

Constitution

Of the

Rutgers University Student Assembly

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Preamble

We, the undergraduate students of Rutgers New Brunswick/Piscataway, as an integral component of the University community, hereby establish through this Constitution a federated 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; to secure for students an active role in deciding official policies and priorities; to effectively disburse student activity fees; and to provide a forum for the open expression of student ideas and opinions, we establish the Rutgers University Student Assembly (hereafter referred to as the “Assembly”).

Continuing in a tradition of student government dating back to 1894, the Assembly shall serve as the official voice of the student body of Rutgers University New Brunswick/Piscataway.

Article I. Powers of the Assembly

Section 1.01 Purpose of the Assembly

The Rutgers University Student Assembly shall act as the official liaison between the students and the faculty and administration of Rutgers University, the Cities of New Brunswick/Piscataway, and the State of New Jersey. The Assembly shall advocate and promote student interests and rectify concerns; shall serve as a resource center for students; and shall disburse student fees to registered student organizations through the Allocations Board.

Section 1.02 Powers of the Assembly, Caucuses, and Councils

The authority of The Assembly is derived from this constitution and its ratification by the undergraduate students of Rutgers University New Brunswick/Piscataway and from the recognition of the administration and faculty of Rutgers University as the **sole/lead/head/primary** student governing organization of the students of the School of Arts and Sciences

The Assembly shall distribute student fees to registered student organizations through the Assembly Allocations Board and shall be recognized by those within and interacting with the University community as the primary representation of the students of Rutgers University New Brunswick/Piscataway.

Section 1.03 Meeting Procedures (REALLY DON'T WANT THIS HERE-- Should be in Standing Rules?)

The Assembly shall hold regular public meetings during the Fall and Spring semesters. Special meetings may be held at the request of the Assembly President, a majority of Campus Caucus Chairpersons, a staff advisor, or 10% of the voting members of the Assembly, with 3 days prior notice. Meetings may enter closed session by a 2/3-majority vote of the members present. Only members of the Assembly, specified ex-officio members, 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. Vacant seats shall not be included during quorum call.

Additional meeting procedures may be outlined in the Standing Rules. Meetings of the Assembly shall adhere to 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.

Article II. Structure of Student Government

Section 2.01 Rutgers University Student Assembly

1. Legislative Body

The Assembly shall be composed of Representatives and Senators, elected directly by the School of Arts and Sciences (hereafter referred to as "SAS") student body, and Representatives that shall be internally elected by Professional School Councils and Residential College Councils. The Assembly shall operate through committees and general body meetings. The Assembly shall have legislative power representing the students of Rutgers New Brunswick/Piscataway.

2. Executive Board

The Assembly Executive Board shall be composed of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary and Recording Secretary. A Parliamentarian shall also advise, but not serve on the Executive Board, as a member ex-officio; he/she shall also serve as a member ex-officio of the Internal Affairs Committee. The Executive Board shall manage the operation of the Assembly.

Additional positions may only be created by a 2/3-majority vote of all voting members present.

Section 2.02 Campus Caucuses of the Assembly

Each individual campus, and off campus/commuter students, shall have a Campus Caucus, with an internally elected Chairperson, and representatives elected directly by the student body to serve on the Assembly. Each Campus Caucus shall be composed of membership from their respective campuses, as well as off-campus students affiliated with each respective campus. The role of the caucus shall be to represent the student body for that particular community, as well as the entire Rutgers New Brunswick/Piscataway campus. These seats are only available to SAS students.

The Cook Campus and Douglass Campus shall be jointly represented by a Cook/Douglass Caucus that shall consist of equal representation between the Cook and Douglass campuses.

Caucus Chairpersons shall be elected internally at the first meeting of the Campus Caucus following Spring elections.

Section 2.03 Professional Schools and Residential Colleges

1. Professional Schools

Professional schools may have their own respective representative councils, independent of the Assembly, having legislative powers and an executive board, and internally elected representatives to serve on the Assembly. Membership shall be comprised of the professional school constituency. These councils may determine their preferred governance structure. The Professional School Councils shall elect a number of Senators proportional to the number of students enrolled in the respective professional school. They shall include Engineering Governing Council, Pharmacy Governing Council, Rutgers Business Governing Association, Mason Gross Student Government Association, and the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences Council.

