

CAMDEN BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
May 12, 2022

A meeting of the Camden Board of Directors of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey was held on Thursday, May 12, 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 May 6, 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 JANUARY 27, 2022 MEETING

Mr. Hundley called attention to the minutes of the January 27, 2022 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 reported on current accomplishments, including Rutgers–Camden's recognition in national rankings, efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion, research support, civic engagement, and student success. He also shared plans for the upcoming fiscal year.

As borne out in rankings by US News and World Report, Rutgers–Camden is an institution on the rise. Most recently, the publication ranked Rutgers–Camden at 148 among national research universities, at 18th among national research universities in terms of providing social mobility, and at 67th among top public universities. All three categories represent increased rankings from prior years.

As a place of belonging and inclusion, Rutgers–Camden robustly supports efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Recently, exemplary students, faculty and staff, alumni, and community partners were honored at the first-ever Chancellor’s awards for Diversity, Inclusion, and Civic Engagement. Additionally this year, the first cycle of IDEA Innovation Grants, which are focused on opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to work on collaborative projects, were awarded. Two examples include a conversation regarding representation of Black childhoods hosted by Childhood Studies and a community arts festival in Johnson Park facilitated by Digital Studies in collaboration with the Idea Arts Center in Camden. On May 17, the inaugural Rites of Passage ceremony will be held to celebrate the achievements of Black and Hispanic students and, the evening before, a special event will be held for Rutgers–Camden’s Black and Hispanic alumni. To keep the work of the DEI strategic plan moving forward, a standing DEI Council began its work, and a Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Center was launched.

Rutgers–Camden continues to excel as a research institution. A Carnegie-classified R2 research institution, Rutgers–Camden is a place of innovation thanks to its exceptional research faculty. Research support of \$20.3 million was received during FY2021. A few recent examples of the increasing number of faculty members receiving grant funding include Dr. Grace Brannigan, director of the Center for Computational Biology and associate professor of physics (\$2 million grant from the National Science Foundation to build new models for interdisciplinary graduate training); Dr. Nathan Link, assistant professor of criminal justice (\$1.5 million grant from Arnold Ventures to evaluate processing of individuals through a key criminal diversion program in Philadelphia); Dr. Jinglin Fu, associate professor of chemistry (\$250,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to develop screening methods for infectious diseases related to COVID-19); and Dr. Mei Fu, professor of nursing (\$69,000 grant from the Rowan University/Rutgers–Camden Board of Governors to explore issues of public health).

Rutgers–Camden is also recognized regionally and nationally as an innovative leader in civic engagement. With 125 engaged civic learning courses, 111 trained faculty who teach engaged civic learning courses, 530 students in grades 3-12 served currently, and 300,000 hours spent by students in the community, Rutgers–Camden provides significant impact locally. This work has led to recognition of Rutgers–Camden as a national model for civically engaged universities by the Carnegie Foundation and by Washington Monthly magazine. Chancellor Tillis said he is committed to seeing this work elevate.

Diligent effort in student success is also yielding positive results. The chancellor reported that graduation rates are trending upward; more students are being retained in the critical transition from their first to second undergraduate years; and the proud tradition continues of Rutgers–Camden being a nurturing place where students can earn their degrees with the supports needed to thrive.

While these initiatives demonstrate that Rutgers–Camden rests on a solid foundation, Chancellor Tillis has plans in place to move the campus forward. Among these are building innovative community partnerships (e.g. the Chancellor’s Mayoral Internship Program and the LPN to RN to BSN pipeline in partnership with Camden County College); increasing the global footprint with current engagement efforts in Egypt, South Africa, Brazil, and Paraguay; onboarding new undergraduate and graduate programs that will increase enrollment and enhance the academic profile; and providing opportunities for staff to enhance their skills and growth potential. In addition, Chancellor Tillis announced a series of 15 strategic initiatives to advance in the next five years. Termed “15 in 5,” four initiatives have been launched in the program’s first two months alone. These include the Chancellor’s Learning Abroad Course Scholarship, the Chancellor’s Mayoral Internship Program, the Chancellor’s Grant for Staff Development, and the Chancellor’s Lecture Series on Racial Reckoning and Civility. Remaining initiatives are positioned to launch during the coming months.

