

CAMDEN BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
January 27, 2022

A meeting of the Camden Board of Directors of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey was held on Thursday, January 27, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom. Mr. Frank Hundley presided as Chair.

Present and constituting a quorum were Covington, Dougherty, Dietrich, Hundley, and Tambussi.

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

Also present were Rabinowitz, faculty representative to the Camden Board of Directors, Ciallella, graduate representative to the Camden Board of Directors, and Johnson, undergraduate representative to the Camden 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 21, 2022 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 23, 2021 MEETING

Mr. Hundley called attention to the minutes of the September 23, 2021 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 REPORT

Chancellor Tillis provided a report on important happenings since the last board meeting when he was still within his first 100 days as chancellor. Since then, he has continued to dialogue with various constituencies about the future of Rutgers University–Camden and is “pleased to report out that our beloved community is in a good place, moving forward to fulfill our mission as an anchor institution here in Camden and across all of southern New Jersey.”

After the pause in January due to COVID-19, in-person classes, events, athletic competition, and learning abroad experiences will resume, beginning on January 31, within the boundaries of public health

guidelines. Among those activities include the signature learning excursion to South Africa, which the chancellor will attend, and resumption of play for the track and field and baseball teams, for the first time in the Camden County Athletic complex, an important new asset for Camden which Rutgers–Camden proudly partners on with the city and county.

Rutgers–Camden’s faculty continue to remain at the forefront of research and teaching. Chancellor Tillis provided examples from the Rutgers–Camden faculty, which continues to elevate the Rutgers brand worldwide: Prof. Kim Mutcherson, Rutgers Law co-dean, was named a co-recipient of the Society of American Law Teachers’ M. Shanara Gilbert Human Rights Award; Dr. Kevin Emmons, associate dean in the School of Nursing–Camden, received the Luther Christman Award; Dr. Ozum Zor, assistant professor of marketing, had a research paper accepted for publication in the Journal of Consumer Research; Dr. Richard Michelfelder, clinical associate professor of finance, is advising the New Jersey legislature on a bill related to electric and fossil fuel plants in the state; and, Dr. Margaret Marsh, University Professor of History, has been elected to the rank of Fellow in the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Rutgers–Camden students and alumni also continue to boast remarkable achievements. Recently, law students were involved in research and an education effort that helped the NJ state legislature pass a bill forbidding healthcare providers to perform invasive exams on unconscious patients; recent graduates of the MFA program won a Hugo Award, the 2022 Lexi Rudnitsky First Book Prize in Poetry, and published a novel; and, three biology students won awards last fall when they presented their research at the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students.

Chancellor Tillis also highlighted new academic programs and learning experiences for Rutgers–Camden students, including clinical work in nurses’ offices throughout Vineland’s school district; a successful site review from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education in support of the new master of science program for school nurses; reaccreditation of the ostomy continence graduate certificate program from the Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nurses Society; signing of a partnership agreement with Camden County College to begin accepting RN to BSN transfer students in spring 2023; development of a program for housing justice; approval of two new programs by the Board of Governors (a bachelor of fine arts in creative writing and a master of science in finance and wealth management); and, development of an internship program in the Camden City mayor’s office to begin in summer 2022.

In support of his belief that the role of any great university is to provide forums that allow individuals to connect with innovating thinking and new ideas, Chancellor Tillis is invigorating existing programs and creating new ones. This month, Rutgers–Camden is commemorating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with a month-long virtual speaker series that includes a variety of perspectives and culminates with the keynote presentation by Dr. Clayborne Carson, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Centennial Professor Emeritus at Stanford University and founder of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute. A new initiative is the Chancellor’s Signature Lecture Series, with the campus visit in April of Prof. Sheryll Cashin, author and senior scholar in law, civil rights, and social justice at Georgetown University.

In addition to commitment to the campus and university, Chancellor Tillis remains committed to finding new ways to partner with the host city of Camden and the region in accordance with Rutgers’ responsibility as an anchor institution. In support of that commitment, Chancellor Tillis has launched a local procurement initiative to improve opportunities for small and micro businesses in Camden and South Jersey to do business with Rutgers. In addition to cataloguing the city’s microbusinesses, Rutgers–Camden is working with local business leaders, area chambers of commerce, and the Camden mayor’s office to bring this initiative to fruition.

