

THE TRANSFORMATION OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION AT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY:

AN EVALUATION

By:

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Transformation of Undergraduate Education at Rutgers University: An Evaluation

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In 2005 the Task Force on Undergraduate Education at Rutgers University made a series of recommendations that led to the Transformation of Undergraduate Education (TUE), through which several complex changes were instituted prior to Fall Semester 2007, including consolidating the four existing liberal arts colleges into one School of Arts and Sciences. Some of these changes were controversial in the Rutgers community.

This study describes participants' knowledge and impressions about what has been done to address the following overarching goals of the transformation: 1) attracting and retaining high quality students, including supporting students in underrepresented groups and nontraditional students; 2) reducing roadblocks and inequities and improving the delivery and consistency of services for students; and 3) increasing the engagement of undergraduate students with cocurricular activities and with faculty. The context and the processes to bring about these changes, and ideas for future directions, are also discussed. The design of the study was informed by research about institutional change, evaluating changes in higher education, student and faculty engagement, and by stakeholder interest in determining what had been done to meet the six goals of the transformation. Administrator interviews, student focus

groups, faculty online questionnaires, public records about the TUE, and existing outcome data from university offices inform descriptions of the changes.

Short term impressions of the changes range from positive feelings about new structure and the reduced inequities met by students, to negative feelings about difficulties that have arisen, such as a perceived loss by some of campus-based community. The university has been successful in attracting and retaining high quality students with the TUE, as the academic profile and diversity of incoming students have continued a positive trajectory. Positive changes in the consolidation of university offices have led to better coordinated student services, reducing roadblocks for students. Finally, many programs and structures have been initiated to increase student engagement and interaction with faculty members. This study shows that given strong leadership and vision, significant and sustainable change is possible, even at large institutions. This documentation of change processes and perils can be studied by other institutions implementing or evaluating large-scale change.

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## Chapter One: Literature Review

Several areas of literature contributed to the design of this evaluation of the TUE changes. Research pertinent to the following goals of the transformation was reviewed:

- Reconnect the Rutgers–New Brunswick/Piscataway faculty to the work of undergraduate education and provide opportunities for faculty to focus energy and time on undergraduates.
- Engage students in the exciting intellectual work that characterizes our campuses, from the time of admission to the time of graduation and beyond.
- Offer all undergraduates equal access to Rutgers’ high-quality academic programs and to the distinctive educational experiences that characterize a research university.
- Provide undergraduates on all New Brunswick/Piscataway campuses ready access to learning communities of students with similar interests, as well as to facilities, services, and programs that meet their diverse needs.
- Recruit and admit to Rutgers–New Brunswick/Piscataway high-quality students who contribute to the rich diversity of the campuses and who seek the challenges and opportunities of a major research university.
- Improve the attractiveness, clarity, organization, and accessibility of undergraduate education at Rutgers–New Brunswick/Piscataway. (Rutgers, 2005, p. 9)

These six goals were reconceptualized into the following areas: 1) attracting and retaining high quality students, including supporting students in underrepresented groups and nontraditional students; 2) reducing roadblocks for students; and 3) increasing the engagement of undergraduate students with cocurricular activities and with faculty. The context and the processes to bring about these changes, as well as ideas for future directions, are also assessed in this evaluation and literature regarding these areas will be included as well.

This literature review first discusses issues surrounding the research university in the twenty-first century. In recent years, demands for research universities to concentrate more effort on the education of undergraduate students have increased as some have expressed concern that research is valued over undergraduate learning. This section also reviews the other challenges that universities are facing as we proceed through the new century. The next section addresses the subject of institutional change in order to better understand what is known about how universities undergo transformations, what stands in their path to change, and how change

can be facilitated by the institution. This literature review therefore provides a foundation for evaluating organizational change, and determining its success. Next, the topic of student engagement, and its importance to student learning and achievement, is reviewed, considering the TUE goals to improve student engagement. Research was reviewed to discern what factors promote student engagement, to determine the extent to which Rutgers University- New Brunswick (RUNB) is facilitating this engagement. Additionally, faculty promotion of student engagement research is reviewed, including research on promoting enhanced teaching roles and faculty involvement with undergraduates in research projects, to learn how to evaluate the current roles of faculty members and what more can be done to increase the involvement of faculty with undergraduates. Issues specific to the evaluation of organizational change are also discussed, in order to learn about how institutions have been evaluated in the past, and how these constructs have been measured. Finally, background information about Rutgers University and the impetus and history surrounding the TUE change are explained to provide context to readers considering implementing an evaluation of another institutional transformation.

### *The Research University in the Twenty-First Century*

One of the prominent goals of the TUE transformation was to “offer all undergraduates equal access to Rutgers’ high-quality academic programs and to the distinctive educational experiences that characterize a research university” (Rutgers, 2005, p. 9). This section explains the benefits inherent to attending a research university and discusses changes in higher education in the twenty-first century.

Conflict about the ultimate purposes of higher education have existed since the notions of state and land-grant institutions and research universities were brought to the United States in the nineteenth century. State universities were conceived with populist and democratic ideals and land-grant universities were intended to educate and train people of a working-class in

order to serve society. Research universities had more scholarly and worldly purposes (Aronson & Webster, 2007). As a result, some institutions such as Rutgers University, as a land-grant, state, and research university, have disparate fundamental purposes. It has been argued that the tension between these two higher education purposes has resulted in many institutions losing their original land-grant ideals, exemplified by universities becoming more interested in scholarly research at the expense of service to the local community and to its students (Aronson & Webster, 2007; Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University (Boyer Commission, 1998).

#### *Current Challenges Facing Higher Education*

Adding to this conflict are a number of newer challenges in the field of higher education. The first is the increased call for accountability (Terenzini, 1989), meaning that state level policies, accreditation standards, and the increasing costs of college have lead universities to be held increasingly accountable for student learning. Institutions have been called upon to be more accountable for educational practices, as well as to reform areas of affordability, access, and quality (Morris, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Additionally, “financial pressure, growth in technology, changing faculty roles, public scrutiny, changing demographics, competing values, and the rapid rate of change in the world both within and beyond our national borders” (Kezar & Eckel, 2002a, p. 435) are some of the changes that universities have needed to address with major transformations. As an example, the push toward corporatization, downsizing, increased efficiency, and the idea that the benefits of college rest in the individual and not in society, have each lead to higher education funding decreases (Lincoln, 2000). There has also been a steady decline in state support for higher education, which has impacted New Jersey colleges to a great extent.

In a major 2002 report called *Greater Expectations: A New Vision of Learning as a Nation Goes to College*, The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) explained the new state of higher education and gave recommendations for its future direction. It described the various pressures on higher education in the twenty-first century, all of which are impacting Rutgers University. These pressures described included:

- *Changing demographics of college attendance*: Higher proportion of high school graduates; Students lacking recommended college preparatory curricula; Greater percentage of nontraditional students; More cultural diversity with higher minority student participation; Growth in school-age minority population; Increased numbers of immigrant students and those not proficient in English; Ongoing achievement gaps for minority and economically disadvantaged students
- *New enrollment patterns*: Increased part-time enrollment; Multiple-institution attendance; Online and distance courses
- *The information explosion*: Huge and rapidly increasing quantity of information widely available; Looser review and control of information quality; Shift from remembering facts to finding and evaluating information
- *The technological revolution*: New types of jobs for graduates; Changed nature of the classroom because of online learning
- *A stricter regulatory environment and new accountability demands*: Greater call for accountability; More intrusive state regulation of the curriculum; In many states the potential to expand from K-12 to college the strict standards and mandates that stress factual recall in testing; Accreditation emphasis on effectiveness and assessment; Standards-based approach to learning disconnected from how teachers are trained; Demand for better qualified teachers without corresponding financial supports or incentives; College preparation needs misaligned with high school curricula and assessments
- *New educational sites and formats*: Rapid growth in the for-profit higher education sector with little regulation and accreditation; Rise of the corporate university; More flexible learning formats
- *The changing nature of the workplace*: Emphasis on creative problem solving team work and adaptability; Need for high-level intellectual skills; Demand for large numbers of technologically and quantitatively literate employees; Interaction with greater diversity of people
- *The global nature of major problems requiring enhanced international cooperation*: Porosity of national boundaries; Worldwide environmental impacts; Multinational companies; Post 9/11/01 awareness of global interdependency
- *Renewed emphasis on civic responsibility and the development of communal values*: Rise in student volunteerism; Cyclical student activism; Increased pressure on colleges and universities to join the community in resolving local problems
- *Decreased state funding for public colleges and universities*

- *Changing educational policies and practices:* Requirements for evidence-based instructional practices; Insufficient political will for adequate funding; Vouchers, charter schools and other alternatives to public education
- *Over-reliance on educational traditions:* Credit awarded for seat time rather than demonstrated competence; Ongoing use of social promotion; School year based on agrarian economy; Assessments uncoupled from instructional changes to improve learning (AACU, 2002, pp. 6-7)

The report noted the changing profile of students entering college in the twenty-first century. Many more students who are women (57%), minorities (28%), and part-time students (28%) are entering college. The number of students entering college has also been enormous: three quarters of students who graduate high school enroll in some college courses within two years of graduating high school, and the enrollment of students in higher education programs will increase by one to two million people by 2015 (AACU, 2002). Along with the changing profile of college students has come a change in the preparation of students for learning in higher education. According to the AACU report,

Preparation for higher learning has not kept pace with access. Less than one-half of students who enter college directly from high school complete even a minimally defined college preparatory program. Only 40 percent of school teachers hold the high expectations for performance that would ready students for college-level work. Once in college, 53 percent of all students must take remedial courses. Those students requiring the most remedial work are the least likely to persist and graduate. (p. ix)

Students' lack of preparation for college-level courses can affect and complicate the achievement of already lofty learning goals presented by various constituencies of universities and of society.

### *Changing Goals of Higher Education*

Efforts to promote the outcome of undergraduate learning in universities have increased, and important learning goals have been outlined in a recent report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and Promise, *College Learning for the New Global Century* (AACU, 2007). This included the call for increased student engagement with the

university. Academics have recognized that the current college ranking system is flawed due to its emphasis on a college's resources and the skills with which students enter college, not on what students learn and accomplish as a result of their undergraduate education (Pascarella, 2001). It is more important to evaluate colleges by the validated processes and practices used to educate students, in part because administrators will put more resources into practices that are measured to evaluate a college (Pascarella, 2001).

The *Greater Expectations* report described the differing goals that society's stakeholders have for college students.

Many students and parents see college primarily as the springboard to employment; they want job-related courses. Policy makers view college as a spur to regional economic growth, and they urge highly targeted workforce development. Business leaders seek graduates who can think analytically, communicate effectively, and solve problems in collaboration with diverse colleagues, clients, or customers. Faculty members want students to develop sophisticated intellectual skills and also to learn about science, society, the arts, and human culture. For the higher education community as a whole, college is a time when faculty and students can explore important issues in ways that respect a variety of viewpoints and deepen understanding (AACU, 2002, p. ix)

This variation in goals is important but is also another challenge that universities need to address. These goals can be translated into broad learning goals for college students. According to the panel, students are expected to "become intentional learners who can adapt to new environments, integrate knowledge from different sources, and continue learning throughout their lives" (p. xi; Riordan, 2005).

The AACU panel made several recommendations about the core learning goals of a modern liberal education, which results in learners who are empowered, informed, and responsible. Empowered learners have practical and intellectual skills that include the ability to communicate in a foreign language, understand how to solve problems quantitatively and qualitatively, are able to discern the validity of information from various sources, work with diverse groups in complex contexts, be able to confront change intellectually, and to change



information into knowledge and to be able to judge and act on this knowledge. Informed learners have a deep understanding of the world and continue to learn about other cultures, the relationships among communities of the world, and about the basis of the U.S. democratic system. Responsible learners help to maintain a democratic society by demonstrating ethical judgment and social responsibility. Institutions should have these ultimate goals in mind when planning the education of their students (AACU, 2002).

A commission appointed by U.S. Department of Education Secretary Margaret Spellings described the most pressing problems facing higher education today, and identified the immediate goals on which institutions should focus, in a report entitled *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education*. The first problem described is that of access, with many students experiencing difficulties attending college for reasons such as lack of information about applying to college, financial problems, and deficient high school preparation, resulting in low income students having relatively low college graduation rates. The next problem is that of college cost and affordability, and the complexity of receiving financial aid. The ballooning costs of attending college for students, their parents, and for taxpayers who contribute funding to state colleges has led to the push for improvements in productivity in colleges. Interestingly, one reason for the increasing costs of college is that a school's resources are in part used to determine its rank, and by cutting expenditures, schools risk a diminished ranking. Additionally, the commission expressed concern about the decline of student learning indicators, which led to their call to encourage the use of new technology and pedagogy to improve student learning. The commission also discussed the further need for accountability that is available and transparent for all stakeholders. As part of the call for increased accountability, the commission also called for also measuring student learning by calculating how much value is added to student abilities, taking into account how students were performing when they entered college.

Finally, the report encouraged a culture of innovation and improvement of curricula, pedagogies, and technologies, to improve students' learning (U.S. Department of Education, 2006).

To begin to address these issues, colleges and universities have also been encouraged to use “data about the benchmarks of institutional success—student access, retention, learning and success, educational costs (including the growth in administrative expenses such as executive compensation), and productivity—to stimulate innovation and continuous improvement” (U.S. Department of Education, 2006, p. 15).

### *The Changing Research University*

In order for these learning goals to be met, research-oriented universities need to focus more on student learning (e.g., Brand, 1992; Vincow, 1997). The emphasis on research has taken hold of many universities due to the rewards of concentrating on research, such as grant support, name recognition, and prestige, which result in increased legislative and public support, and student applications to universities (Brand, 1992; Learning Matters, Inc., 2005). A 1999 higher education report called *Reconsidering Faculty Roles* noted that although university advertisements, grant proposals, mission statements, and other public documents have embraced the rhetoric of student-centeredness, the reality is less impressive and action to transform the paradigm for undergraduate education is still needed (Zahorski & Cognard, 1999).

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching funded the production of a report on undergraduate education by the Boyer Commission on Undergraduates in the Research University (Boyer Commission). This 1998 report was entitled *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities*. The report was commissioned because of the belief that research universities fail undergraduate populations, despite the increasing tuitions that these students pay, because of the culture of emphasis of

top professors on scholarship over teaching and mentoring students. It gave recommendations pertaining to the future of research universities, and came up with a bill of rights for undergraduate students at research universities in order to provide students with many opportunities for intellectual and creative growth.

The bill of rights for all students included the chance to learn through inquiry instead of having knowledge transmitted by instructors, opportunities to experience arts, humanities, social sciences, and sciences, training in communication skills, and comprehensive preparation for post graduation experiences. Students at research universities should also be given these opportunities: the chance to work with senior professors and researchers and access quality research facilities, the ability to access many complex fields of study that might not be available at non-research institutions, and the chance to be part of a community of learners of people from differing levels of accomplishment and a range of cultures and backgrounds.

As a result of these rights for undergraduate students, the Boyer Commission (1998) described ten goals to meet the rights of students. Briefly, these recommendations for higher education research institution goals are to:

- *Make research-based learning the standard.* Undergraduate education in research universities requires renewed emphasis on a point strongly made by John Dewey almost a century ago: learning is based on discovery guided by mentoring rather than on the transmission of information. Inherent in inquiry-based learning is an element of reciprocity: faculty can learn from students as students are learning from faculty. (p. 15)
- *Construct an inquiry-based freshman year.* The first year of a university experience needs to provide new stimulation for intellectual growth and a firm grounding in inquiry-based learning and communication of information and ideas. (p. 19)
- *Build on the freshman foundation.* The freshman experience must be consolidated by extending its principles into the following years. Inquiry-based learning, collaborative experience, writing and speaking expectations need to characterize the whole of a research university education. Those students who enter the research university later than the freshman year need to be integrated smoothly into this special atmosphere. (p. 21)
- *Remove barriers to interdisciplinary education.* Research universities must remove barriers to and create mechanisms for much more interdisciplinary undergraduate education. (p. 23)

- *Link communication skills and course work.* Undergraduate education must enable students to acquire strong communication skills, and thereby create graduates who are proficient in both written and oral communication. (p. 24)
- *Use information technology creatively.* Because research universities create technological innovations, their students should have the best opportunities to learn state-of-the-art practices—and learn to ask questions that stretch the uses of the technology. (p. 25)
- *Culminate with a capstone experience.* The final semester(s) should focus on a major project and utilize to the fullest the research and communication skills learned in the previous semesters. (p. 27)
- *Educate graduate students as apprentice teachers.* Research universities must redesign graduate education to prepare students for teaching undergraduate students as well as for other professional roles. (p. 28)
- *Change faculty reward systems.* Research universities must commit themselves to the highest standards in teaching as well as research and create faculty reward structures that validate that commitment. (p. 31)
- *Cultivate a sense of community.* Research universities should foster a community of learners. Large universities must find ways to create a sense of place and to help students develop small communities within the larger whole (Boyer Commission, 1998, p. 34).

