

CAMDEN BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
January 14, 2021

A virtual meeting of the Camden Board of Directors of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey was held on Thursday, January 14, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. via WebEx. Mr. Hundley presided as Chair.

Present and constituting a quorum were Dietrich, Hundley, Lewis, and McCue.

Absent was Stewart.

Attending for the university administration were Marsh, Roesener, and Sepanic.

Also present were Rabinowitz, faculty representative to the Board of Directors, Cialella, graduate student representative to the Board of Directors, and Shanas, undergraduate representative to the Board of Directors.

ANNOUNCEMENT PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 231, PUBLIC LAW 1975
(OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT)

Mr. Michael Sepanic, Secretary of the Rutgers–Camden Board of Directors, announced that pursuant to Public Law 1975, Chapter 231 and Public Law 2020, Chapter 11 (Open Public Meetings Act), public notice of this meeting was filed on January 5, 2021 with the Office of the Secretary of State of New Jersey and three newspapers, the Cherry Hill *Courier-Post*, the New Brunswick *Home News Tribune*, and the Newark *Star-Ledger*. Public notice of the meeting was posted in the following University libraries: the Alexander Library, New Brunswick; the Dana Library, Newark; and the Robeson Library, Camden. In addition, notice of this meeting was posted on the Rutgers–Camden Board of Directors website.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Mr. Sepanic asked the board members if they had read the meeting agenda and supporting documents and if anyone had a possible conflict of interest to disclose. No conflicts were reported.

ROLL CALL

Roll was taken during the meeting.

INTRODUCTION OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Hundley welcomed Ms. Heather Cialella as graduate student representative to the Rutgers–Camden Board of Directors and Mr. Nitan Shanas as undergraduate student representative to the Rutgers–Camden Board of Directors. Ms. Cialella is a fourth-year doctoral student in the Center for Computational and Integrative Biology. Mr. Shanas, a senior studying economics, urban studies, and psychology, is student body president and active in the Civic Scholars program.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2020 MEETING

Mr. Hundley called attention to the minutes of the September 10, 2020 meeting that were distributed to the Board and asked if there were any additions or corrections. Receiving no objections, Mr. Hundley called for a motion which was seconded and asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, the minutes were approved unanimously.

CHANCELLOR'S UPDATE

Chancellor Marsh provided the Board with an update on important happenings since the last Board meeting on September 10, 2020, including a recap of the fall semester, an update on the spring semester, and a report on a number of positive developments.

With instruction delivered largely remotely due to the pandemic, the fall semester was challenging for everyone. The move to online teaching was a radical shift for most faculty and students. However, Rutgers University–Camden's IT Department and Department of Instructional Design and Technology provided faculty with the apparatus they needed to successfully deliver synchronous and asynchronous instruction. The Department of Instructional Design and Technology offered well attended webinars and provided 3,000 faculty consultations. Both departments were recognized with Chancellor's Awards for Staff Excellence for their exemplary effort. Students also received additional assistance. Dr. Jason Rivera, vice chancellor for student academic success, created RU Engaged, an initiative that utilized a two-pronged approach to monitor student engagement in coursework and to provide personal outreach to students by phone to determine how they were doing and to assist with any issues. Students and parents greatly appreciated the effort. In addition, CARES funds were made directly available for student benefit, and the laptop loaner program was extended.

Although some more classes will be offered in person during the spring semester, for the most part, the spring semester will be delivered remotely. The Student Government Association actively advocates for the student body and has brought a number of needs to the administration's attention. In response, the needs for in-person meetings with professors and physical space for socially distanced studying are being addressed. Planning for the 2021-2022 academic year is under way. With vaccination, virus mitigation, and herd immunity, it is hoped that the fall semester will be as close to normal as possible.

Despite challenges presented by the pandemic, faculty, students, and staff continue to excel. Chancellor Marsh highlighted some particularly noteworthy achievements. A faculty member, who wishes to remain anonymous, donated \$3.5 million to create the Rayman L. Solomon Scholars program at the Camden location of Rutgers Law School in honor of the school's former dean. This is the largest individual gift made to Rutgers University–Camden and will attract students to Rutgers Law School in Camden who have distinguished themselves academically and demonstrated a commitment to public service. The School of Business–Camden launched a master's degree in business analytics. The inaugural cohort of 35 students began studies in the fall. Nidhi Sheth, a doctoral student in the Center for Computational and Integrative Biology, received a highly competitive graduate research fellowship from the National Institute for Justice. The fellowship helps support her research on DNA analysis which seeks to help the forensic science community tackle the interpretation and inference of complex mixture samples. Dr. Angela Gonzalez, assistant professor of biology, received a CAREER award from the National Science Foundation. The prestigious monetary award helps junior faculty further their research. Now that Rutgers University–Camden is an R2 doctoral institution, faculty are receiving more of these awards. Providing critical experience in patient care and serving the people of South Jersey, Dr. Donna Nickitas, dean of the School of Nursing–Camden, assembled a 300-member team of students and faculty to support vaccine distribution at a field location in Blackwood. Lastly, although Martin Luther King, Jr. Day cannot be observed as usual with faculty, staff, and alumni engaging in volunteer work in the community, the day will not go unmarked. In a virtual event co-sponsored by the Camden and New Brunswick campuses, Dr. Nyeema Watson, vice chancellor for diversity, equity, and civic engagement, and Dr. Anna Branch, senior vice president for equity, will engage in conversation with Dr. Eddie Glaude, Jr., a well-known scholar from Princeton University. At the event on January 21, Dr. Glaude will focus on Dr. King's legacy, racial reckoning, and how the nation can move forward.