2. Residential College Councils

The Douglass Residential College shall have its own representative council. This council shall be independent of the Assembly, have legislative powers, an executive board, and internally elected representatives to serve on the Assembly. The council may determine its preferred governance structure. The Douglass Residential College shall receive funds from the RUSA Allocations Board for programming that relates to the mission of the Douglass Residential College.

In addition, the University College Council (UCC) shall exist as a Residential College, receiving co-sponsorship funding from RUSA Allocations, but not directly being allocated Senators. UCC students shall select their Senators from those running for the SAS Senate seats.

Article III. Committees

Section 3.01 Required Committees

The Assembly committees shall be structured as follows:

1. Core Committees

The Core Committees are Academic Affairs, Legislative Affairs, Public Relations, and University Affairs. Their responsibilities shall be outlined in the Standing Rules.

2. Standing Committees

- a. The Assembly may create additional committees, which are called Standing Committees.
- b. These committees may be created by a 2/3-majority vote of all voting members present and should be enumerated in the Standing Rules. At minimum, there shall exist a mandatory standing committee on Internal Affairs.
- c. The Internal Affairs Committee shall be responsible for all investigations of the Assembly, and when necessary, impeach members of the Assembly. It shall be comprised of at least one member of every Campus Caucus. To remove a member from office, the Assembly shall follow

the procedures outlined in the Standing Rules.

- d. Committee membership shall be open to all Rutgers University students, with the exception of the Internal Affairs Committee, which shall be open to only voting members of the Assembly who are not members of the Executive Board.
- e. “It is the responsibility of the RUSA Executive Board to set meetings’ agendas. In addition, any resolution approved by a recognized cultural umbrella organization, as listed in the Standing Rules, must be added to the agenda of the next occurring meeting.”

Article IV. Eligibility, Elections, Impeachments

Section 4.01 Eligibility

Candidacy eligibility shall be open to all undergraduate Rutgers University students and must comply with federal laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, military service, and veteran status, and any other category protected by law.

The Assembly shall not adopt any by-laws or motions restricting students from running for an Executive Board, University Senate, Class Council Representative, or Assembly Representative Position. Students that do not successfully attain a seat on the Assembly through the election process shall not be prohibited from participating in any open meeting.

Professional school and residential college students may only vote for candidates in their respective Professional School Council or Residential College Council, in addition to the Assembly President, Vice President, and Treasurer. The President of the Assembly must have at least one year experience on the body.

All undergraduate students enrolled in a professional school may vote and run for office in their respective Professional School Council or RUSA, unless restricted by any Election Guidelines adopted by the Professional School Council.

No member may concurrently run for or hold office in the Assembly and a Professional School Council. Students may not concurrently vote for representatives from more than one geographic campus, professional school or residential college. If an elected student switches schools during his or her term, he or she has the option of finishing the remainder of the term.

In the Fall elections, eligible SAS students may vote and run for positions respective of their campus. Off-campus students shall choose one geographic campus with which to affiliate, and on which one will run for office.

In the Spring elections, eligible students shall vote and run for office respective of the geographic campus on which they will reside in the following year. If a student will be an off-campus student the following year, he or she shall choose a Campus with which to affiliate. 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.

The Douglass Residential College shall consist only of Douglass Residential College affiliated women.

Cook Douglass Caucus shall be comprised of all other students living on Cook or Douglass Campus, not affiliated with Douglass Residential College or SEBS.

If the University houses students off campus, i.e. in Hotels, those students shall be treated as off campus students and allowed to declare affiliation in the same process. If these students are moved on campus they shall be allowed to maintain their original elected seats.

Section 4.02 Elections (Internal too)

The Assembly Committee on Elections shall administer Fall and Spring elections for the Assembly. Professional School Councils and Residential College Councils shall administer elections in conjunction with the Assembly Committee on Elections. Professional School Councils and Residential College 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 Assembly elections.. All Campus Council elections administered by the Assembly shall be determined by a plurality.

“Prior to the Spring elections, the RUSA Public Relations committee must sponsor a “Ready to Run” program that empowers students to run for office and educates students on how to be an effective member of student government. Sponsorship money shall be allocated from RUSA Allocations to ensure adequate funding.”