Considering these challenges and goals for a more student-centered education in research universities in the twenty-first century, and following many recommendations for higher education institutions from the 1990s, RUNB has gone through a transformation in the past year in order to address some of these concerns and goals. This dissertation is an evaluation of the changes made through this transformation, with these ultimate changes and goals in mind.

### *Institutional Change at Universities*

One of the overall goals for the transformation of undergraduate education was to “improve the attractiveness, clarity, organization, and accessibility of undergraduate education at Rutgers-New Brunswick/Piscataway” (Rutgers, 2005, p. 9). In order to study this objective and the transformation that has taken place at RUNB, it is important to understand the process of institutional change, how it can be facilitated, and how it can be resisted. The designers of the Transformation of Undergraduate Education at RUNB are interested in its being permanently

integrated by the university. Therefore, with the knowledge of how a university transformation works, signals of the resistance to or acceptance of these types of changes can be used in the evaluation of the changes, in order to provide information about the weaknesses and successes of this TUE change. This section of the paper is not an exhaustive review of the literature on higher education institutional change, but rather it focuses on lessons learned about this topic from case studies of change at other institutions, and from the relevant literature.

### *Institutional Change*

Higher education institutions have existed in the United States since the seventeenth century. The higher education institution that currently is Rutgers University has existed since 1766. As is evident in its nearly 250 years of existence, there are qualities of Rutgers and many other higher education organizations that have promoted their survival. What has led to the strength of these institutions is that they have at times demonstrated strong, institutionalized objection to modification, but that they have also been able to transform themselves in order to adapt to the changing world. "Our postsecondary enterprise is large enough, diverse enough, open enough, decentralized enough, and competitive enough to be simultaneously both quite open to change and stubbornly resistant to it" (Hearn, 1996, p. 144). An important characteristic of universities is that they have authority divided among faculty, departments, and high level administrators. Each of these groups has differing goals for the education of the students. Universities are loosely organized such that each of these entities does not always have that much influence over the other, with faculty members able to be especially independent (see Larson, 1997 for a detailed explanation of the stages and views of organizational change).

Attempting to bring about a major transformation to such a university is no small task when one considers the complex, enduring system that is a higher education institution. This task begins with attempting to appreciate the complexity of the existing institution, and its

history. Selfridge and Sokolik (1975) as cited by Awbrey (2005) used the metaphor of an iceberg to describe the complexity of organizational change.

The tip of the iceberg is the everyday, apparent operations of any organization. These include elements that are observable, rational, and related to the structure of the organization, including span of control, hierarchy, mission, goals, objectives, operating policies, procedures, programs, and practices. This is the formal, visible organization. It is in this realm that organizations focus most of their time and energy when dealing with change. However... there is a deeper, covert level of the iceberg that is crucial to the success of systemic organizational change. This level is made up of elements that are affective and that relate to the psychological and social characteristics of the organization. This is the informal organization that is made up of elements such as power and influence patterns, personal views and interpretations of the organization, interpersonal relationships, norms, trust, risk-taking, values, emotions, and needs. It is the level at which institutional culture operates. (pp. 4-5)

Therefore, in endeavoring to bring about change to an organization, one must realize that there is more to the organization than its observable structure: its embedded culture must also be addressed.

### *Resistance to Change*

When universities go through changes, several local level challenges and pressures must be handled by faculty and staff. These include changes in job description, degree of autonomy, work environment, use of technology, power structure, and budget allocations. Additionally, adapting to increasing levels of uncertainty and ambiguity, competition and the need for quick work, and the push for constant improvement, are further examples of these challenges (Brown, 1997). These challenges, and other factors, can be barriers to institutional change. Trader-Leigh (2002) identified several general factors that contribute to resistance to change, including: (1) the perception that self-interest can be endangered by change; (2) the concern that modifications in social status and job security will have harmful psychological impacts; (3) the existence of long-standing traditions or a culture with little incentive to adjust inhibits change; (4) a fear of the redistribution of organizational responsibilities and thus the loss of control; (5)

the destabilization of current operations; (6) change that does not fit with the current culture, values, and beliefs; and (7) the political effect of change having resulting in individual or group change in power. Change also may be denied through behaviors such as rejection of ideas, postponing work on the change, not coming to a decision about a change, through direct interference with work on the change, and from not following through with change-related decisions (Awbrey, 2005).

In a specific study of change involving the institution of a school-wide learning and teaching strategy at one British institution, further barriers to the success of the change were identified. One overarching impediment to internal change was that the university was becoming increasingly dependent on external funding and support, and with this support has come the increasing influence of funding bodies. These changes left less time and autonomy for teaching, learning, assessment, and therefore led to less of an emphasis on school-wide learning of a teaching strategy (Newton, 2003). Taken as a whole, understanding where and how resistances to change have happened in the past is useful in learning to prevent or control these differences in future change attempts.

#### *Change Facilitation Strategies*

Change occurs in higher education despite resistance. Several researchers have studied this topic empirically, and have given advice about how to promote institutional change. In a study of changes made at six universities, Kezar and Eckel (2002b) identified major strategies that were in place in each of the cases that helped to facilitate change, but that were effective to an extent that depended on the context of the institution, the type of institution, and its culture. Many of these tactics were thought to be potent because of their capacity to “help individuals conceptualize a new identity, to feel worthwhile about their efforts, and to be brought along with the institutional agenda—what is labeled sensemaking” (p. 303). They

described the central strategies that can be used to help participants in the institutional change in making sense of their new roles in the institution. Some of the strategies that were described already existed in the literature, but six of the strategies described were new to the study by Kezar and Eckel. They are summarized below under the headings of: culture-related strategies, leadership strategies, fostering participation strategies, communication strategies, planning strategies, change justification strategies, support strategies, and other strategies. Many of these strategies overlap with various categories.

*Culture-related strategies.* Much of the higher education institutional change literature has pointed to the influence of institutional culture (e.g., Kuh & Whitt, 1991; Peterson & Spencer, 1991). Since studying the topic of change can be quite context-dependent (Hearn, 1996), it follows that the change process has the potential to be greatly affected by the influences of culture in an institution (Awbrey, 2005). Institutional culture refers to the, “deeply embedded patterns of organizational behavior and the shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies that members have about their organization or its work” (Peterson & Spencer, 1991, p. 173).

Taking the time to understand an institution’s culture may aid in the institutional transformation process. Being cognizant of an institution’s dynamics and its culture can help to minimize conflict and promote progress toward developing and attaining goals (Chermack, 1990). As such, understanding the problems and resistances that might be encountered during a change process can lead to more purposeful and effective change strategies. By the same token, imposing a new set of norms, traditions, and values on an institution is not likely to succeed because it infringes on a university’s existing traditions and culture (Hearn, 1996). Considering the purposes of this evaluation, understanding the culture of RUNB and the issues and problems



that might impede the success of the transformation can help the university to target resources toward addressing those problems and keeping the transformation on course.

Overall, leaders can come to understand a culture through an assessment of its norms, feelings, traditions, and values, and incorporate this information during decision-making, development of change strategies, and the design of an ultimate vision for the changes. However, in addition to looking within an institution for information on how to change it, it is also important to step outside for similar advice. This involves using consultants, conferences, and research for learning about institutional change (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b).

*Leadership strategies.* Because individuals are taking risks to be part of the changes taking place, they must be supported through strong leadership. The central administration must demonstrate commitment and sustained effort for the change, in order to keep the change moving (Chermack, 1990). The involvement of the university President can be very helpful because it increases the legitimacy of the change and helps to establish a climate that promotes this change (Zahorski & Cognard, 1999). Support should be provided through resources, new structures in administration, and in statements of value related to the changes. Also, expectations should be established about the influence of the results of the change in the structure of guidelines or policies that everyone can access. Then, individuals can be held accountable to acting in accordance with these new expectations (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b).

*Fostering participation strategies.* It is important for stakeholders in an institution to have a say in the change procedure and to provide feedback throughout the process. These plans are open to input from others, but giving the university a sort of vision of the future is helpful. Individuals in leadership and non-leadership positions should also be involved in the change process from its beginning to end (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b).

A group of faculty members that is both committed and motivated is necessary for change (Lee, Hyman, & Luginbuhl, 2007). The independent strength of university faculty has had a significant effect on the vitality of the higher educational system, as well as in its resistance to change:

Faculty can often successfully repel externally imposed changes, and may resist or simply remain ignorant of innovations arising in other departments. At the same time... faculty can adapt efficiently and effectively. For example, U.S. research universities have been able to maintain enrollments, funding, and social legitimacy through both lean and rich areas by allowing academic departments to shape their own curricula and by granting individual professors freedom to pursue their own research priorities and manage their own time. In important parts of these institutions, adaptive change can take place swiftly and logically, without tight bureaucratic control and coordination from top administrators. (Hearn, 1996, p. 144)

Clearly, faculty, as well as academic departments, plays an important role in effecting or preventing change in a university, along with the larger notion of the culture of the university. People who contribute more intensely in the institutional change process are more empathetic toward their role in the change, and are more likely to support the changes (Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). Therefore, institutions that should increase faculty involvement in the change process in order to help gain support for the transformations.

Learning from a case study of an institutional change, Van Loon (2001) noted that even dissent against some change procedures can be beneficial to the overall process, through the publicity surrounding the changes that an institution is tackling.

The attentive public know that major change is accompanied by plentiful noise, and most took the dissent as evidence that the required changes were indeed being made. Those who do not like the results will always attack the process of change. It will inevitably be characterized as too rushed, secret or covert or "behind closed doors," and/or based on inaccurate data. Since these criticisms are inevitable, it is essential that the leader be able to defend the process and the data publicly. The criticism *will* become personal, and it is difficult to rise above that. Nonetheless, the president and administration must bear in mind that people who are threatened with loss of jobs or personal status or years of institutional work are understandably desperate. We would be, too; and we, too, would use every rhetorical weapon at our disposal to defend our positions. (p. 298)

Formal methods should be established to encourage participation, through means such as focus groups, and requests for input (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b).

*Communication strategies.* In order to promote the institutional changes, the media should be involved in the change process in order to bring about excitement for the change, and to start to create the new institutional image. Steps in the change process should be visible and promoted so people within the institution can see that this change is valued and is taking place as described, this helping to build the momentum of change. As such, people within and outside of the university's leadership should provide reports that outline the initiative and its implementation in a persuasive manner (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b). At the same time, communicated goals of the change should be simple and straightforward (Zahorski & Cognard, 1999). Providing evidence of the accomplishment of incremental phases in the transformation, and publicizing these positive steps, are ways to do this. Funding should also be made available to sell the vision of the change through marketing (Chermack, 1990). Similarly, the changes taking place should often be discussed at meetings throughout the school, as well as in all offices of the institution, so that everyone will see the impacts of the change (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b).

*Planning strategies.* Approaches related to the planning of a transformation can help to facilitate its acceptance. First, a plan for change should be clear, with specific goals and objectives for its implementation. It is also important to plan the flow of changes, controlling its pace so that a momentum of change is promoted. Based on a case study of an institutional change at a small liberal arts college, the author came to this related conclusion:

While the constantly learning and adapting organization is an important objective, the pace of change must occasionally slow. Organizations (or the people in them) crave stability. They cannot always have it, but they should not be subject to constant turmoil. The end point of the process must not be a static organization, but it should not be an unstable one either. (Van Loon, 2001 p. 300)

Additionally, some of the plans for change can be emergent from input from the university community, and some can come from the leadership, so everyone can be involved in keeping the changes moving. Another piece of planning advice is that institutional transformations are more likely to be successful when distinct undergraduate initiatives are pooled together into large, comprehensive, and integrated transformations of undergraduate education, because many changes such as improving diversity, creating learning communities, improving curriculum, and introducing service learning, can be turned into a powerful transformation:

Our inability to build integrated links among these and other undergraduate reform efforts, in their conception and in their practice, ultimately limits our ability to effect the kind of comprehensive, transformative change that we might have hoped for when introducing these initiatives. ... In too many cases, absent such infrastructure, new undergraduate initiatives are marginalized and left to the will of changing senior administrators and the vagaries of the fluctuating economies and budgets. (Schoem, 2002, p. 53)

*Change justification strategies.* Changes can also be facilitated with appropriate justification of the need for the change. This can also involve making connections with outside initiatives, such as accreditation forces, so that forces are coming from many directions to move the transformation forward. Other external forces include new legislation, changes in funding, and foundation involvement. These forces might serve purpose such as providing resources and funding, and confirming or legitimizing the need for change. Similarly, changes have been taking place in higher education institutions across the world, and by emphasizing that these transformations are common in the higher education community, stakeholders might come to understand the larger context for the change (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b).

*Support strategies.* Strategies to support a change might include hiring a coordinator to manage the change effort, or setting personnel or money within an existing center to serve this purpose. Also, specific policies and procedures can be developed to promote the changes. Staff and faculty development should be part of this support, so they can build their skills and

knowledge that will help facilitate the change effort. Change can also be supported through incentives used for the recognition of faculty or staff development in support of the changes made. One common effect of institutional change is that relationships within offices and between groups of people will be restructured. Therefore, support should be provided to help establish new relationships and to support people through the change of past relationships (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b).

*Data-based change.* Another line of change strategies developed by Kezar and Eckel (2007) promotes organizational learning, which is “the process of intentionally acquiring and reflecting upon information and changing organizational practices based on that information” (p. 20), and involves building a “culture of evidence”. To do so, they suggest steps such as creating systems to gather and study data, learning by working directly with students, putting what they have learned to use in making changes, and using disagreements as opportunities for learning. Learning from good data ensures that decisions are made not based on anecdotal information or assumptions, because “politics are much more likely to thrive in a culture of stereotypes and misinformation than one based on data” (p. 20). In order to act appropriately on the data-based learning done in such a system, Kezar & Eckel recommended utilizing the help of individuals committed to the success of students, working with external partners such as business people and government leaders, and internal Board of trustees members, to add legitimacy to the changes made.

*Collaboration support.* In further research on fostering change, such as creating learning communities or beginning interdisciplinary research, Kezar (2005) found that collaboration inside the university among many faculty and staff is necessary. However, many professors do not have experience in collaboration, and are often doomed to fail. In order to shift to a university culture that supports collaborative work, a three stage process has been observed in

universities succeeding in this change. In the first stage, commitment needs to be fostered among university members by promoting values that reflect the importance of collaboration, such as being student-centered or innovative; education needs to take place so members learn about the benefits of collaboration, in order to motivate this change; external messages are needed from the public, federal agencies, accreditation bodies, and businesses, regarding the importance of collaboration; and a campus network must be built so members could support one another and observe one another in collaboration efforts. The second stage depended on a commitment to collaboration through a sense of the priority of collaboration, a mission reflecting this, and further support from the university network to demonstrate this commitment. The last stage focused on sustaining collaboration, through collaboration rewards, network support, and the development of structures such as centers, institutes, and supports for cross-institution efforts such as assessment, technology, and institutional research (Kezar, 2005).

*Other change-related advice.* Another imperative for change described by Chermack (1990) is that the values and behaviors of an institution must be in line with one another. However, Lewis (1994), in a longitudinal case study of a change that took place at one higher education institution interestingly showed that an organization can be changed regardless of whether values were modified in line with the change, saying “the relationship between espoused and observed reactions to change, behavior and organizational performance is a tenuous one at best” (p. 41). The author went on to advise: “behavior, therefore, has to be interpreted very carefully in unearthing feelings, beliefs, and basic assumptions; for, in isolation, we can never be sure whether we are looking at a cause, an effect, or a contingency action” (p. 52). This indicates that just because people within an institution might disagree with and say they do not like the changes that have taken place this does not mean that they will fail to

behave in such a way that goes along with the transformation. One last change facilitation strategy is providing a framework for evaluation in order to verify the changes (Lueddeke, 1999).