Chancellor Marsh concluded her presentation by recognizing the resilience of Rutgers University–Camden’s students, faculty, and staff and their ongoing commitment to serving the city, region, and state. She also responded to questions from board members.

RESEARCH UPDATE

Mr. Hundley called on Dr. Benedetto Piccoli, vice chancellor for research and the Joseph and Loretta Lopez chair professor of mathematics, to provide an update on research at Rutgers University–Camden.

Dr. Piccoli indicated that the research agenda at Rutgers University–Camden has advanced considerably in the last decade due to several important milestones: inception of Ph.D. programs in 2010 under the leadership of and strong support from former chancellor Margaret Marsh; establishment of a research office in 2016 directed by a provost and, later, by a vice chancellor position; and, most importantly, classification of Rutgers University–Camden by the Carnegie Foundation as an R2 national research university.

Benefit of this expanded research agenda is evident in numerous ways, including an increase in the number of grant awards, which has doubled to 160 in the last five years, and in an increase in the total amount of grant funding, which has almost tripled to \$20 million in the last five years. Benefit is also evident in the prominence of many grants awarded to and honors bestowed on the faculty. Some notable research awards so far in FY21 include those earned by Dr. Hao Zhu, professor of chemistry (\$2.78 million R01 grant from the NIH), Dr. Ross Whiting, senior project administrator for the Senator Walter Rand Institute (\$1.26 million grant from the Pascale Sykes Foundation), and Dr. Maria Solesio, assistant professor of biology (\$733,210 grant from the NIA/NIH). Notable honors and awards bestowed on faculty from all schools include ECASE Army and NSF CAREER awards, Fulbright Awards, Guggenheim Fellowships, an NEA Literature Fellowship, the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Lifetime Achievement Award, and an AALS Impact Award. Rutgers University–Camden’s faculty also applied their expertise to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic by advising policy in New Jersey, developing a telehealth initiative, managing the pandemic and transportation, studying genetic sequencing of COVID, and exploring early COVID detection mechanisms. Through their efforts, the highly acclaimed faculty at Rutgers University–Camden benefit the region, nation, and world.

Through a variety of initiatives, the Research Office at Rutgers University–Camden promotes and sustains campus research efforts to improve the visibility and impact of research activities inside and outside the Rutgers University system. The Research Office provides seed money to allow faculty to embark on new research, works with faculty and students to identify appropriate funding and collaborative opportunities to advance their work, hosts events to promote ongoing research and creative activities, conducts professional development sessions for graduate students, and recognizes exemplary achievement through the Chancellor’s Award for Outstanding Research and Creative Activity.

UPDATE ON THE ROWAN UNIVERSITY/RUTGERS–CAMDEN BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Mr. Hundley called on Ms. Dana Redd, CEO of the Rowan University/Rutgers–Camden Board of Governors, to provide an update on the Joint Board.

Construction of the Joint Health Sciences Center (Phases I and II) was completed in the fourth quarter of 2020, and the \$50 million NJ EDA grant for biomedical research facilities was closed. The Joint Board continues to manage the GO bonds (Building our Future Bond Act) which financed the annex side of the building. Construction fit-out of the café space is complete; however, the pandemic has stymied efforts to secure a café operator. Responding to this challenge, the Joint Board has investigated setting up a micro-market and has furnished the space for instructional and meeting uses.

With completion of Phases I and II, the Joint Board is shifting to Phase III, which proposes to develop Block 1400 as a collaborative life sciences center. Awarded a contract by the Joint Board in December, Ewing Cole, proposes an integrated team consisting of McKernan Architects & Associates and Bob Melvin, of Camden's Pennoni, to work with the Joint Board. A dynamic, collaborative process is envisioned that engages a variety of stakeholders and leaders in higher education, healthcare, research, business, government, and the community. The planning process is expected to launch in the first quarter of 2021.

Progress continues on development of the Population Health Research Institute (PHRI), a collaborative effort between Rutgers University–Camden, Rowan University, and the Joint Board. Dr. Sarah Allred, faculty director of the Senator Walter Rand Institute at Rutgers University–Camden, and Dr. Nicole Vaughn, assistant professor of community health at Rowan University, co-chair the inaugural PHRI grant-making initiative for southern New Jersey. Since mid-September, Dr. Allred and Dr. Vaughn have been creating the infrastructure necessary to sustain the initiative that seeks engagement from both public and academic stakeholders. Notice of funding availability for collaborative population health research projects that focus on challenges in urban and rural areas in southern New Jersey is expected soon. Finally, to avoid confusion with another health-related organization in New Jersey, the name of the Population Health Research Institute will be changed to the South Jersey Institute for Population Health (SJIPH).

Ms. Redd concluded her presentation by answering questions from board members.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Hundley directed the Board's attention to old business. There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Hundley directed the Board's attention to new business. There was no further new business.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hundley asked if there was any further business. Hearing none, he called for a motion and a second to adjourn the meeting at 2:02 p.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by,

Michele L. Robinson
Rutgers University–Camden Chancellor's Office