In the event of the President’s resignation, the Vice President shall assume the Presidency, and the position of Vice President shall be put forth to an internal election. If the Vice President elects not to assume the Presidency, the position of Presidency shall be put up for an Internal Election at the next meeting of the Assembly.

Internal Elections

Each Campus Caucus shall have an internally elected Chairperson. The Chairperson of each Campus Caucus shall have been an elected member or an active participant of any Campus Caucus or Council in any Fall and/or Spring semester prior to his or her candidacy.

These elections procedures shall be used to elect Core and Standing committee chairs, officers of the Allocations Board, representatives to university-wide committees, and other positions needing the 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 and comments directed at the candidates 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 4.03 Impeachments

To remove a member from office, the Assembly, Professional School Councils, and Residential College Councils shall follow the procedures in this section, and may adopt additional procedures.

The Assembly, Professional School Councils, and Residential College Councils shall utilize the Internal Affairs committee to review the membership of the Assembly. 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 Assembly, 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 present is required to remove a member from office. If the President is the member being considered for expulsion, the Vice President shall chair the proceedings.

Article V. Membership and Responsibilities

Section 5.01 Responsibilities of Members

1. Campus Caucus Representatives:
 - a. Represent the interests of their campus in all respects.
 - b. Represent the interests of the entire New Brunswick/Piscataway undergraduate community.
 - c. At least one member from each Campus Caucus shall be a member of each of the core committees. All members shall sit on an Assembly committee.
 - d. The responsibility of the Chairpersons is to maintain contact with administrators of their specific campus, as well as organizing and chairing Campus Caucus meetings.
 - e. The Chairperson of each Campus Caucus has the authority to call meetings of his or her respective caucus
2. University Senators
 - a. Represent the interests of the New Brunswick/Piscataway campus at-large.
 - b. Represent the interests of the entire New Brunswick/Piscataway undergraduate community.
 - c. University Senators shall not be required to serve on the core committees.

Section 5.02 Voting Members

1. Campus Caucuses
 - a. Each Campus Caucus shall consist of eight (8) students with one (1) per academic year, and four (4) elected at-large. Students residing on-campus shall only serve as a Representative on the Campus Caucus for the campus on which they reside. Members of the Off Campus Student Association must reside off-campus.
 - b. The Cook-Douglass Caucus shall have one (1) per a year per each Cook and Douglass. Totaling four (4) representatives from each.
2. Professional School Councils and Residential College Council Representatives

- a. Professional Schools shall send one representative per nine-hundred (900) students enrolled in the school, or major fraction thereof, plus two.
 - b. Representation shall be made available to any new Professional School Councils that form after the inauguration of the Assembly.
3. University Senators
- a. All SAS University Senators shall sit on the Assembly. The number of University Senate seats is determined by the amount allocated to the School of Arts and Sciences, as outlined in the University Senate Handbook.
 - b. The President and Vice President of the Assembly may not serve as a Senator.
4. Cultural Umbrella Organization and Special Population Representatives
- a. One representative from each recognized cultural umbrella and special population organization may sit on the Assembly as a full voting member.
 - b. The selection of these representatives shall be determined by said organizations

Section 5.03 Responsibilities of the Executive Board

1. President of the Assembly
 - a. Serve as the official representative of the Assembly
 - b. Call special meetings of the Assembly when necessary and create subsidiary and ad-hoc committees when necessary
 - c. Preside over meetings of the Assembly, Executive Board, and the President's Advisory Council
 - d. Charge the Assembly committees with the assistance of the Vice President
 - 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
 - g. Establish a President's Advisory Council, which meets once a month, including at least the following: Campus Council Chairpersons, Professional School Presidents, Residential College Presidents, Class Council Presidents, Off-Campus Student Association President, Residence Hall Association President, the Asian Student Council President, Latino Student Council Co-chairs, United Black Council President, Educational Opportunity Fund President, and Greek Life Council Presidents
2. Vice President of the Assembly
 - a. Assist the President with reports, meetings, and other appropriate tasks
 - b. Serve as presiding officer in the absence of the President
 - c. Oversee the Assembly committees
 - d. Recommend committee placement of Assembly members to the Executive Board
 - e. Serve in the capacity of the Presidency in case of vacancy or the President's inability to perform his or her duties
3. Treasurer
 - a. Develop and submit a semester budget for the Assembly to the Allocations Board
 - b. Serve as a voting member on the Allocations Board
 - c. Keep an accurate account of all funds of the Assembly and submit a regular report to the Assembly
 - d. Oversee distribution and management of funds within the Assembly in accordance with the Allocations Board Guidelines
 - e. Guide and support Professional School Council and Residential College Council treasurers