Overall, these empirically-based pieces of advice from Kezar and Eckel (2002b) and others show that change can and does happen when it is supported in these types of ways, despite some objection from parties involved. Kezar and Eckel (2002b) utilized four criteria to investigate which institutions were making progress toward their institutional change. They looked to see if universities “met measureable goals; illustrated change in values, underlying assumptions, behaviors, processes, products, and structure; provided evidence of a change in institutional culture; and demonstrated mechanisms of sustainability, such as new positions or divisions, or the embeddedness of the changes” (p. 301). These change facilitation processes and indicators are therefore be included in this evaluation and its discussion in order to assess how supported the transformation has been, in order to provide information about what steps needed to sustain the change.

### *Fostering Student Engagement*

Many of the changes that made up the TUE had to do with increasing levels of student engagement in ways that were consistent with the recommendations of the Boyer Commission (1998). One of the overarching goals was to “engage students in the exciting intellectual work that characterizes our campuses, from the time of admission to the time of graduation and beyond” (Rutgers, 2005, p. 9). Increasing student engagement levels is believed to be a good goal for higher education because of its positive relationship to desirable outcomes of learning such as critical thinking and grades (Carini, Kuh, & Klein, 2006). According to Kuh (2003),

The engagement practice is deceptively simple and self-evident: the more students study a subject, the more they learn about it. Likewise, the more students practice and get feedback in their writing, analyzing, or problem solving, the more adept they become. The very act of being engaged also adds foundation of skills and dispositions that is essential to live a productive, satisfying life after college. (p. 25)

The importance of student engagement has increasingly been recognized in the higher education literature as an additional factor contributing to positive student outcomes (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, et al., 2005); factors such as students' pre-existing human, social, and cultural capital, and factors related to qualities of the institution are also recognized in the literature as affecting student learning outcomes (Porter, 2006). Years of research have demonstrated that the more involved students are in a variety of purposeful educational activities the more engaged they are and the more they learn (e.g., Lundberg, 2003; Umbach & Wawryzski, 2005). Therefore, the quality of undergraduate education at schools is related to student engagement, which can be appraised by focusing on how much energy and time students spend engaging in educational activities inside and outside of class, and by looking at what colleges are doing to help students to take part in these activities (Kuh, 2003). While there are many definitions that exist for student engagement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004), for the purpose of this study, student involvement in cocurricular activities and in non-mandatory activities such as first-year seminars, learning communities, research activities, and in applying for distinguished fellowships will be considered student engagement.

Recently, perhaps in recognition of importance of student engagement, the national accrediting agency for engineering education shifted its accreditation criteria away from the resources and facilities of a school and toward assessing specific learning goals, a move which regional accrediting agencies are making as well. The increased attention to learning outcomes has influenced curricula and instruction, faculty culture, and the policies and practices in schools across the country, leading to a change in student engagement, in-class and out-of-class behaviors, and an increase in student learning (Lambert, Terenzini, & Lattuca, 2007). This framework for understanding change is useful for evaluating research on the causes and effects of student engagement.



The increasing focus on improving student engagement can be seen through the popular use of student engagement assessment instruments by higher education institutions. The most common assessments that colleges can opt to take part in are the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE; Kuh, 2004), the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey, and the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ). One survey that is nationally representative is the Beginning Post-Secondary Student survey (BPS; Porter, 2006). These measures assess subareas of student engagement including level of academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, campus facility use, amount of reading and writing assigned, course learning, library use, quality of relationships with faculty and with administrative personnel and offices, support of campus climate, integration of diversity into coursework, active and collaborative learning, working harder than thought to meet instructors' expectations, institutional emphasis on good practices, what students talk about with their peers, higher-order thinking, participation in school clubs and study groups outside the classroom, and attendance at fine art events on campus. It has been argued that using measures of student engagement is more meaningful than the current college rating system because of the link between engagement and student learning (Kuh, 2003; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005).

Assessments of engagement have shown that there are categories of students who tend to be more engaged than their counterparts. This includes students who are female, Black, Hispanic, international, full-time, on-campus residents, recipients of financial aid, humanities and science majors, who have not transferred colleges, who are participants in learning communities, and who participate in experiences that increase their learning about diversity (Kuh, 2003; Porter, 2006). Levels of engagement of transfer students, students who are working, first-generation college students, those who have not decided on a major, and who

have majors in areas such as business, education, and engineering, tend to be lower (Porter, 2006; Umbach & Porter, 2002).

The study of student engagement must account for student background characteristics, institution characteristics, degree of academic and social integration, and their effects on student behavior, in order to completely understand the effect of student engagement on learning (Lundberg, 2003; Terenzini & Upcraft, 1996). Such student engagement levels are linked to variables such as student SAT and high school GPA scores, and extra-curricular activity participation; that is, students who have better grades, SAT scores, and levels of engagement coming out of high school tend to be more engaged in college. Students' preexisting levels of social, cultural, and human capital are also related to student engagement in college (Carini, et al., 2006; Porter, 2006). Knowing that existing academic achievement levels are related to higher levels of student engagement, research was done to study what aspects of engagement were most correlated with improving the engagement of low-ability students. Efforts to improve engagement can be targeted toward students with the lowest levels of ability and the greatest risk of dropping out because they benefit considerably more from activities such as a supportive campus climate, the interaction with faculty regarding coursework, and increased levels of reading and writing in class, than their higher ability counterparts (Carini, et al., 2006). Additionally, a few variables have been negatively linked with high engagement, including commuting and part-time enrollment for 20-23 year-olds, working twenty hours or more or part-time enrollment for students 24-29, and part-time enrollment of students older than 30 (Lundberg, 2003).

In addition to student-level attributes that are linked to higher levels of engagement, there are also institution-level qualities that are correlated with higher levels of engagement. These qualities include degree of selectivity, the size of the student body, and the ratio of

students to faculty members (Porter, 2006). Schools that are more selective tend to have higher levels of student engagement, perhaps in part because of peer effects: studies have revealed that having high achieving peers as roommates or high school classmates tends to improve the achievement of lower performing students. The size of the student body and the faculty ratio are related to a measure called density, or the likelihood that students interact with faculty members. In schools that have more students and fewer faculty members, with less physical space to interact in, the less likely it is that students and faculty will engage with one another. Variables that are negatively related to student engagement include a school's curriculum differentiation, proxied by the number of majors a school has (perhaps because if there are more classes and majors, students therefore tend to have less in common with one another, or that this indicates a move away from a liberal arts curriculum), the percentage of Ph.D. students in the student body (which would imply faculty members are spending less time with undergraduates because they have Ph.D. students to attend to), and the amount of spending per student (a finding that is also supported by past research) (Porter, 2006). Some research suggests that students at research universities tend to be less engaged, but other studies have found that undergraduate education at research universities is not substandard compared to other college types, especially when universities work to give students more practice with their school work, and access to faculty (Kuh & Hu, 2001; Porter, 2006).

Related to student engagement is the idea of the disengagement compact, which is described as a professor's attitude that "I'll leave you alone if you leave me alone. That is, I won't make you work too hard (read a lot, write a lot) so that I won't have to grade as many papers or explain why you are not performing well" (Kuh, 2003, p. 28). As colleges and faculty members become increasingly aware of the importance of faculty attention to student engagement, and the link between student engagement and achievement, several ideas have

been proposed to increase the engagement of faculty with students. These ideas include the improvement of undergraduate education and engagement through the creation of learning communities, welcoming communities, residential colleges, first-year seminars, honors programs, undergraduate research experiences, and specific supports for students such as students of color, nontraditional, transfer, commuter, and women students. The eventual goals of these efforts are to increase student engagement and thus student outcomes, and to attract and retain high quality students. All of these efforts are related to the need for increased engagement of staff and especially faculty members.

### *Creating Welcoming Communities for Students*

A number of the new changes made at RUNB relate to creating welcoming communities for new students. Under this heading, the college has initiated the use of various types of learning communities, and optional first-year seminars open to all students. Research pertinent to these strategies will be briefly discussed.

*Learning communities.* Another of the inclusive goals that was part of the TUE transformation was to “provide undergraduates on all New Brunswick/Piscataway campuses ready access to learning communities of students with similar interests, as well as to facilities, services, and programs that meet their diverse needs” (Rutgers, 2005, p. 9). The research on engagement and its relationship to student and institution qualities has caused many researchers to call for the promotion of small learning communities, within the larger university, in order to give students and faculty more time to interact, and to place students with motivated peers (e.g., Kuh, 2003; Kuh & Hu, 2001; Porter, 2006).

The structures of learning communities in higher education vary greatly. The least coordinated learning community can just be two or more courses (sometimes with similar content) who enroll the same students. Other learning communities involve first-year student

interest groups taking courses related by theme. More organized learning communities involve the faculty members that collaborate to create linked interdisciplinary course content with a common theme. These courses might utilize cooperative learning and group work procedures as part of the course, to facilitate community building. Further organized learning communities include close living arrangements for students in order to facilitate student in and out of class interactions and learning opportunities. These learning and living communities might be further organized by targeting special student groups who might especially benefit from such a system, such as students of underrepresented minority groups, honors students, women in historically male majors, and students with similar scholarly interests (Stassen, 2003; Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Even nontraditional students can benefit from learning communities in ways such as perceptions of increased social and academic integration (Goldberg & Finkelstein, 2002). A national research study of learning communities has found that certain types of students tend to participate more often in learning communities, such as students of color, non-transfer students, fraternity and sorority members, student in pre-professional majors, full-time and on-campus students, as well as students who have parents with lower levels of education (Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

Student participation in learning communities is positively correlated with outcomes such as high academic performance, student engagement, satisfaction with experience in college, personal development, and persistence (Stassen, 2003; Zhao & Kuh, 2004). However, when students SAT scores, and characteristics of the institution (e.g. colleges admitting high quality students) are controlled for, these positive outcomes disappear for first-year students but not for senior-year students who had participated in a learning community at some point during college, suggesting that benefits might not appear until later years (Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Importantly, it was learned that the whole range of levels of organized learning communities

provided positive outcomes for students, suggesting that colleges interested in reaping the benefits of learning communities can start at the most basic levels of using linked courses and cooperative learning pedagogical techniques (Stassen, 2003).

*First-year seminars.* Another strategy that RUNB has begun to use to create welcoming communities for its new students is to give them the option to enroll in their choice of first-year seminars, taught by leading faculty members. First-year seminars can be found at most colleges in the U.S., and are accessible to nearly half of college students in this country because universities view first-year seminars as useful ways by which to maintain retention rates of freshmen students, improve their college ranking, market the college's quality, and fulfill their mission of graduating students. These seminars tend to have themes related to the transition to college, exploring a special topic in an interdisciplinary manner, introduction to a discipline, remediation, or a mixture of these purposes (Porter & Swing, 2006).

Porter and Swing (2006) conducted a multi-institutional study of first-year seminars to learn how participation in them influences first-year student intentions to continue their studies in the college. The authors concluded:

That the school-level study skills and academic engagement factor is associated with higher intention to persist is consistent with the undergirding philosophy of many first-year seminars: students need assistance with college-level study and academic expectations. It makes intuitive sense that students who quickly gain confidence in their study skills would believe that they are likely to be successful in college and so plan to continue their enrollment. (Porter & Swing, 2006, p. 106)

This conclusion, based on the analysis of a large number of studies of first-year seminars, underscores the idea that many students need the opportunity to be coached on academic expectations and study skills. Interestingly, faculty reported that they did not enjoy teaching students about study skills and did not feel prepared to help counsel students about the big picture of college (Porter & Swing, 2006). Therefore, it is perhaps especially important to provide coaching to faculty on how to prepare for first-year seminars and how to include the

practice of skills that students will need throughout college, and this idea should be part of an evaluation of first-year seminars.

### *Undergraduate Research Experiences*

One of the main goals of the TUE transformation was to “recruit and admit to Rutgers-New Brunswick/Piscataway high-quality students who... seek the challenges and opportunities of a major research university” (Rutgers, 2005, p. 9). A primary benefit of attending a research university is the opportunity for exposure to and participation in research experiences.

Many benefits of participation in an undergraduate research experience were described by a study of an institution that encourages this type of student engagement. Undergraduate research was defined as the collaboration between faculty and undergraduates in such a way that students have a significant role so they can observe all steps of the research process, with a steady increase of responsibilities in order to grow as researchers. The university had a department of Undergraduate Research Program services which coordinated this program. Some of the ways that undergraduate research experiences were facilitated to include the open opportunity for anyone to participate, the keeping of a directory of research projects that undergraduates can partake in, advisement to place students, some support for new faculty who are utilizing undergraduate researchers, provision of many outlets for undergraduates to present their research, use of a senior-thesis program where students complete a full research project, provision of funding for collaborations, and summer research opportunity funding, as well as the participation of over two-thirds of faculty members (Bauer & Bennett, 2003).

Alumni of this research program along with students who did not participate in a research experience were surveyed for the study of this undergraduate research program. First, it was found that students who had participated in research tended to have also been more engaged in school activities in other ways, such as through study abroad, student government,

living on-campus, internships, intramural sports, and in clubs, where non-participants tended to work more off campus. Research participants had greater ratings of their ability to carry out research, as well as “the ability to develop intellectual curiosity, acquire information independently, understand scientific findings, analyze literature critically, speak effectively, act as a leader, and possess clear career goals” (Bauer & Bennett, 2003, p. 221), than their matched counterparts. They were also more likely to attend graduate school, and especially enroll in doctoral programs. Finally, research participants expressed significantly greater satisfaction with college overall, than non-participants (Bauer & Bennett, 2003). Clearly, well-organized research experience programs can have many benefits for undergraduates.

However, research universities are not doing all they can to increase student participation in research activities. Undergraduate research experiences increased at all types of schools between the early 1990s and 2004, across nearly all fields, sometimes more so at doctoral and selective liberal arts institutions than at research institutions, despite the 1997 recommendations of the Boyer Commission (Hu, Kuh, & Gayles, 2007).

#### *Nontraditional and Underrepresented Student Group Support*

The idea of increasing the admission of “high-quality students who contribute to the rich diversity of the campuses” (Rutgers, 2005, p. 9) also appears as a major goal of the TUE transformation. Students who are of minority backgrounds, transfer students, and nontraditional students such as adult, part-time, and commuter students, will be given special attention in this evaluation because of the unique and additional challenges they often face in college that might lead to lower levels of engagement and performance.

Higher education researchers and school administrators are concerned because the dropout rates for students who are Hispanic or African American (which are close to 30%) are almost twice that of white or Asian students (Kezar, 2007). An interview study of 30 university



presidents was done to learn more about how to retain minority students. One specific recommendation for helping students of color succeed had to do with pulling together the disconnected and discrete diversity initiatives so that synergy can be created to better utilize resources and be more powerful. Another suggestion was to create advisory boards of students of color so that they could be part of an information organizational learning process to help fellow students of color (Kezar, 2007).

One strategy used to support students of color is for universities to measure many indicators that reflect the accomplishments of the students. At this time, institutions are not ranked or evaluated on the basis of statistics about students of color other than how many are admitted or enrolled, which means college are not being held accountable for how these students perform after they are admitted. Therefore, in order to monitor the progress of students of color and to help them to succeed, measures such as which majors they enroll in and if these majors result in high paying jobs, how much access they have to fellowships, internships, and financial aid, the percentage who go on to graduate schools, their retention rate by major, what percentage graduate, whether the faculty composition reflects the diversity of the student body, and the percentage of students of color earning GPAs of 3.5 or higher, should be used to compare students of color to other students on campus. In other words, commonly used statistics should be disaggregated by race and ethnicity in order to monitor outcomes, and this information should then be made widely available so that students, faculty, and administrators alike can be involved in effecting change based on the data (Bensimon, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2006). In assessing the involvement and engagement of students of color it is important to realize that some traditional measures of student engagement and involvement may not entirely capture the degree to which students of color are engaged, and

therefore involvement with organizations intended for students of color should be assessed (Sutton & Kimbrough, 2001), and qualitative measures are needed to confirm any findings.

Considering this research, it is important for evaluators to disaggregate data based on race and ethnicity, and also by gender, transfer or native student, full- or part-time student, and other categories, to the extent possible.

*Increasing Faculty Engagement with Undergraduates: Balancing Research and Teaching*

In 1980, RUNB comprised separate colleges and separate departments (e.g., five Biology departments, one on each campus). The restructuring of the university created mega-departments under the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, which had some negative consequences for faculty engagement. This action decreased some faculty member's involvement in student life, and created structures that effectively separated the faculty and students. The goal of restructuring was to increase the quality of research at the university, but this came at the expense of a concentration on teaching by some faculty members (Rutgers, 2005). Recently, as part of the TUE transformation, a better balance of research and student centeredness was proposed.

