Piscataway students as determined by the Office of the New Brunswick Registrar may propose any specific amendment or amendments to this Constitution.

The petition will be certified by the Internal Affairs Committee and will then be submitted to the students in the manner provided for in Article X.

## **Article X. Referendums**

### ***Section 10.01 Structure***

The referendum is the highest decision-making instrument available to Rutgers University students. It may be used to challenge any decision or course of action of any organ of the Assembly. It must be used to raise or lower student activity fees or any fee assessed to support student organizations recognized by the Assembly. A majority vote will decide a referendum question and may only be overturned by a subsequent referendum in the same manner. Referendum questions must be explicitly written and once approved by the Assembly shall not be revised in any way. No referendum results shall be construed to limit the functions of any organ of the Assembly except as explicitly stated in the referendum question. The referendum shall be administered and validated by the Internal Affairs Committee. This committee shall determine rules and regulations for conducting the referendum. All rules and regulations must be approved by the Assembly. Any referendum concerning the Assembly that is not administered by the Internal Affairs Committee shall be null and void.

## ***Section 10.02 Procedure***

For a referendum to be valid, two percent (2%) or more of the total combined number of undergraduate Rutgers New Brunswick/Piscataway students as determined by the Office of the New Brunswick Registrar must participate in the voting. A referendum question shall be placed on the ballot if two-thirds (2/3) of the Assembly members present approve it to be, or if at least two percent (2%) of the total number of undergraduate Rutgers New Brunswick/Piscataway students petition the Assembly for such. The referendum question must be held no later than fourteen (14) school days after the Assembly approves it, unless the Assembly decides to extend that deadline by a 2/3-majority vote.

## **Article XI. Ratification**

### ***Section 11.01 Ratification of the Constitution of the Assembly***

This constitution must be approved by a 2/3-majority vote of the voting members of each of the governing associations that will have representation on the Assembly. This includes the governing associations that will become the campus councils, Cook, Douglass, Livingston, Rutgers College (Busch and College Ave), and the professional school councils, including University College Governing Association, that will have membership on the Assembly.

After consent of the governing associations and professional school councils, the approval of this constitution must be supported by a popular referendum. A popular referendum to ratify the constitution shall require the support of a majority of votes cast. Fifteen percent of all eligible voters must vote for the referendum to be legitimate. Eligible voters shall be defined as all students who would be enrolled in the School of Arts and Sciences and any professional school, including University College, with representation on the Assembly.