4. 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. Maintain attendance records
 - f. Distribute of all paperwork for the Assembly
5. Corresponding Secretary
 - a. Assume the responsibilities of the Recording Secretary in his/her absence
 - b. Outreach to various clubs on campus and report to them about the Assembly Activities. Maintain all correspondence with media and other external parties
 - c. ***Serve as Chair of the Public Relations Committee***

Section 5.04 Non-Voting Ex-Officio Members

3. Non-voting, ex-officio members shall not be required to leave Assembly meetings during closed sessions, except impeachments, and shall be treated as equivalent to voting members during debate.
4. All Deans of Students and Student Involvement professional staff shall be non-voting, ex-officio members of the Assembly.
5. The presidents of all registered student organizations, special population student organizations, and umbrella organizations shall be non-voting, ex-officio members of the Assembly.

Article VI. Allocations Board

Section 6.01 Purpose of the Assembly Allocations Board

The Assembly Allocations Board shall 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 shall 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 shall be submitted to the Assembly for approval.

The Assembly may only vote on the budget as a whole, and 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 6.02 Assembly Allocations Board Membership

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

1. Five officers of the Allocations Board, selected through an application process
2. Five at-large Rutgers University students, selected through an application process
3. The Treasurer of the Assembly, elected directly to the Assembly by the student body

Of the voting members, at least one member must be a student enrolled in a professional school or residential college, and at least one must be a student enrolled in the School of Arts and Sciences

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 an Assembly, Professional School Council, or Residential College Council representative is selected to be an officer, that person shall vacate their Assembly or Professional School Council 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.

Section 6.03 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 present voting members of the Assembly before taking effect.

Section 6.04 Professional School Allocations

The Professional School Councils shall receive eighty percent (80%) 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 (20%) shall be given to the RUSA 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 RUSA 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 RUSA Allocations Board and a 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 may approve/deny that organization's application for registration.

One hundred percent (100%) of student fees collected from the graduate students of School 31, the School of Pharmacy, shall be directly 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 VII. Standing Rules

Section 7.01 Establishment of Standing Rules

The Assembly shall establish a document of Standing Rules to facilitate its operations. The ***Standing Rules shall function as an extension of this Constitution. All Standing Rules must be consistent with this Constitution, and where discrepancies exist, 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 submitted in

writing to the Internal Affairs committee, which may prepare the amendment for the executive committee.

Article VIII. Constitutional Amendments

Section 8.01 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 may 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. Two percent (2%) of all eligible voters must vote in order 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 or residential college with representation on the Assembly.

Section 8.02 Provisional Amendment Period

During the first three (3) 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 at least a 2/3-majority vote of all voting members of the Assembly, and at least a two-thirds majority of the voting members of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Professional School Councils and Residential College 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:

- *Assembly Membership - During the annual review, the Assembly should review the membership levels of the Assembly. The review should focus on whether the elections for the Assembly are competitive as well as the level of participation. 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 those members who serve in multiple student organizations, as well as on the Allocations Board, are properly abstaining from any decisions that may cause a conflict of interest.*

- *Lobbying Strength – The Assembly also serves a student advocacy role, advocating to both to the administration and to the federal, state, and local 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 prove unproductive, changes should be proposed to strengthen the overall effectiveness of the Assembly’s lobbying efforts.*

Section 8.03 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 must be certified by the Internal Affairs Committee and may then be submitted to the students in the manner provided for in Article X.

Article IX. Referendums and Ratification

Section 9.01 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 shall 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 9.02 Procedure

For a referendum to be valid, ten percent (10%) 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.

Section 9.03 Ratification of the Constitution of the Assembly

Ratification requires the approval of a majority of at least two percent (2%) of the student body, as required under Article X of this Constitution.

Article X. General Provisions

Section 10.01 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 10.02 University Regulations

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

This Assembly shall abide by all applicable rules and regulations of the University and under the privileges as granted by the Division of Student Affairs and by the rules and regulations of the Board of Governors.