Therefore, a final goal of the TUE transformation had to do with increasing the engagement of faculty with undergraduates. The objective was to "reconnect the Rutgers-New Brunswick/Piscataway faculty to the work of undergraduate education and provide opportunities for faculty to focus energy and time on undergraduates" (Rutgers, 2005, p. 9). This idea has been partially discussed in the previous sections of this literature review, but the review of related research will continue here, with the goal of understanding what promotes faculty engagement in order to be able to sufficiently measure the extent to which it is evolving at RUNB.

*Increasing Faculty Involvement in a Student-Centered Research University*

Traditionally, American faculty members have not been well instructed on how to teach, or have not been asked to demonstrate improved instructional abilities over their careers (Weimer, 2003). It is argued by many that the emphasis on research often comes at the cost of being committed to undergraduate education, and effective teaching (e.g., Boyer Commission, 1998; Brand, 1992; Vincow, 1997). As a result of this concern, there was an increasing focus on spending more time and resources on undergraduate education, because the existence of a high quality research program does not provide assurance that other aspects of the university, such as its teaching, will also be of high quality (Henderson & Kane, 1991). Faculty members have shown a range of opinions about the balance between research and teaching, with some professors agreeing with the current research concentration while others are focusing on its believed detriments; (e.g., Serow, Van Dyk, McComb, & Harrold, 2002). Sometimes, faculty attitudes depended on whether they are assistant, associate, or full professors (Patrick, 1997). Faculty involvement in student learning and engagement is also a function of the culture of faculty roles and expectations in their department or university (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). At the same time, members of a university faculty are individually very different, and can behave in ways that are different than other faculty members in a department, group, or school.

Causing a shift from research to increased attention to teaching has been difficult for several reasons including the pressure for professors to publish research in order to gain prestige among peers in their discipline as well as to earn more institutional support, mobility in career markets, and promotion. There is also a socialization of doctoral students toward concentrating on research over teaching because this will gain them tenure and power (Brand, 1992). The increased attention to improving teaching has also led to the idea of research universities turning into student-centered research universities (Zahorski & Cognard, 1999), with

a mission to encourage learning through “teaching, research, scholarship, creative accomplishment, and service” (Vincow, 1997, p. 167). It should be noted that there is a large variation in the student-centeredness of current research universities (Fairweather & Beach, 2002), as well as a large range within university colleges and departments (Durning & Jenkins, 2005; Newton, 2003) regarding the emphasis on teaching and learning.

A number of tactics have been suggested to shift the focus back toward teaching excellence by encouraging faculty “buy in” (Aronson & Webster, 2007). Strategies specific to improving teaching include stressing quality and not quantity of research publications in tenure decisions, so researchers would spend less time on seldom read or cited articles, and less time working as editors on journals publishing this type of work, as well as rewarding of teaching and promotion of student engagement excellence during tenure review, both through promoting people to full professor on the main basis of teaching excellence, and through promotion of people who are recognized scholars and great instructors (Brand, 1992, Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). Criteria used to appraise research could also be used to determine if teaching and service work merits tenure or promotion (Boyer Commission, 1998). Incentives for teaching excellence, such as merit pay, or rewards for professors to participate in professional development about teaching and curriculum development, are thought to be other useful strategies (Zahorski & Cognard, 1999). Furthermore, the student evaluation process could be altered to provide better assessments of teaching effectiveness (Brand, 1992). Umbach & Wawrzynski (2005) also mentioned the strategy of simply hiring faculty members with the appropriate attitudes and feelings toward teaching and student engagement, as a way to start a change in this direction, instead of waiting for the faculty culture to change on its own. General institutional change data indicated that showing the important reasons behind the need for change helps faculty to accept the change, they are also likely to be supportive if they are involved in and experience

the change activities. The outcomes of the change should also be emphasized (Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). Other general change strategies are discussed in the section on facilitating institutional change.

Faculty members have had their own views of what can be done to promote teaching. In faculty focus groups in one research university, faculty members discussed the ideas of “improving teaching evaluation, making teaching a priority, supporting faculty development activities, improving the physical infrastructure, providing effective rewards for teaching, understanding the student responsibility, implementing change at multiple levels, recognizing teaching as a multifaceted activity, supporting intellectual community, promoting interdisciplinary teaching, and clarifying the institutional mission and educational goals” as ways to improve teaching (Frost & Teodorescu, 2001, p. 402). Strategies such as these have been implemented and shown to work at universities (Aronson & Webster, 2007). Targeting reform at individual academic departments using similar strategies is another target for faculty culture change (e.g., Lee, Hyman, & Luginbuhl, 2007). Importantly, a study of faculty satisfaction found that almost half of faculty members interviewed did not feel supported by colleagues and the university, and that this was their primary struggle (Ambrose, Huston, & Norman, 2005). As such, moves to foster collegiality and to provide support to faculty members in their teaching improvement are vital. Of course, individual faculty members might have beliefs and behave in ways that differ from these broad findings.

Additionally, research is increasingly being published on how to improve teaching in a particular field (Henderson & Kane, 1991; Huber & Hutchings, 2006), or in college in general (Henderson & Kane, 1991; Weimer, 2003), with this research sometimes being counted in the tenure review process (Vincow, 1997), because “someone who is in the midst of discovery, who is both excited and on the frontiers of knowledge, tends to be a better and more inspiring

teacher” (p. 23, Brand, 1992). This trend toward improving undergraduate education through the scholarship of teaching and improved learning about pedagogical content knowledge has been increasingly visible to many professors. Since the late 1990s, research on pedagogy has become increasingly accessible to educators, facilitated by the internet and listservs about teaching, and the increased funding for teaching and learning research projects. Faculty members have started documenting teaching strategies and sharing this knowledge, sometimes encouraged by local campus initiatives, and also by large resource grants. Research is being shared through journals, conferences, and new societies such as the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. It has also been discovered that faculty in many other countries have been doing this type of research for years, providing more resources to American professors (Huber & Hutchings, 2006). Considering the increasing external influences on improving the practice of teaching, this perpetuates the call for increased focus on improved teaching of undergraduates.

Syracuse University changed its emphasis to that of a student-centered research university (Vincow, 1997; Wright, 2001). An administrator of the university who helped with this shift has the following advice regarding what is needed to make a university a student-centered research university:

- We view each aspect of the university from the perspective of its impact on students.
- We affirm student learning as our principal goal, and our principal rationale for research is the extent to which research promotes learning among undergraduate and graduate students.
- We judge our success in education by how well students learn and not simply by how well we transmit knowledge.
- We revise our courses and our majors to become more centered on students' learning.
- We continually improve courses and academic programs through assessment of learning outcomes.
- We emphasize the value added by a research university experience in promoting students' learning.

- We develop a holistic approach to the experience of students and the culture of the institution--scholarly learning and personal development become mutually supporting goals.
- We support students' success leading to graduation so that student-faculty relationships, including improved advising and mentoring, are central to our efforts.
- We modify faculty roles, evaluations, and rewards to increase the emphasis on teaching and advising; and we redirect institutional incentives and reallocate resources to support these actions. (Vincow, 1997, p. 169)

This advice is attended to in the evaluation of RUNB' shift toward increased concentration on teaching excellence.

Efforts to measure the commitment to quality instruction, by proxies such as the number of classes taught or time in the classroom, may not accurately assess the quality of instruction or of student learning productivity. These outcomes are best influenced through a fundamental shift in incentives and the values of individual departments (Fairweather & Beach, 2002). At the same time, departments within a school might vary in their reliance on outside grants and institutional funding, and might therefore be differentially amenable to policies such as the use of incentives to invoke a focus on teaching (Fairweather & Beach, 2002). "The most effective policies [offer] compelling incentives to shift institutional and departmental reward structures toward policy goals [of better teaching] while allowing for differences in teaching and learning goals, research profiles, and service obligations" (Fairweather & Beach, 2002, p. 114).

Overall, the restructuring of universities to attend to faculty members' professional concerns should involve:

- (a) The recognition of teaching as an important area of professional expertise in its own right—and of the need for structures of professional development and support to ensure the growth of that expertise; (b) The reintegration of teaching and research—and the need for structures to facilitate collegiality within and across departments and between individuals with increasingly different workloads and professional commitments; and (c) A recognition of the wide variety of research traditions and outcomes—and the need for structures to ensure that all research activity is valued for its contribution to the overall work of the institution. (Nixon, 1996, p. 14-15)

### *The Importance of Faculty Participation in Undergraduate Education*

The importance of faculty participation in undergraduate education is increasingly being supported by empirical research that has attempted to pinpoint the most important steps faculty and universities can take to further engage students and promote learning. There are two lines of arguments that advocate for a balanced research-teaching nexus. The first is the function approach that “regards research as a tool in the learning environment in order to develop competencies that are function for the knowledge society” (Simons & Elen, 2007, p. 617) and the other is the idealistic approach that “regards research as a process of edification and understands academic education as participation in research” (p. 617). As a whole, faculty members are being pulled in many directions, such as increasing research and grant support, improving teaching pedagogies to promote student engagement, increasing their service to the university and to the community (e.g., Aronson & Webster, 2007; Butin, 2007; Zahorski & Cognard, 1999), making it difficult for them to invest time in improving pedagogy. In addition to the strategies presented above regarding how to get faculty more engaged in undergraduate education, this section will explain empirical findings about the importance of such faculty engagement.

In a national study, Umbach & Wawrzynski (2005) found several effective educational practices for enhancing student engagement and learning. Simply stated, higher levels of student engagement and learning are reported at colleges where professors “use active and collaborative learning techniques, engage students in experiences, emphasize higher-order cognitive activities in the classroom, interact with students, challenge students academically, and value enriching educational experiences” (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005, p. 153). The study also found non-significant results in that out-of-class interactions with faculty members did not have a relationship with student views of a supportive college environment, suggesting that out-



of-class interaction is not a necessary step to promote student engagement, and also in that students' general satisfaction was unrelated to professor emphasis on best practices. Overall, the others conclude that faculty members are critically important because "faculty attitudes and behaviors create a culture that emphasizes best practices in undergraduate education" (p. 174).

One way that faculty members can help to engage students and provide them with some of these best practices experiences is by including them in their research activities (e.g., Bauer & Bennett, 2003). Another particular way faculty can help new students is through teaching first-year seminars. As was noted before, participation in first-year seminars has also been found to be beneficial for student retention, for reasons such as students learning study skills and being counseled by faculty members. However, faculty have reported that these two aspects of first-year seminars, teaching study skills and counseling students about the big picture of college, are their least desired activities, in part because they feel ill-prepared to help students in these ways (Porter & Swing, 2006). However, as Umbach & Wawrzynski (2005) report, these negative faculty attitudes are a bad indicator, and as such, one way to assess the promotion of student engagement and learning is to assess faculty members' current attitudes and behaviors regarding factors such as first-year seminars. Importantly, there is a lot of variance in the views and actions of individual university faculty members, when it comes to engagement with students.

#### *Higher Education Evaluation Design Considerations*

Higher education institutions need to become more reflective, and more involved in systematic self-evaluation (Seymour, 1994). This interest in constant improvement should begin by assessing students early in college in order to improve the environment for students (Riordan, 2005). There are many stimuli for fostering these changes, such as changing accreditation standards, research findings, and the media's call for increased accountability

because of the rising costs of college. As such, this evaluation of the TUE at RUNB is very timely and valued by many stakeholders. Much is known from the published literature and empirical findings about what factors affect students' college success, which has been reviewed in the previous sections of this literature review. There is increasing pressure to apply this knowledge to making changes in higher education.

One expert in the field summarized higher education research in this way:

Within-college experiences tend to count substantially more than between-college characteristics. The quality of teaching, the extent and nature of interaction with faculty and peers, the effectiveness of student affairs programming, the focus and intensity of academic experiences, and the overall level of student engagement, to name several important dimensions, are much more important in defining excellence in undergraduate education than the reputation, selectivity, or resources of the institution attended (Pascarella, 2001, p. 20).

He believes that instead of focusing on flawed identifications of excellence, such as an institution's reputation or ranking, or student or alumni outcomes, we should instead measure a university's effective educational practices. Rankings are flawed because they only measure a university's resources, such as the endowment, faculty salaries, expenditures per student, selectivity, and student test scores, and they do not at all measure if a university is using the positive dimensions mentioned by Pascarella. They are also problematic in other ways, such as increasing the costs of college by encouraging spending in measured areas, and by taking resources away from these positive strategies (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Likewise, using alumni outcomes also leads to invalid estimates of a university's educational excellence because of the fatal flaw that there are large differences in the schools that students select and in the type of students the school accepts. As such, universities that begin with high quality students will produce high quality students, and this will be what is measured in alumni outcomes, not the excellence of the education itself. Therefore, it is most useful to evaluate a university's excellence based on empirically designated measures of excellence, and as such, the

research presented in previous sections of this literature review that pertains to quality educational practices plays a large part in the evaluation design and discussion.

However, assessing student outcomes in higher education is not an easy task. This section of the literature review is dedicated to compiling research pertaining to higher education evaluation practices. This includes information about the methodology of studies, what quality indicators to look for, and how to encourage involvement in the evaluation.

#### *Evaluations in Higher Education: What We Have Learned About Methodology*

Research in higher education has told us that there are many organizational and implementation issues to address, as well as issues surrounding the methodology, such as design, measurement, and statistical problems (Terenzini, 1989). “Attempting to understand the full complexity of the undergraduate experience requires coping with messy processes that are rarely linear and results that are often hard to measure” (Beyer & Gillmore, 2007, p. 47). For example, difficulties arise when surveying students in their first or second year because an impact of a program might not have affected them completely yet, and they often demonstrate different attitudes and perspectives than do seniors and students who have been through the process for longer (e.g., Umbach & Wawrynski, 2005). As such, longitudinal assessment is sometimes recommended in research about higher education students, in order to better understand how they learn and grow (e.g., Beyer & Gillmore, 2007; Erwin, 1997). However, because the time provided for this and other evaluations is often limited, recommendations for an extension of this evaluation study are included in the discussion.

Other researchers have called for the use of detailed qualitative methods in order to study changes made (Kezar & Eckel, 2002), including the depth to which institutional cultural change took place (Awbrey, 2005). Because of the multidimensional nature of this evaluation, several data collection measures are utilized, including interview, focus groups, surveys,

questionnaires, and existing data and artifacts, from students, faculty, and the institution. The evaluation design draws upon that of Bullock & Scott (1992), who provide an outline of evaluating innovations in higher education settings, and other evaluation design resources (e.g., Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004; Mertens, 2005; Patton, 1997, 2002).

This evaluation's methodology considers Astin (1993), who devised a model to identify and approximate an institution's influence on how students change during college: the input-environment-output (I-E-O) model (Terenzini & Upcraft, 1996). Inputs consist of every possible precollege characteristic of students that may affect educational outcomes. Because inputs are correlated with outputs, evaluators need to find a way to measure outputs after controlling for the effects of inputs, in order to understand the pure institutional effect. Astin classified many environmental measures into seven main variables: institutional characteristics, student peer group characteristics, faculty characteristics, curriculum, financial aid, major field choice, place of residence, and student involvement. Understanding these variables helps shed light into why an institutional change may or may not be effective. Astin's seven areas of student outcomes are academic and cognitive development, satisfaction with the collegiate environment, political orientation, attitudes, values, and beliefs, personality and self concept, patterns of behavior, and career development. Utilizing an evaluation design that accounts for inputs, environment, and outputs can provide a complex and complete picture of an institution. As such, this study carefully identifies the desired outcomes to assess, the relevant input variables that may affect the outcomes, and the environmental variables to evaluate.

#### *Additional Outcome Measures Important in Higher Education*

Another of the necessary steps in designing an evaluation for higher education is to determine what the change objectives entail. While the main goals of the TUE are assessed, it was also important to determine if there are additional or overarching goals to assess, such as

goals from federal guidelines that are pertinent to the TUE initiative, or indices of the progress of the changes. Kezar & Eckel (2002b) used the following criteria to determine if universities were making good progress toward their intended changes: “(a) met measureable goals; (b) illustrated changes in values, underlying assumptions, behaviors, processes, products, and structure; (c) provided evidence of a change in institutional culture; (d) demonstrated mechanisms of sustainability, such as new positions or divisions, or the embeddedness of the changes” (p. 301).