Achieving pre-eminence for Rutgers–Camden through national rankings is also part of Chancellor Tillis’ plan to advance the campus. Rutgers–Camden was designated recently as a Minority Serving Institution (MSI), and designations as an anchor institution and Hispanic Serving Institution (HIS) are expected within the next three years. Such designations provide new opportunities for Rutgers–Camden to seek and secure funding to support students and faculty.

Two new hires in leadership positions will also help advance this work. A national search concluded recently with the hire of Ms. Endia DeCordova as vice chancellor for advancement. And a national search for dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences–Camden is underway. Chancellor Tillis expects to announce the new dean soon. Once the new dean is on board, a new strategic planning process for Rutgers–Camden will commence. Coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the founding of the campus, the strategic planning process will include input from all constituents.

Chancellor Tillis concluded his presentation by inviting the board to graduation ceremonies for approximately 2,000 students. Honorary degrees will be presented to acclaimed journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones and New Jersey Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli. Chancellor Tillis also thanked outgoing Chairman Frank Hundley for his leadership of the Rutgers–Camden Board of Directors and for his advocacy on behalf of the campus. He also congratulated student representatives Heather Ciallella and Sydney Johnson on their upcoming graduations and thanked them for their service to the board.

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

Ms. Dana Redd, CEO of the Rowan University/Rutgers–Camden Board of Governors, provided updates on the Camden Athletic Fields project, the South Jersey Institute for Population Health, planning for the Joint Health Sciences Campus, and the Joint Board’s Certified Medical Assistants program.

A ribbon cutting for the Camden Athletic Fields was celebrated on May 2 by the project partners, including the Joint Board, Rutgers University–Camden, Camden County, and Mayor Carstarphen. The project represents an investment of \$16.8 million in Camden city’s greenspace infrastructure while providing a state-of-the-art facility for Rutgers–Camden’s athletic teams. The collaborative project between anchor institutions, which is open to the public, contributes to improving health, quality of life, and vibrancy of the neighborhood. Ms. Redd said that “Camden youth are excited to have access to a collegiate level sports complex.” She acknowledged Mr. Larry Gaines, senior vice chancellor for administration and finance at Rutgers–Camden and Mr. Jeffrey Dean, director of athletics and recreational services at Rutgers–Camden, for their efforts in bringing the project to fruition.

Under the direction of Dr. Sarah Allred of Rutgers–Camden and Dr. Nicole Vaughn of Rowan University, the South Jersey Institute for Population Health, awarded \$230,000 to 11 projects in its inaugural funding cycle in Spring 2021. The projects, led by multi-disciplinary teams from Rutgers University, Rowan University, and non-profit community partners, study a diverse cross-section of the Southern New Jersey population to help improve the social determinants of health for residents across the region. Information about the funded projects is on the institute’s website. A call for proposals for a second funding cycle of \$300,000 is being readied for release.

The Joint Board continues its work with Ewing Cole and the community to update the Health Sciences Campus Plan, which impacts both the Lanning Square and Cooper Plaza neighborhoods. The Joint Board seeks to coordinate its vision with other planning efforts and capital projects underway in the “eds and meds” corridor, including the Downtown Master Plan, the Walter Rand Transportation Terminal, and related Creative Placemaking initiatives.

Along with program partners including Center for Family Services, Camden City School District, Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers, Cooper Health, and Camden County College, the Joint Board is moving forward with the fifth cohort of students in the Board’s Certified Medical Assistant Pathways Program. A job force development initiative, the CMA Pathways Program, is designed to address a critical hiring need across the region. Within one year of graduating high school, successful program participants earn 22 college credits and CMA certification, enabling them to embark on an in-demand career in healthcare.

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 1:48 p.m.

Minutes prepared and submitted by,

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