Chancellor Tillis also emphasized the importance of traditions, many of which were disrupted by the pandemic. A special graduation event at the BB&T Pavilion in Camden was held on November 10 for the classes of 2020 and 2021. In-person commencement will be held in May, with a rites of passage celebration for Black- and Hispanic-identified students to be held on May 17. And, a campus

convocation, the first for Rutgers–Camden, will be held in September 2022 to welcome the start of the new academic year.

Chancellor Tillis concluded his report by introducing two new members of his cabinet. Dr. Jimmy Jung, senior vice chancellor, oversees enrollment management, student academic success, and institutional research, and Ms. Toni Mooney Smith, vice chancellor, oversees marketing and communications.

REPORT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION STRATEGIC PLANNING

Chancellor Tillis introduced Dr. Nyeema Watson, vice chancellor for diversity, inclusion, and civic engagement, to report on the diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic planning process conducted at Rutgers University–Camden.

Under the leadership of Dr. Anna Branch, senior vice president for equity, each of Rutgers University’s campuses was tasked with undertaking a diversity, equity, and inclusion strategic planning process. Dr. Watson leads the effort at Rutgers University–Camden. Dr. Watson assembled a steering committee of faculty, staff, and students who hosted a series of conversations with groups internal and external to the Camden Campus. Four priority areas emerged from these conversations: 1. Recruit and Retain a Diverse Community; 2. Promote Inclusive Excellence in Teaching, Research, and Scholarship; 3. Deepen Civic and Community Engagement; and 4. Nurture an Inclusive Campus Climate.

Dr. Watson provided insight into each priority area. As a recently designated Minority Serving Institution by the Department of Education, it is imperative to recruit and retain a diverse community. Some of the ways this priority will be supported include continued support of the Bridging the Gap Program, increasing the number of historically under-represented faculty, and evaluating issues that affect faculty and staff retention. Promoting inclusive excellence in teaching, research, and scholarship is important to provide broader, more diverse approaches to research and pedagogy. This priority will be supported, in part, by equipping faculty to bring more diverse voices into the classroom and by providing opportunities to share their research. Civic and community engagement are already hallmarks of the Camden Campus; however, this third priority will be deepened by expanding the existing work to also focus on local procurement and local hiring, two areas of key importance to the community, and to better connect with alumni of color. Finally, the fourth priority to nurture an inclusive campus climate will be supported by conducting campus climate surveys to ensure that everyone feels welcome at Rutgers University–Camden.

Additional efforts to bolster the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion on the Camden Campus include the recent hire of Ms. Naima Hall as director for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and by instituting the Chancellor’s Awards for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to recognize achievement in this space.

Dr. Watson concluded her presentation by answering questions from board members.

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

Ms. Dana Redd, CEO of the Rowan University/Rutgers–Camden Board of Governors, provided an update on capital projects, the Joint Health Sciences Center, and the South Jersey Institute for Population Health.

The Joint Board is working in collaboration with Rutgers–Camden to support capital projects that strengthen the institution as well as advance development of the “eds and meds” corridor. The Joint Board entered into an agreement of sale and purchase in December for Rutgers for the acquisition of Block 77 in downtown Camden. An environmental site investigation is underway, and closing is expected in March.

As manager of the Joint Health Sciences Center on behalf of the resident institutions, the Joint Board is committed to supporting the work of faculty researchers and students at the building. Currently, the Joint Board is working closely with Provost Dan Hart and Vice Chancellor for Research Benedetto Piccoli to accommodate space needs for researcher Dr. Hao Zhu, professor of chemistry at Rutgers University–Camden. Dr. Zhu recently secured two large grants from the National Institutes of Health.

In December, in its inaugural funding cycle, the South Jersey Institute for Population Health awarded a total of \$230,000 to support 11 research projects related to population health challenges in southern New Jersey. Collaborative teams, comprised of individuals from Rutgers University–Camden, Rowan University, and various non-profit entities in the area, will conduct research on important and emerging issues in population health, including impact of drug use, digital equality, perinatal depression, health needs assessment, housing and food access, and the effects of COVID-19 on mental health. Ms. Redd acknowledged the work of Dr. Michael Palis, former provost, Dr. Daniel Hart, current provost, and Dr. Sarah Allred, SJPHI co-lead and professor of psychology, for their work on innovating the institute and laying the foundation for the inaugural funding initiative. Ms. Redd indicated a second round of funding for collaborative research has been secured, with a call for proposals expected in mid 2022.

Ms. Redd concluded her update by answering questions from the board.

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 new business.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Hundley asked if members of the public wished to comment. No public comment was offered.

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 2:07 p.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by,

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