The *Greater Expectations* report (AAUU, 2002) details a set of expectations for colleges that are integrated in assessing the value of the TUE at RUNB. It expects that colleges and universities will:

- Value themselves as learning communities whose mission is to improve student achievement
- Respond to the students they serve: their diversity, enrollment patterns, preparation, aspirations
- Assign resources to support increased faculty attention to student learning
- Accept responsibility for improved teacher education
- Promote collaborative leadership among the faculty, administrators, and other key stakeholders
- Join with state and business leaders to align college with society’s needs
- As a group, offer multiple educational models. (p. 46)

Also, the new expectations are that faculty members will:

- Hold themselves to high standards of teaching
- Hold their students to high standards of intellectual work that require strong commitments of time and attention
- Set clear, interrelated goals for their courses, academic programs, and student learning
- Accept responsibility for, and teach to achieve, the goals
- Design coherent curricula and employ teaching practices to help all students achieve the goal
- Regularly assess their own and student success, and use the results to improve learning
- Individually and collectively assume responsibility for the entire curriculum
- Embody life-long learning by engaging in professional development to improve teaching. (p. 47)

It is also expected of classroom practices that:

- While teaching knowledge, also ask students to apply it
- Stress inquiry and engagement with unscripted and contested problems, including those drawn from real life
- In an intentional way, employ the diversity of the student body as a learning tool
- Develop and value collaborative as well as individual achievement. (p. 47)

These overarching national goals are incorporated in this evaluation and its discussion.

*Advice on measurement of institutional engagement.* Researchers have identified qualities of institutional practices that are the most related to learning outcomes, using colleges with the highest learning productivity scores and their scores on the NSSE. The engagement scales most related to higher learning test scores are (a) level of academic challenge, (b) student-faculty interaction, (c) supportive campus environment, (d) reading and writing, (e) quality of relationships, (f) institutional emphases on good practices, (g) higher-order thinking, and (h) student-faculty interaction through coursework (Carini, et al., 2006). This framework, and the corresponding NSSE questions (Kuh, Hayek, Carini, Ouimet, Gonyea, & Kennedy, 2001), are used to portray RUNB' progress toward its goal of increased student and faculty engagement.

However, measuring these constructs is not always easy. Recent research has been conducted by the Cornell Office of Institutional Research, in regard to response rates to student surveys, including those on student engagement levels (Clarkberg, Robertson, & Einarson, 2008). Results showed that there is a distinct difference in the students who tended to complete this surveys (many were women with good grades) and those who did not. Whether the groups of students who tended to answer the surveys would respond differently than students who did not complete them remains an elusive question. This can have an acute impact on measures of student engagement because, "there are non-ignorable links between multiple dimensions of student engagement and the likelihood of responding to a survey designed to measure student engagement" (p. 2). As a result, care should be taken to keep response rates as high as possible,

perhaps by making the survey salient and relevant to students. Based on these data, upperclassmen response rates around 35% would not be unusual, and nationally, response rates are dropping for higher education surveys, perhaps due to their wide and increasing use (Clarkberg et. al, 2008). Considering this finding, evaluators should be somewhat skeptical of the representativeness of higher education student survey results.

*Other higher education evaluation advice.* Many universities have recognized the utility of conducting evaluations within their schools, and have created capacity to facilitate this research. Because colleges have a need for accurate data and systematic research in order to improve college-wide planning, universities have often established offices of research and planning to collect information about students and the university (Daoud, Gabriner, Mery, & Wolfe, 1999). As such, much of the data used in this evaluation already existed within this office at Rutgers. However, preexisting, as well as new data, must be utilized with vigorous adherence to proper research and evaluation methodologies.

### *Background of Rutgers and the Transformation of Undergraduate Education*

#### *History of the Transformation*

In 2004, President Richard L. McCormick and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Philip Furmanski, created a Task Force on Undergraduate Education consisting of representatives (faculty, staff, and students) from RUNB. It was given the task of investigating the undergraduate experience at RUNB, and was charged with making recommendations for the improvement of undergraduate education. The next year, a report was issued by the Task Force: *Transforming Undergraduate Education: Report of the Task Force on Undergraduate Education at Rutgers–New Brunswick /Piscataway*. “The report described a comprehensive series of recommendations from all aspects of the undergraduate experience. The suggestions touched on many areas of the university such as student recruitment and admissions, core educational

requirements, student life, facilities, and the academic structure of the university” (Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2008, p. 5). The report critiqued the “organization of undergraduate education, the curriculum, the admissions and recruitment process, the student experience, and campus planning and facilities. In each area it made recommendations designed to bring students and faculty back together and to make the vast resources of the New Brunswick Campus equally available to all undergraduates” (p. 5). The report recommended:

- Abolition of the multiple liberal arts college structure and the establishment of a single School of Arts and Sciences that would house both faculty and their students
- Renaming Cook College to better reflect its mission and status as a professional school
- A single set of core distribution requirements so that all arts and sciences students in New Brunswick would have the same general education experience
- A New Brunswick-wide honors program
- Unified and closely coordinated advising centers on each campus under singular direction and the consolidation of student services so that all students could find equivalent advising, counseling, and support services on any campus in New Brunswick
- Strengthened faculty roles in every aspect of undergraduate education. (p. 5)

The report provoked a lively discussion about its proposals, and President McCormick produced recommendations “to reinvigorate the undergraduate experience at Rutgers by creating a more satisfying, more coherent, less frustrating, less confusing, and more rational academic environment for all students” (RUNB, 2008), which were later approved by the Board of Governors. In the subsequent year and a half, these recommendations were implemented, and the first students were enrolled in the School of Arts and Sciences in Fall Semester 2007 (RUNB, 2008). The goals of the transformation were to:

- Reconnect the Rutgers–New Brunswick/Piscataway faculty to the work of undergraduate education and provide opportunities for faculty to focus energy and time on undergraduates.
- Engage students in the exciting intellectual work that characterizes our campuses, from the time of admission to the time of graduation and beyond.
- Offer all undergraduates equal access to Rutgers’ high-quality academic programs and to the distinctive educational experiences that characterize a research university.
- Provide undergraduates on all New Brunswick/Piscataway campuses ready access to learning communities of students with similar interests, as well as to facilities, services, and programs that meet their diverse needs.



- Recruit and admit to Rutgers–New Brunswick/Piscataway high-quality students who contribute to the rich diversity of the campuses and who seek the challenges and opportunities of a major research university.
- Improve the attractiveness, clarity, organization, and accessibility of undergraduate education at Rutgers–New Brunswick/Piscataway. (Rutgers, 2005, p. 9)

### *Evaluating the Transformation of Undergraduate Education*

In the report *Transforming Undergraduate Education: President's Recommendations to the Rutgers University Board of Governors regarding Undergraduate Education on the New Brunswick/Piscataway Campus*, President McCormick called for the monitoring of success or failure in the implementation of the plan to transform undergraduate education at RUNB in areas such as “admissions, advising, cocurricular programming, faculty engagement, and student life” (McCormick, 2006, p. 15). He stated the desire to “identify means by which to measure whether the RUNB undergraduate experience—academic and cocurricular—has improved in meaningful ways.” The university intends to track and publicly report measures such as:

- Graduation rates and post-graduation placements
- Use of advising opportunities
- Faculty/student participation in first-year seminars and undergraduate research and service
- Use of student centers, recreation centers, and residence life programs, and
- Strength and diversity of entering classes. (p. 15)

President McCormick also stated he would report publicly on “student satisfaction and the university’s progress on other key measures of success” (p. 15).

Additionally, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education has recently given Rutgers its suggestions for improvement, which are based on its evaluation of the self-study conducted by Rutgers. Relevant suggestions included:

- Investment in functions that help improve student retention and graduation efforts
- Support “less self-directed students”
- Promote and expand undergraduate research opportunities at all campuses
- Consider assessing learning communities with tools such as the National Survey of Student Engagement (Evaluation team representing the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2008, p. 4).

These calls for evaluation and assessment were considered in the development of the evaluation questions and determining how to answer them.

#### *Initial Changes at RUNB*

The university reported that several areas of RUNB experienced changes because of the TUE. First, its four liberal arts colleges for undergraduates were combined into one School of Arts and Sciences (SAS), and students now have access to over 100 majors through this school. Formerly, the four undergraduate liberal arts colleges had different admissions criteria, degree requirements, available majors, and other rules. The faculty of SAS has set uniform admissions, honors, scholastic standing, general education, and degree requirements, so that all students can access all of the services that RUNB provides. RUNB also now has the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS), which was formerly Cook College, the fifth undergraduate college at the university. RUNB still has five campuses, each of which now is headed by a dean who coordinates academic, cocurricular, and cultural life affairs. Students can now live on any of these five campuses (RUNB, 2008).

Students now have access to the full range of resources related to academic advising, housing, dining, health services, student life, recreation and counseling. The university is also interested in creating residential colleges which support students through increased faculty participation, coordinated academic, cocurricular and cultural programs, faculty mentoring, and on-campus courses. So far, Douglass Residential College has been formed to provide a supportive community to its students, who are all women. In addition to these structural changes, First-year seminars have been developed for freshman students, called the Byrne Family First-year Seminars. Learning and living communities have also been established by the university (RUNB, 2008). All of these changes will be described in depth in the results chapters.

## Chapter Two: Evaluation Philosophy

“Program evaluation is undertaken to inform decisions, clarify options, identify improvements, and provide information about programs and policies within contextual boundaries of time, place, values and politics” (Patton, 1997, p. 24). Because of the potential impact of an evaluation, the methods used in this evaluation have been developed with respect to what evaluation questions university stakeholders are most interested in, what data are available from the university related to the evaluation questions, and what research literature findings inform us of what to ask and include. The methods used in this study have evolved in response to what stakeholders wanted to learn from this study, and to what data could be feasibly collected and analyzed in time for the evaluation findings to influence services at RUNB. In this sense, the methodology for this study was emergent because of its iterative strategy to determine what questions to answer and what data to collect.

### *Purpose of Evaluation*

#### *Research versus Evaluation*

Before the evaluation methodology is explained further, the distinction between research and evaluation will be briefly explained, so that the rationalization of the TUE evaluation as well as the way it may inform areas of research is clear. Overall, this study has evaluative purposes, in that it seeks to assess the process changes and short term outcome of the RUNB TUE goals, but it also can have larger research applications to various disciplines. Major distinctions between research and evaluation are related to their purposes, goals, agenda control, generalizability, and quality criteria (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2004). The purposes of an evaluation are to provide important information to stakeholders, to possibly make judgments that benefit stakeholders, and to describe relationships within a program, while the purposes of

research are to add understanding to a field, to advance theory, and to document causal relationships. However, data furthering research can also be gleaned from an evaluation. As a multi-faceted higher education study at a large university, evaluation findings, such as how students access and benefit from learning communities at RUNB, can also advance theory in the research on learning communities.

In another distinction, the major goals of evaluation are to assign worth or merit to a program or transformation and to use evaluation findings as an impetus for program changes. Goals of research, which are to seek conclusions and to improve understanding of phenomena, might also be accomplished in this study. Understanding a phenomenon such as student engagement can be facilitated by analyzing qualitative evaluation data from RUNB, and then generating theory about student engagement in general. Additionally, evaluators do not establish the entire agenda of a study: it is determined what aspects of a program stakeholders want to learn more about, and then the study agenda is designed to include the suggestions of stakeholders. Data are collected from a variety of sources, and are analyzed and presented back to the organization and stakeholders so they can make a decision about future action. A research agenda, on the other hand, is set by the researcher who generates research questions and hypotheses, and then collects and analyzes data, which are then used to draw conclusions to advance theory. The generalizability of these findings is not a priority in an evaluation, as it is in research. Also, evaluation quality is determined by the accuracy, utility, feasibility, and propriety of the data collected, while internal and external validity considerations are used to judge the quality of research (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2004; Joint Committee on Standards for Evaluation, 1994).

### *Purposes Specific to the Interest of Rutgers*

Calls to monitor the implementation of TUE goals and other changes at Rutgers were made by President McCormick and by the Middle States accreditation committee (Evaluation Team representing the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2008; McCormick, 2006). Now that Rutgers has passed its 2008 Middle States Accreditation visit, it is more important than ever for it to continue to assess itself and to demand ongoing improvement in order to continue to provide an excellent education to its students.

### *Larger Possible Research Purposes*

The data used in a qualitative description of a higher education construct, such as student engagement, can come from one university because of great variation within the university, in order to advance theory. Data from this evaluation provide descriptions of RUNB programs and efforts involving student engagement, faculty engagement, higher education organizational change, learning communities, involving undergraduates in research, improving undergraduate student services, and serving underrepresented college populations. Higher education researchers or other universities can look at what RUNB is doing in these areas and learn from what has been done.

### *Audience for Evaluation*

An important step in an evaluation is determining how such stakeholders are affected by the evaluation, and establishing how much support they will give to the evaluation (Patton, 1997). In addition to administrators at RUNB, there are several stakeholders with an interest in the findings of this evaluation and who were relied upon to provide data. Because this evaluation assessed the process changes and short term outputs of the TUE's goals, anyone affected by the changes brought about by these goals was considered to be affected by this evaluation. This includes all students at RUNB, faculty members who are the focus of efforts to

increase faculty engagement in undergraduate education, and staff members who have taken on new roles related to these changes.

A broader audience for parts of the evaluation might include parents of students, alumni, possible funders, future evaluators or accreditation teams, and the broader media, to inform everyone about the effects of the TUE and how RUNB is constantly trying to improve itself, and where it might need help, such as through increased donations and funding.

### *Theoretical Evaluation Considerations*

#### *Evaluation Standards*

The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994) describes standards by which it expects all evaluations are designed and conducted under, with utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy as four essential considerations for proper evaluations. Standards of utility, or gathering information that is useful to stakeholders, are very important to this large study. Stakeholders want evaluation results that are practical and useful. Time and effort spent collecting data that is not useful to administrators and stakeholders will be avoided. Awareness of feasibility considerations is also important because this evaluation is being done in a university on a limited budget with limited resources; therefore, the evaluation should be realistic, diplomatic, prudent, and frugal. In accordance with the standard of propriety, taking into account the vulnerable nature of the students being served by the many individuals that make up the university and of faculty and staff who are employed by the university, it is important to protect the rights and interests of these stakeholders. Finally, the accuracy of the results of this evaluation is paramount because of the potential impact of the findings on perhaps funding allocation, student services, and faculty training (Joint Committee's Standards for Program Evaluation, 1994).

### *Cultural Relevance and Cultural Competence in Evaluation*

There is an expanding literature on the cultural competence in the evaluation field (e.g., Hood, Hopson, & Frierson, 2005; SenGupta, Hopson, & Thompson-Robinson, 2004), focusing on understanding the impact of culture on all aspects of evaluation. Maximizing the validity of interpretations of the findings of an evaluation is always a focus in evaluation, but this must also be done through a cultural lens. “Valid evaluation presumes an understanding of culture and culturally based discrimination as well as the ability to identify appropriate and inappropriate considerations of cultural context in evaluation’s epistemological, methodological, and theoretical foundations, professional practices, and standards and guiding principles” (Kirkhart, 2005, p. 22).

There are several assumptions that culturally competent evaluators should embrace in order to ensure that evaluation results have multicultural validity: 1) all decisions based on evaluation are rooted in culture; 2) all parts of an evaluation process are situated in cultural context; 3) culture is a relevant consideration despite the design of the evaluation; and 4) neglecting to consider culture is a threat to validity (Kirkhart & Hopson, 2008). Some specific recommendations for enhancing multicultural validity framed for this evaluation include 1) reviewing the history, community, and culture of the university; 2) including multiple stakeholders that are representative of the university, including attention to the power of these stakeholders; 3) designing the evaluation to determine if the program is respectful of cultural context, if resources and program benefits are being distributed in a fair manner, 4) ensure that the measurement of outcomes is done with culturally sensitive instruments and methods; 5) analyzing data by disaggregating data to examine differences among groups, and seeking the input of others who might have a different perspective on the data collected; 6) disseminating

the results so that the community benefits and so everyone has appropriate access to the findings (Kirkhart & Hopson, 2008).

#### *Role of Evaluator and Participants*

Patton (1997) advises that evaluators consider the influences that politics can have on carrying out an evaluation and disseminating the results, warning that, “failing to recognize that an issue involves power and politics reduces an evaluator’s strategic options and increases the likelihood that the evaluator will be used unwittingly as some stakeholder’s political puppet” (p. 345). Evaluators need to anticipate the political interests of stakeholders and to balance asking useful and sometimes difficult questions with the greater needs of the evaluation. Reporting all categories of opinions and information about TUE changes and detangling personal and political bias from what is asked and reported are necessary evaluation components, and are important in the ultimate goal of improving undergraduate education at RUNB. Patton also warns that resource allocations, such as that of power, money, and personnel, might be impacted by an evaluation’s findings, which speaks to the necessity of being as accurate and unbiased as possible in the collection and analysis of evaluation data.

Stakeholders also play a pivotal role in explaining their concerns about the program that will be evaluated, determining what should be included in the evaluation, and in identifying the criteria that will be used to judge the value or merit of the program (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2004). Considering that students, staff, and faculty members are key stakeholders in this evaluation, they will have a say, in addition to administrators, in what is studied in this evaluation, because of the potentially political results. The practice of speaking to a select group of stakeholders to identify issues pertinent to assessing the TUE will also help the results of this evaluation to be more useful to individual stakeholders and the university as a whole. When people are made a part of an evaluation and are given a role in the process, and a say in the questions asked, the



utility of an evaluation increases, and the results are more likely to be disseminated and incorporated. Parts of the evaluation report will be shared across aspects the university to provide everyone access to results.

Also, we have learned from the Hawthorne study about the problem of researchers finding what they are looking for, even if the effect does not exist, (Bramel & Friend, 1981) and therefore research methods and findings should always be scrutinized with attention to this problem. As researchers, we need to take care not to overlook contradicting data or rely on confirming data to describe the phenomenon they thought they were seeing. I work to include all points of view in the report of results, despite personal impressions or social desirability considerations.

### *Evaluation Classification*

A description of an evaluation strategy covers several areas, including if the evaluation is formative or summative, qualitative or quantitative, internal or external, and what type of approach it takes. First, it is important to determine whether an evaluation will be aimed at making summative decisions based on the measured effectiveness of the program, learning more about how a program can be improved (formative evaluation), or expanding theory about a topic (Patton, 1997). This evaluation has the formative purpose of providing university administrators with information about how the goals of the TUE transformation are impacting stakeholders in the university and what might be done to facilitate achievement of these goals, but it can also be used for theory building for the topics of higher education institutional change, student engagement, and other areas. It makes some limited judgments about how goals are impacting stakeholders in the short term following their implementation.

Program evaluations can be designed using a combination of research methods. These methods include designing and implementing structured or open-ended surveys or interviews

with various groups within an organization, creating a scientific experiment to prove effectiveness, as well as looking at pre-existing data within the organization. The organization's goals are used to select strategies for evaluation. In this case, primarily qualitative and some quantitative data are used, as well as both existing archival data and to-be-collected data. Additionally, this can be viewed as both an internal evaluation, as I am a graduate student at RUNB and I have some intimate knowledge and experience with the university, but also as an external evaluation, as I am not employed as an evaluator at RUNB, and I have not been personally affected by the changes made as part of the TUE. This evaluation may partly be viewed as utilization-focused (Patton, 1997) to promote the likelihood of the use of results. "Utilization-focused evaluation begins with the premise that evaluations should be judged by their utility and actual use; therefore evaluators should facilitate the evaluation process and design any evaluation with careful consideration of how everything that is done, from beginning to end, will affect use" (p. 20). The utilization-focused nature of this evaluation will be described throughout this section.

Another classification of evaluation types describes whether evaluations are objectives-oriented, management-oriented, consumer-oriented, expertise-oriented, and/or participant oriented (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2004). Because the evaluation's overarching goal is to examine the implementation and achievement of each TUE goal, objectives-oriented evaluation theory will partly be used to design the evaluation. Objectives-oriented evaluation theory is useful here because "the information gained from an objectives-oriented evaluation could be used to reformulate the purposes of the activity, the activity itself, or the assessment procedures and devices used to determine the achievement of purposes" (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2004, p. 71). This type of evaluation often uses a basis of logic models, which in this situation might begin with a long-term vision of the impact of each goal and how students will be better served as a result of

each goal. A logic model then breaks out the inputs needed to achieve the goal, activities used to achieve the goal, outputs used to measure the changes, and short-term and long-term outcomes to measure. Logic models can be taken a step further by using a program theory approach to measuring objectives “by seeking the specification of the mechanisms that mediate between delivery of a program and the appearance of outcomes of interest. [Their function is to determine] what are the specific causes of observed outcomes, and what do we have that supports causal conclusions?” (Fitzpatrick et al, p. 79). This model uses extant literature to help to generate evaluation questions and to understand the connections between the goals and outcomes, in order to determine why goals fail or are achieved. Explicit logic models were not developed during the evaluation process, but the theoretical framework of considering the inputs, activities, outputs, and short-term outcomes in describing what happened to each area of the university is prominent in each description.

This evaluation is also partly management-oriented in theory because it is likely that administrators and other policy-influencing members of the Rutgers community might use evaluation results to make judgments about aspects of the TUE. According to Stufflebeam’s Context-Input-Process-Product management-oriented model, this evaluation can also be partly classified as an input evaluation (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2004). As such, if aspects of the goals are not succeeding, then information from stakeholders can be used to structure further decisions about the goals and changes. Structuring further decisions involves “determining what resources are available, what alternative strategies for the program should be considered, and what plan seems to have the best potential for meeting needs” (Fitzpatrick, et al., 2004, p. 89). It is also partly a process evaluation because it can help to determine how the goals are being implemented, what problems stand in the way of fulfilling the goals, and what changes are needed to realize the implementation of the goals. Process evaluation “enables you to describe

and assess your program's activities and to link your progress to outcomes. This is important because the link between outputs and short-term outcomes remains an empirical question" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008, p. 3). Suggestions about how goal progress can be monitored, managed, and refined can be made, using this model. This aligns with President McCormick's call to determine how to monitor and then track the progress of the goals. This evaluation will also have some product-related measures, to assess the short term outcomes and the beginning impact of the actions to achieve the goals.

### *Measurement Considerations*

#### *Validity Checks*

Validity has to do with whether we are measuring what we want to measure.

Evaluators have to determine what inferences, predictions, and decisions we can make based on test scores, survey results, research findings, and other measures, in order to hold trust in results. In other words, validity is "a unitary concept that measures the degree to which all the accumulated evidence supports the intended interpretation of [measured results] for the proposed purpose" (Mertens, 2005, p. 352). In qualitative research, validity is synonymous with credibility, and determining whether the results of a test or study are credible through means such as prolonged or substantial engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, progressive subjectivity, member checks, and triangulation (Mertens, 2005). To ensure the validity of the interpretation of the results of this study, or representativeness (Miles & Huberman, 1984), I compare across data types and participants to determine the consistency of the findings. I also engage in member checks for most sections of the reports, and I persistently looked for additional information about a topic using questions asked in subsequent interviews and by reading student and university newspapers and other sources of information.

### *Generalizability*

Though it is not always the most important consideration of a quality evaluation, external validity is nonetheless important, especially since components of this study might be used to inform research literature. External validity refers to how far findings in one study or test can be applied to another situation. Whether or not results or findings are generalizable has to do with whether effects are found in other settings with other populations at other times. If there are threats to the external validity of outcome measures, effects might be found with one group but not another, at one time but not another, under some situations and settings and not others (Cook & Campbell, 1979). Because this evaluation is a case study of the experiences of one university, the results might not be very generalizable to other colleges. That is, just because RUNB students are found to have high levels of student engagement does not mean that other colleges will. Broad generalizations about the status of RUNB cannot be made to other colleges, but it is more reasonable to develop theories or hypotheses about the causes of student engagement, or other constructs, at RUNB that can be tested at other universities.

### *Consistency*

The purpose of measuring a construct is to get an accurate estimate of that construct, and accuracy comes from minimizing any error in the measurement. Reliability refers to the consistency or stability of measurement, classification, or coding results. Technically, it is the ratio of true to observed variance, so it calculates the proportion of the variability in test scores that is due to true scores, (Murphy & Davidshofer, 2005). In qualitative research, dependability is a proxy for reliability (Mertens, 2005), with attention to if measures are dependably providing the same results in all situations. Standardized measures, such as the NSSE, have likely gone through many of the described estimates of reliability, so if this is used, this information will be provided in the evaluation report. The lack of reliability in some participant self report may be

another inherent limitation of this study. Pascarella (2001) warns about the difficulties of using participant self-report to learn about subjective subject matter. People are often accurate in the reporting of factual data, but might vary widely in their ability to report about quality and less factual information. Therefore, he warns caution must be taken in comparing groups based on subjective self report data.

### *Confidentiality*

Because the data collected through the evaluation of the TUE involves students, faculty, and administrators can include both praise and criticism of RUNB, either at the institutional or local departmental level, it was considered very important that data from this evaluation be kept confidential when possible. However, because of the specific nature of the discussions with administrators, their interview responses were said to be not confidential within the university, because they would be easily identified by the content and topics of their answers.

Administrators were told that they could abstain from answering questions, they could have the tape recorder turned off at any point, and if some still expressed concern, they were told they could read what was written about their statements prior to publication. The student focus group interviews and the faculty online questionnaires were conducted with promises of confidentiality. To protect the identities of study participants, including those of administrators without tenure, when describing statements by some of the participants, I will not describe who has said what, except to sometimes refer to the category of administrator they are, or their level of authority. Additionally, any interview data that are used in publications outside of the Rutgers setting are presented in a confidential manner. Regardless of confidentiality guarantees, consent forms were gathered from all participants in case the data from this evaluation are presented outside of the university.

### *Analytical Considerations*

The analysis of the qualitative data into the ultimate report follow mostly an inductive approach to analysis, and little deductive analysis. “Deductive analysis refers to data analysis that set out to test whether data are consistent with prior assumptions, theories, or hypotheses identified or constructed by an investigator” (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). I did not establish firm assumptions, theories, or hypotheses about what the short term impacts of the TUE would be, or about any of the evaluation questions, and I did not strongly utilize the relevant literature inform what to look for; this literature review provided a context for understanding the relevant bigger picture issues confronting organizational change in a higher education setting. Instead, I used inductive analysis, which refers to “approaches that primarily use detailed readings of raw data to derive concepts, themes, or model through interpretations made from the raw data by an evaluator” (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). An inductive approach to qualitative evaluation data analysis allows “research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies. In deductive analysis...key themes are often obscured, reframed, or left invisible because of the preconceptions in the data collection and data analysis procedures imposed by investigators” (p. 238). Because one of the goals was to look for unintended consequences of the TUE, inductive analysis was used because it better allows for this.

### *Evaluation Questions*

In looking for a study to do for my dissertation, I approached university administrators about conducting an evaluation of the TUE. Because I initiated the evaluation process, I had to work with university administrators to form evaluation questions for this study. The final evaluation questions for this study stemmed from the literature reviewed, the stated goals of

the TUE and published needs of the university, and from interviews with various stakeholders and leaders at Rutgers. While the initial plan was to interview a few administrators to collect information about what they wanted to learn from the evaluation to further develop evaluation questions past what were described as TUE goals, these administrators were interested in what had been accomplished so far and in the documentation of the changes from the TUE.

Therefore, this report focuses on evaluating the outcomes from four overarching areas of the transformation: 1) attracting and retaining high quality students, including supporting students in underrepresented groups and nontraditional students; 2) reducing roadblocks for students; and 3) increasing the engagement of undergraduate students with cocurricular activities and with faculty. The context and the processes to bring about these changes, as well as ideas for future directions, are described. The specific evaluation questions are:

1. What was done to change the structure of the university, and what are people's impressions of these changes, considering the context and culture of RUNB?
2. What has been done to attract and retain high quality students, including supporting students in underrepresented groups and nontraditional students?
3. What has been done to reduce roadblocks and inequities and improve the delivery and consistency of services for students?
4. What has been done to increase the engagement of undergraduate students with cocurricular activities and with faculty members?
5. Based on any difficulties or unexpected consequences with the TUE, what further changes are being made and can be made to improve undergraduate education at RUNB?

Results for these questions describe the ongoing process changes and short term outputs of each TUE goal, explaining what has been done so far to meet the goals, and including what more stakeholders believe should be done. The answer to the first question will be described in Chapter Four and throughout the remaining chapters. The other evaluation questions will be answered in Chapters Five through Eight, respectively.



## Chapter Three: Evaluation Method

### *Participants*

Three types of participants were included in this study: current university administrators, faculty, and students.

#### *University Administrators*

The administrator interviewees were selected because they were leaders of the Transformation of Undergraduate Education, and hold positions within the university that were affected by the reorganization (some of these administrators are also on the faculty or are class instructors). In total, information was collected from fifty-one administrators. They were interviewed in person (43), over the phone (1), via email (4), or were asked to provide a large portion of data about his or her program (3). The positions of administrators included the President of the university, Executive Vice President of the university, middle-level administrators who oversaw other administrators, and administrators in charge of a particular program. Administrators came primarily from the offices of Undergraduate Education, Student Affairs, the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS), but also represented other areas such as the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS), Enrollment Management, and Business Administration. Twenty-four administrators were men and twenty-seven were women. The administrators interviewed are presented in Table 1, organized into the following groups: central or general administration, student affairs, undergraduate education and academic engagement, and SAS deans and instructional support, though instructional support is actually managed by the Office of Undergraduate Education. The administrators who appear in italics are sometimes referred to as a “senior administrator” in the description of the results.

Table 1: Table of Administrators Interviewed

<b>Central or General Administration</b>	<b>Student Affairs</b>	<b>Undergraduate Education and Academic Engagement</b>	<b>SAS Deans and Instructional Support</b>
<i>Rutgers President</i>	<i>Vice President for Student Affairs</i>	<i>VP for Undergraduate Education</i>	<i>Associate Dean Academic Services SAS</i>
<i>Executive VP- Academic Affairs</i>	<i>Senior Dean of Students</i>	<i>Asst. VP for Undergraduate Academic Affairs</i>	<i>Asst. Dean for Nontraditional Students, SAS</i>
<i>SEBS Dean- Academic Programs and Research</i>	<i>Cook/Douglass Dean of Students</i>	<i>ARESTY Director</i>	<i>Asst. Dean and Director of Transfer Student Services, SAS</i>
<i>SAS Vice Dean- UG Education</i>	<i>Dean of Students, Busch</i>	<i>Byrne seminar director</i>	<i>SAS Dean of First-year students</i>
<i>Director- Institutional Research&amp; Planning</i>	<i>Director- Office of Compliance, Student Policy, Research, Assessment</i>	<i>Director- External Fellowships and Postgraduate Guidance</i>	<i>Asst. Dean and Director of Retention, Scholastic Standing, and Assessment, SAS</i>
<i>Director- Business, HR, and IT</i>	<i>Senior Director- Campus Information Services</i>	<i>Dean- Douglass Residential College, Interim</i>	<i>Asst. VP, Instructional Support Services</i>
<i>Director- Financial Management and Computing</i>	<i>Executive Director- Recreation, Community Development</i>	<i>Cook Campus Dean</i>	<i>Associate Dean of SAS EOF</i>
<i>University Registrar</i>	<i>Executive Director- Residence Life</i>	<i>Campus Dean- Livingston Campus</i>	<i>Asst. Dean SAS EOF Academic Affairs</i>
<i>University EOF Programs admin.</i>	<i>Executive Director- Health Services</i>	<i>Dean- University College Community</i>	<i>Asst Dean SAS EOF Student Development</i>
<i>VP for Enrollment Management</i>	<i>Asst. Director- Counseling and Psychological Services</i>	<i>Asst. VP- Academic Engagement and Programming</i>	<i>Director, Learning Resource Centers, Interim</i>
<i>Director- UG Admissions</i>	<i>Executive Director- University Student Life</i>	<i>Director- Learning Communities</i>	<i>Director- McNair Program and Student Support Services</i>
	<i>Director- Parents Association</i>	<i>Director Multicultural Student Engagement</i>	<i>Director- Students with Disabilities</i>
		<i>Director- Discovery Houses</i>	<i>Admin. Director- SAS Honors program</i>
		<i>Director- First Year Interest Groups</i>	<i>Dean- SAS Honors Program</i>

### *Current Students*

Students participating in the focus groups were chosen in the following way. Because students of the former RUNB colleges of Cook, Douglass, and University College were said by many administrators to have been the most affected by the reorganization of the colleges, and had been the most vocal about the changes, I interviewed the current members of campus student councils representing these former colleges. Student leaders tended to be upperclassmen, and would therefore remember the distinctions between the old and new systems. These students were said by administrators to be very well aware of the reorganization and its effects on their colleges, and would therefore be able to answer questions about the short term impact of the changes with knowledge not only of their personal situation and experience, but that of the students they represent as members of the campus council. Students in the Honors program and in Equal Opportunity Fund (EOF) program were also interviewed in focus groups, because their academic programs were also greatly affected by this reorganization. Either the administrative leaders or the student presidents representing these organizations were contacted to set up focus groups. Since these students were not randomly selected from their organizations, and instead tended to be student leaders, that their opinions and statements may not truly reflect the experiences of students in their organizations, but instead may reflect the politics surrounding the reorganization. Despite this trade off, student leaders were interviewed because of their increased knowledge of the changes.

A total of five student focus groups were conducted, ranging in size from two to seven students, with a total of 21 students participating, including 9 females and 12 males. More description of these students can be found in the subsequent procedure section. Readers should remember that they are only hearing the views of 21 students, who only represent the five areas of SAS EOF, the SAS Honors Program, the University College Community, Douglass

Residential College, and the Cook Campus Council. Most of these students are continuing student leaders.

### *Faculty Leaders*

Faculty members were identified for inclusion with this study using a similar line of logic. All faculty who were part of designing and implanting the TUE changes, and all undergraduate chairs in departments in SAS and SEBS were asked to participate. TUE-involved faculty members helped to design the changes, so it was thought they would have been attuned to the initial impacts of the TUE. Additionally, department chairs were also asked to participate because they are in communication with all of their fellow department members, and could be asked to observe the short term impacts on their departments and to report their findings. Lastly, a representative from each of the professional schools at RUNB was asked to participate in the online questionnaire. Individuals who met these criteria, but who had already been interviewed during the round of administrator interviewing, were not asked to participate in the faculty survey.

The views of faculty members presented here only represent the views of undergraduate faculty chairs of departments and faculty TUE committee members, limiting the generalization of the results. Because they completed an online survey, they knew they were speaking anonymously; they were also self-selected because they completed the survey, and they also could not be asked follow-up questions because of the nature of the survey.

### *Procedure*

#### *Conducting Administrator Interviews*

This study was originally designed to have two distinct components: the first, an initial round of interviews of stakeholders of the evaluation, and the second, an evaluation based on

information learned from these interviews. The actual methods followed a more iterative approach, in a somewhat non-linear fashion. It was initially conceived that about 15 administrators would be officially interviewed for the evaluation, but often one administrator would defer questions and topics to another administrator who could better answer a question, so they were added to the list of administrators to interview. Some senior level administrators who would be direct users of evaluation data were also asked to review the list of administrator interviews completed, and add to the list of names of administrators whose perspectives they sought.

Nearly every administrator contacted to take part in this evaluation eventually participated. One did not because he believed that his job description did not give him much access to be able to answer the interview questions. All administrators were sent the general interview questions in advance so they would know what to expect from the interview, and so they could prepare. Administrator interviews took place between June 26, 2008 and December 10, 2008. Each university administrator interview was also used to inform subsequent administrator interview questions, to identify which other administrators should be interviewed or which other data should be collected, and to inform questions in faculty questionnaires and student focus groups. The goal of these interviews was also for interviewees to articulate questions and concerns that people with background information on the TUE are interested in, and to help identify special considerations and caveats that the evaluator should be aware of in the design of the larger study. Administrator interviews lasted between 17 and 82 minutes, with most lasting around 45 minutes.

### *Student Focus Groups*

After interviewing many administrators, student focus groups were also conducted, designed with the help of information from administrator interviews. Five student focus groups

were conducted from October 31, 2008 to December 9, 2008. For the focus group of Honors students, I contacted an administrator in the Honors program, asking for a diverse group of students to talk to in a focus group. She gave me a list of 20 students, the upperclassmen evenly representing each of the former colleges, and a group of students from the new SAS. I contacted an even mix of 10 of these students (two from each of the old colleges and new SAS) to come to a focus group session one evening. Two students attended, and the focus group interview lasted about 30 minutes. To set up the focus group of the EOF students, I spoke to an EOF administrator about how to contact students. He told me to attend an EOF leadership conference to find students with whom to speak. I attended a session given by student EOF leaders, and after the session, I conducted a focus group interview with four EOF student leaders, lasting about 25 minutes.

In the other three focus groups, I identified the current president of the student organizations, and e-mailed them about coming to a council meeting to speak to a group of students. For the University College Council, I conducted the focus groups with six students who were present at the meeting, which lasted about 30 minutes. The Douglass Council President asked that I come prior to one of their meetings, so I conducted a focus group interview with three students prior to a meeting, which lasted about 40 minutes. Finally, I came prior to a weekly Cook/SEBS council meeting, and interviewed five students who agreed to come early and be interviewed.

#### *Faculty Online Questionnaires*

Finally, online faculty questionnaires were administered. Once faculty members were identified to take part in these questionnaires, the Vice President of Undergraduate Education sent an e-mail to these 90 faculty members in early January to complete the online questionnaire, which they were asked to complete by January 30, 2009. The faculty

questionnaires answers were completely confidential, though they were asked to provide the name of their department as well as whether or not they served on a TUE task force. Twenty-three faculty members completed the online survey, for a response rate of 26%. Sixteen faculty members were from the School of Arts and Sciences, and seven were from either the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy; School of Management and Labor Relationships; School of Communication, Information, and Library Sciences; Mason Gross School of the Arts; Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy; or School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. Ten of these faculty members served as representatives to the TUE task force at some time, nine reported not having served on a TUE task force, three did not say whether or not they did, and one faculty member was not sure whether he or she had served on the TUE task force or a Middle States-related committee.

### *Protocols*

During administrator and student focus group interviewing, a “standardized open-ended interview” (Patton, 2002) was used. Questions were already created, and given to the participants ahead of time, but the participants were able answer questions in whatever way deemed appropriate. The interviewees were also asked to talk about anything else that seemed important, with regard to TUE and changes at RUNB.

#### *Administrator Interview Protocol*

For the most part, administrators were asked the following questions, in addition to questions that were more relevant to their specialization:

- What is your position, and job responsibilities within the university?
- What changes have you and your department/staff undergone as a result of the TUE?
- What have been your impressions so far of the TUE changes?
- What short term impacts have you seen from the TUE (positive and/or negative)?
- Have you noticed any changes in student and/or faculty levels of engagement?

- What changes or impact have you observed regarding untraditional or underrepresented students at Rutgers?
- Do you know of any unexpected consequences of the TUE that should be examined?
- What data/reports are currently available that you know of for looking at impact of the TUE on faculty engagement, student engagement, elimination of roadblocks for students to access services, and/or the profile of incoming students?
- Can you think of any questions you would like included in interviews/surveys of faculty/staff/students regarding recent changes and how they have been affected?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share about the changes that have been taking place at Rutgers, or a desire for further changes?

### *Student Focus Group Protocol*

Students in the focus groups were asked a combination of these questions, and were also encouraged to speak freely about their experiences as students before and after the transformation:

- What do you know about the Transformation of Undergraduate Education?
- What are your experiences with the Transformation of Undergraduate Education?
- Tell me about your experience as a student in the (X) group? What do you feel about your program and the changes made to your program?
- What changes, if any, have you noticed in the way the university is run or student services are delivered?
- Are you having any difficulty in figuring out who to talk to about various problems you might be happening?
- How much contact do you have with faculty outside of the classroom? Has this changed at all?
- What experiences have you had with Learning Communities, First-year Seminars, research opportunities, and what are your opinions of the these experiences?
- What experiences have you had with academic services, such as student support services, career services, academic advising?
- What experiences have you had with student life services, such as counseling, residential life, student life?
- What suggestions do you have to improve how student services are run at Rutgers?
- What services have aided you to remain a student at Rutgers?
- Where do you go for support in the university? How do you engage with the university?
- Given your time and energy limitations, how can the university better address your support needs?
- To what extent do you feel a sense of belonging to Rutgers? And how important is it for you to be a feel of a group, other than SAS?
- What suggestions do you have about how to improve student engagement in the university, and how to build community?
- How do you anticipate the new economic problems affecting you as a Rutgers student?



- What suggestions or changes do you have for improving undergraduate education at Rutgers?

#### *Online Faculty Questionnaire Protocol*

The online faculty questionnaire consisted of a few open-ended categories of questions:

- What are your overall impressions of the Transformation of Undergraduate Education (TUE)?
  - What changes have you noticed since the formation of SAS?
- What effects (positive or negative) have occurred for your department?
  - How has your experience in working with administrators and university offices changed?
- How would you characterize your department's involvement with undergraduates outside of academic settings?
  - In what ways do you and faculty in your department engage with undergraduates outside the classroom? How has this changed since TUE?
- In what ways has this faculty work with undergraduates been facilitated by the university?
  - What tactics do you think are effective in improving faculty involvement with undergraduates, outside the classroom?
- Since the TUE, to what extent is faculty in your department aware of where to refer students to meet their various needs (academic, counseling, advising, etc)? Is there confusion about this?
  - How can various offices at the university best *communicate* information about student services with your department?
- Are you aware of any difficulties that students are having in accessing the services they need? What are these "roadblocks"?
- What further changes would you like to see in undergraduate education in order to improve the relationships between faculty and undergraduates?

In the last question, faculty members were given the opportunity to add any other comments that pertained to the TUE that they had not addressed in previous questions.

#### *Collection of Existing Data*

During the time period of conducting administrator interviews, continual reviews were conducted of university websites, student newspapers, university publications, and other relevant public information, for information pertaining to the evaluation questions. These sources included the student newspaper *The Daily Targum*, *Focus Magazine: The Faculty and Staff Publication of Rutgers University*, *Rutgers Magazine* for alumni, various Rutgers websites,

such as the Rutgers Student Life website at [getinvolved.rutgers.edu](http://getinvolved.rutgers.edu), the university website on Transforming Undergraduate Education, the Office of Institutional Research's website and publications, as well as websites for each of the departments and programs that are a part of this study. Pertinent information was saved in Word documents, and was eventually uploaded and coded in Atlas.ti, along with the interview data.

### *National Survey of Student Engagement*

The recent Middle States report suggests using the National Student Survey of Engagement (NSSE; Kuh, 2004) to learn more about students who participate in learning communities, so this was another existing measurement instrument was used in this evaluation. The NSSE was administered at Rutgers in 2005, and again in 2008, so data from these two administrators were examined. The NSSE gauges levels and types of student engagement with their university, as well as the gains and benefits that students get out of their college experience. When a university takes part in the NSSE, first-year students and seniors are surveyed. The NSSE can be completed either online, on paper, or both. The NSSE survey includes 14 sections with a total of 80 questions, in addition to 20 items that are given to RUNB and other Association of American University (AAU) schools. Data comparing RUNB to three groups is available with the NSSE, the first being to peer schools (public AAU schools), the next being to institutions with the same Carnegie Classification, and the last comparison is to all schools participating in the 2008 NSSE.

Overall, five constructs of student engagement are measured, which are: enriching educational experiences, level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, supportive campus environment, and student-faculty interaction. Because the NSSE can be administered every few years, it can be used to track performance over time, as well as to compare the university to similar universities, and for university level analysis, with some

disaggregation possible. In 2005 and 2008, because of its size, RUNB gave the NSSE to a sample of freshmen and senior students. The rates of student response of those asked to participate, about one-third of students from the two classes, was around one-quarter.

#### *Other Data*

Several university offices contributed data that have already been collected, and in some cases, analyzed and summarized, for inclusion in this evaluation report.

*RUNB demographic data.* Data were collected from the website of Rutgers Institutional Research regarding the demographics of first-year and transfer students in all of the past few years. The demographic data include information about race, gender, age, residency, major, and college. These data are broken down by Rutgers-New Brunswick, Camden, and Newark, and by the university level. They are also broken down by students who applied, who were admitted, and who were enrolled. A lot of information was also available regarding the funding sources given to students, such as EOF grants, financial aid, scholarships, and state and Pell grants, student loans, and work study, and on many other topics such as staff and faculty profiles, facility use, class size, and budgets.

*University College demographic data.* The dean of University College, as one of her first activities, collected demographic data on University College students, to learn more about the population of nontraditional students being served by UC. These data include the counts of new University College Community and continuing University College students in each class, students' age, race, residency status, racial and ethnic information, enrollment status (full or part-time, transfer, non-matriculated), majors, GPAs, and their percent of attrition. Data were also collected regarding which majors students could have finished taking only classes at night, over the last ten years.

*Douglass Residential College demographic data.* The dean of Douglass Residential College also gathered demographic data on students, for the first two years of students joining the DRC. Data were collected on the numbers of first-year and transfer students, racial and ethnic information, in state students, the percent who had received Rutgers Merit awards, who are part of the Bunting program for adult women students, who were in the top 5% of their graduating classes, who are in the EOF program, who are in the SAS Honors Program, and final GPA data. Most of these data were also collected from non-DRC RUNB students, as a comparison group.

*Residence Life survey executive report.* Residence Life administers an online survey every couple of years to its residence, to assess information such as the levels of student satisfaction, and areas of needed improvement. This information can be reported by campus, dorm, and floor, and can be compared to similar universities, and longitudinally. In November of 2007, 3,598 students completed the survey, for a response rate of 40.8%. In November of 2008, 4,627 students completed the survey, for a response rate of 52.1%.

*Byrne Family First-year Seminars surveys of students and faculty, other data.* After each semester, the director of the Byrne Family First-year Seminars administers surveys to students and faculty taking part in these seminars. Students are asked questions regarding their participation in the course, what the course has enabled them to do, how the professors were, what they have done outside of class because of the seminar, and their personal interests as a result of the seminar, and their anticipated future relationship with their professors. Faculty instructors are asked to answer “one thing I have learned through teaching the seminar”, and many Likert survey questions. Another piece of Byrne seminar information that was used was a spreadsheet tracking all instructors that ever taught or planned to teach a Byrne course, with the name of the course, the semester(s) it was taught, and instructor’s home department and

school. Additional information about what level of professor or role within the university was collected, using the university people search website.

*First-year Interest Group surveys of students.* The FIG director in the Office of Academic Engagement also collects a lot of information on student satisfaction with the course, FIG instructor (who are also undergraduates) open-ended reflections of their experiences facilitating the course, student GPA data, and the numbers of types of FIGS that have been taught over the past few years. Because FIGS were originally a Rutgers College program, it has data from the past few years on student satisfaction with the course.

*Discovery Houses survey of students.* The Discovery House program also collects data from students to assess its programs. It administers surveys to students who take part on field trips through their Discovery House, as well as of Dinner and Dialogue events. Either the attendance or response rate for these events is low. Overall surveys of student experience are also administered at the end of the first semester. Student testimonials regarding Discovery Houses are also available on the Discovery House website.

*Rutgers Learning Center use data.* The Rutgers Learning Centers collect a lot of information on the students that utilize the centers. Students are also sent surveys to assess the success of the Learning Center programs they took part in. Some of these data were collected and included in the results section.

*SSS tutoring use data.* Student Support Services collects information on the number of hours of tutoring it provides its students. This information was collected and included in the Results section.

*Student Life event attendance data.* Student Life keeps track of the numbers of students attending its events. Data regarding student participation in 2007-2008 Student Life events were obtained by its director, and is included in the Results section.

*Honors Program data in newsletter.* Each semester, the Dean of the SAS Honors Program writes a newsletter to students and faculty regarding the progress of the Honors Program. Information was taken from the newsletters of the first three semesters since the TUE. Data were collected on the numbers of students admitted to the Honors Program.

*Aresty Research Center executive report.* The director of the Aresty Research Center compiles an annual report of progress each year. Information was taken directly from the June 2008 report of the 2007-2008 school year, which was obtained from the program director. This information included the number of applications to the Aresty Research Assistant program and the Aresty Summer Science Research Program for the past four years, the number of accepted, the number of faculty participating as mentors, and other information. Information from student surveys of satisfaction was also collected, as well as student participation in the annual research symposium information. Aresty also tracks student enrollment in independent research, as well as the amounts of funding that have been awarded to students through the Aresty Research Center.

### *Data Analysis*

A general inductive data analysis approach (Thomas, 2006) was taken to analyze the data from this evaluation. Several analytic strategies underlie a general inductive approach:

- Data analysis is guided by the evaluation objectives, which identify domains and topics to be investigated. The analysis is carried out through multiple readings and interpretations of the raw data, the inductive component. Although the findings are influenced by the evaluation objectives or questions outlined by the researcher, the findings arise directly from the analysis of raw data, not from apriori expectations or models.
- The primary mode of analysis is the development of categories from the raw data into a model or framework. This model contains key elements and processes identified and constructed by the evaluator during the coding process.
- The findings result from multiple interpretations made from the raw data by the evaluators who code the data. Inevitably, the findings are shaped by the assumptions and experiences of the evaluators conducting the study and carrying out the data

analysis. For the findings to be useful, the evaluator must make decisions about what is more important and less important in the data (Thomas, 2006, p. 239-240).

Following this guideline, the data analysis procedures are discussed in this section.

#### *Interviews and Data Collected and Transcribed*

Interview and focus group information was analyzed in the following way. First, the interviews were tape-recorded with the consent of the participants, and the sound files were transcribed into Microsoft Word, soon after each interview was completed, by the interviewer. The questionnaire and emailed interview answers were formatted similar to the in-person interviews and were also saved as Microsoft Word documents. Any data collected from websites, newspaper articles, and other similar sources were also imported into Microsoft Word documents. These documents were then all saved as Rich Text Format documents, and were imported into Atlas.ti, for management purposes.

#### *Codes Generated and Data Coded*

Since I personally conducted each interview, transcribed all files, and coded every paragraph of data, I fully reviewed the data three times prior to serious analysis. This ongoing exposure to the data over a period of eight months, in addition to constant review of the overarching goals of the transformation and of the basic evaluation questions enabled me to generate a list of codes to look for in the data. I created an initial list of codes that I thought would be needed to manage the data and answer the evaluation questions, and added to this list as I continued to interview, transcribe, and systematically read through the data. These interviews and other documents were coded using Atlas.ti software, using codes that were developed to represent clusters of topics within each of the various evaluation questions. After the beginning of the coding process, and reflecting on the data, new codes were also generated along the way when interesting information arose, because it was important to look for and

document both intended and unintended consequences of the TUE. These emergent codes included “partnerships and collaborations”, “feelings of community”, and “use of databases and online systems.” These new codes were applied to interviews that I had already coded, using strategies such as text searches for those words. Following Creswell (1998), codes were grouped into categories based on patterns of responding, as well as by evaluation question. All of this was done before any results were analyzed and summaries were written.

*Data Generated by Code and Theme, Summarized*

Once the interviews were complete and the coding was finished, the next step taken was to create mini-headings under each evaluation question that would be addressed; these headings were developed using the names of codes, the Draft Charge of the TUE, which included a list of many areas that the university wanted to assess changes in, as well as other headings that emerged as data were being read that were important but not relevant to existing sections. Codes and data relevant to each heading under each evaluation question were queried and printed out or stored in Microsoft Word documents. The stacks and Word documents of quotes pertaining to each section of an evaluation question were read, with important information being highlighted. This highlighted information was then written into a summary of each section of each evaluation question representing as many points of view that were identified, using many direct quotes as well as paraphrasing of comments. The identification of themes, important points, changes needed, and outlying perspectives were a focus of the writing that appears in under each heading, under each evaluation question. While reading through data that informed one section of results, if a statement or quote came up that applied to another area, it was used in the relevant area immediately, or coded or marked so it would be noticed when writing future sections.



As I was summarizing the findings and applying these findings to answering an evaluation question, other themes that I had not previously thought of started coming to light. For example, I realized that in order to document and explain the elimination of roadblocks, much of this happened through the centralization process, leading to the need to describe the centralization process of each department, such as of Recreation Services. I went through the data from the code about centralization and determined what areas had been centralized, and then I needed to describe the centralization process and effects of each of these. In the example of describing Recreation Services, I did a text search in Atlas.ti to find every time someone mentioned “recreation” and I read through each instance and generated a summary from that, in addition to the entire interview from the Director of Recreation Services.

During the summarizing and writing process, sometimes sections were moved around within a chapter or to another chapter, if the section was more relevant to a different section. For example, the section about the Impact of Changes on Continuing Students was moved from the Chapter 5 on Attracting and Retaining High Quality Students, to Chapter 7 on What Has Been Done to Increase the Engagement of Students and Faculty, because a theme of this section on continuing students was about how some people believe some of them have become less engaged with the TUE, and what was learned had more to do with engagement than retaining students. Another change that was made was to combine the original two evaluation questions about student and faculty engagement into one chapter, because of the major overlap in the findings about student and faculty engagement. Finally, there was originally an evaluation question about the effects on underrepresented and nontraditional students, but this information was combined with the evaluation question about what has been done to attract and retain high quality students.

### *Member Checking*

Lincoln and Guba (1985) discuss the importance of assessing the trustworthiness of the results derived from qualitative data analysis, in terms of their credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability. Member checks were employed to ensure the credibility of the results. Most sections of the rough draft of the report were sent to an administrator who was in charge of the area written about, if an administrator was in charge of a particular topic covered in a section of the report. More than thirty sections were sent for checking with 27 administrators. This was considered an important step because much of the information that comprised a section came from the administrator in charge, so he or she was in a good position to check the section. This was done so administrators could check for inaccuracies in the report, and so they could contribute additional information they thought was useful or missing from the specifics that were provided. It is also thought that this process was helpful to administrators in giving them an advanced idea of the findings of this report, so they could begin to benefit from the information. The sections that were sent for these member checks included nearly every section in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven, without doing so for Chapters Four and Eight, because most of the information presented in them is the subjective opinions of many people, so the sections could not be verified by one person. It should also be noted that most of the results were shared with the Vice President of Undergraduate Education during the writing, but no changes were made based on this. Most changes, about content, statistics, and descriptive style made by administrators were incorporated into the final draft (See Appendix B for a list of which administrators checked which section, and for a description of what changes were made based on their suggestions).

During a final reading of the results, special attention was paid to whether each statement was justified and backed by evidence. Statements that are speculation are noted as

such, and statements are also attributed to administrators, websites, or where ever the information came from, to give the reader an accurate idea of the current state of programs and policies within the university.

#### *Faculty Questionnaire Data Analysis*

Data from online faculty questionnaires were downloaded into Excel spreadsheets, by question. This information was not coded like the administrator and student focus group interviews were, because most of the analysis of those data had already taken place. Instead, headings were created under the relevant evaluation questions with faculty responses to the corresponding survey questions. These responses are for the most part verbatim, with some shortened because of redundancy, and some spelling and grammar changes made. Redundant or irrelevant responses were eliminated, so the remaining quotes for each question represent novel ideas. This procedure was followed with most of the survey questions included. However, the answers to the faculty online questionnaire questions about overall impressions of the impact of the TUE, and the positive and negative impacts so far, were incorporated into relevant sections of the report, as there are no sections purely on impressions of changes, or positive or negative impacts, and were specified as faculty views, since most other direct quotes and sources of information were from administrators.

#### *Quantitative Data Analysis*

No quantitative data analysis was needed other than the calculation of some percentages related to the existing data that were collected. The numbers and statistics that appear in the results section is reported directly from existing data provided by various departments or internet sources.

## Chapter Four: Results Introduction

In order to answer each of the study's evaluation questions, which ask "what has been done to" improve various aspects of the university, this section begins with administrator accounts of the RUNB structure before the TUE and the benefits and negative results of this structure. Because this new university configuration came out of a previous context and culture that continue to shape its impact and reception, this chapter answers the first evaluation question "What was done to change the structure of the university, and what are people's impressions of these changes, considering the context and culture of Rutgers?" This chapter also includes an explanation of the demographics of Rutgers and the organization of RUNB.

In explaining what has happened to various aspects of the university as a result of the TUE, it must be understood that the majority of the data supporting these descriptions are the individual *impressions* of administrators, and some students and faculty. Each quote is the point of view of one person, though each view point likely represents the impressions of many other Rutgers affiliates. To the extent possible, each section includes multiple points of view and is supported by public sources such as Rutgers University publications, and data collected by administrative offices at Rutgers. However, it cannot be known from the data collected how prevalent each point of view is, only that it exists. Overall, each section describes variety of perspectives regarding the short term impact of the TUE on Rutgers.

### *Context of Evaluation*

The underlying university culture and the external pressures on the university, including the many concurrent events that have been taking place at the university, in the state of New Jersey, and in the rest of the country, are important contexts through which the outcomes of the TUE should be considered. Affecting the university directly was the recent turnaround and

success of its football team, the Scarlet Knights. The success of the football team has affected the number of students applying to the university, and how well known Rutgers has become. At the same time as the TUE, the university president pushed for an improvement in the diversity profile of incoming students for the 2007-2008, and the application of extra resources in this area has resulted in an incoming class for the 2008-2009 school year of which more than 50 percent of students consider themselves non-Caucasian (McCormick, 2008).

The state of New Jersey has concurrently been drastically cutting its education budget for the past few years. Sixty-six million dollars was cut from the Rutgers University budget for the 2007-2008 school year alone. Because this was also the first year of the restructured RUNB, administrators and others found it very difficult to attribute which changes resulted from budget cuts and which were related to the Transformation of Undergraduate Education. A senior administrator explained this predicament:

In fact, in the same month that Board of Governors adopted the recommendations to implement TUE, Governor Corzine recommended a 100 million cut to Rutgers' budget. And although we managed to get it reduced to 66 million, it was still the most gigantic budget cut in our history, which meant cutbacks in courses and sections and student services. So some of the ideals of undergraduate education were compromised because we didn't have the money to deliver the services. We did the reorganization, but the results of it were hurt. ... In other words, we had to cut back the delivery of services in some places for lack of funds even though that was in some ways counter to the spirit of the reorganization of undergraduate education. That year we ended up cancelling 400 courses and sections each semester, so students had a harder time getting courses they wanted when they wanted them. That was the opposite of what we intended. In some ways the budget cuts worked against the transformation. And it's sometimes hard to separate out which was the effect of what. If students observe this or that compared to pre-reorganization, it'll be a challenge to tease out what was caused by reorganization good or bad, and what was from the budget cuts which are usually bad. However, it is remarkable to me that in spite of the budget cuts, the university community, faculty staff and students moved ahead and made the changes.

Nationally, a recent economic downturn has also led to an increase in applications and enrollment in Rutgers (1,000 more students than expected enrolled in the university in 2008-2009). Taken together, Rutgers has transformed in many ways in the past few years, both

through controlled changes through the TUE and the commitment to expanding the diversity of the university, and through other uncontrollable influences such as that of the economy, the state funding, and an increasingly successful football team.

### *Rutgers' Demographic Context*

In the decision to study Rutgers University, and to compare it to other similar universities, the following attributes of Rutgers must be taken into account. According to the results of the 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Rutgers' first-year students are similar to its Dashboard Peers (other public Association of American Universities completing the NSSE in 2008) in their "age, gender, international status, enrollment status (full-time versus part-time), athletic status, and residential students." Senior students are similar in their "gender, international status, enrollment status, and athletic status." Rutgers first-year students are dissimilar with similar benchmark universities in the following ways: Rutgers has "more minority students, fewer Greek affiliations, fewer students receiving B+s or better, more first-generation students, more commuters, and more liberal arts focused students." Rutgers seniors are dissimilar to benchmark universities in the following ways: Rutgers "students are older, more minority students, more students starting college elsewhere, more presently enrolled part-time students, slightly fewer students receiving a B+ or better, more residential and off-campus students, fewer commuter students, more first-generation students, and more liberal arts focused students" (Rutgers, 2008b).

### *About Rutgers University- New Brunswick (RUNB)*

Prior to the TUE, RUNB consisted of four separate liberal arts colleges, which have all been combined into the School of Arts and Sciences. The largest original liberal arts college was Rutgers College, which started in 1766 as a college for white males. In its recent history, Rutgers College had the greatest numbers of applicants, and was the most selective. Its facilities were

spread over two campuses, Busch Campus and College Avenue Campus. Another original college was Douglass College, which began in 1918 as a college for women. In recent years, it was more popular for students to apply to Rutgers College, and therefore many women “settled” for enrollment in Douglass College. Douglass College had own students and campus. Livingston College began in 1969, and was created as a co-educational college with a commitment to diversity. It was located on Livingston Campus, which was a former army base and the campus was thought to be less attractive than the other New Brunswick campuses. University College was started in 1934, and was a college for adult and nontraditional students, and also was a college for transfer students. Its students historically have had a lower academic profile than the students in the other colleges. It did not have its own campus, but its central offices were located on College Avenue Campus. The final college that was directly affected by the TUE was Cook College, which began in 1921, and had its own campus, students, and faculty, until the TUE made the campus facilities available to students in the rest of the university. Cook College’s name became the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS).

In addition to SAS and SEBS, RUNB is currently home to the following schools to which students apply from high school: Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, Mason Gross School of the Arts, College of Nursing, Rutgers Business School, School of Communication, Information & Library Studies, and School of Engineering. Undergraduates can also apply to gain entrance into the following graduate schools in RUNB: Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology, Graduate School of Education, Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers Business School, School of Communication, Information & Library Studies, School of Management & Labor Relations, and the School of Social Work.

RUNB is physically divided into five different campuses, which are located in either Piscataway or New Brunswick, New Jersey. Located in Piscataway are the Livingston and Busch Campuses, which are separated from each other by Route 18, a large highway. These two campuses are separated from the other three in New Brunswick, New Jersey by the Raritan River. The College Avenue Campus (CAC) is across the river from Busch Campus, and is the most centrally located of the five campuses. It is separated from Cook and Douglass Campuses by downtown New Brunswick. Cook and Douglass campuses are located near to each other, but are considered different campuses for historical and functional purposes. There are ten bus routes that connect the five campuses, but it is possible to walk along bridges and through downtown New Brunswick among the campuses. Rutgers University also has two other campuses in New Jersey, in Newark and Camden. Because of the geographically separate nature of RUNB, centralizing offices into one location for services such as academic advising, recreation, or housing, is illogical. Discussion of “centralization” will therefore refer to the consolidation of the coordination of services, which used be duplicated in the five former colleges.

In 1981, the university underwent a restructuring process in which the separate faculty bodies for each liberal arts college were merged into the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS). Prior to this merger, there were several redundant departments represented in many of the liberal arts colleges, such as four separate Biology faculties. One administrator who was with RUNB at the time said,

With the faculty merger, there was a dramatic increase in parity between the faculties of different units, where previously, resources had been allocated very differently, there was different prestige, and there were huge inconsistencies in what a biology major here meant, versus there. It was a very rocky and difficult process, but within 2-3 years there was a very significant improvement in the quality of the undergraduate experience. That addressed the first half of the inconsistencies.

She believes that more of the inequities that existed from having four separate liberal arts colleges have been addressed with the current restructuring.



*Reflections about RUNB before the TUE*

The aim of this section is to briefly explain the cultural context of this evaluation.

Historically, the colleges that composed Rutgers were established at varying points since 1766, for varying reasons, and to serve varying populations. They were each incorporated into what was to become known as Rutgers University for various reasons. Therefore, the university “had traditions of decentralization, local autonomy, and collegial decision making [that were] basic to the culture. And added to that are issues of geographic dispersion and campus-based culture” (Rubin, 2008). Decisions were made to initiate the Transformation of Undergraduate Education because of many inequities, inefficiencies, and other difficulties experienced by university administrators, staff, faculty, and students, and confusion about the various components of Rutgers experienced by the community, as measured by a large independent study of people’s impressions of Rutgers University (Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc., 2004). In his 2005 speech to the university, President McCormick described the results of self-studies pertaining to internal and external views of Rutgers:

First, Rutgers is leaving opportunities on the table, the whole is less than the sum of its parts, [and] our achievements do not match our capacity... Second, Rutgers is hard to understand. It presents a confusing picture to those beyond our campuses and even to those who are here. Who among us has not grappled with the RU Screw, struggled to explain the graduation requirements of our colleges, or tried to tell a neighbor about how things work at Rutgers. Third, we are not as well organized as we should be to achieve our goals to allay the confusion about who we are” (McCormick, 2005).

One way to explain what the university was like prior to the initiation of its reorganization during the summer of 2006 is to describe the benefits and complications of university constituencies. In order to understand what is and is not perceived to be currently working well, a comparison of the past and present is needed. These difficulties were all also identified by the 2005 report, *Transforming Undergraduate Education: Report of the Task Force on Undergraduate Education of Rutgers- New Brunswick-Piscataway* (Rutgers, 2005), and should

not be considered an comprehensive list, but as points of comparison to the current system (see the Task Force on Undergraduate Education report for an exhaustive list of problems that needed to be addressed by the TUE).

### *Benefits of the Previous Structure*

Before the TUE, the various colleges enjoyed great autonomy and intimacy, and their accountability was to their college community. This often worked well for the colleges because administrators did not have to spend too much time reporting out to other administrators. Also, most services to students were contained within the college system. For example, within Rutgers College there were administrators or staff members who coordinated academics, advising, counseling, student services, and non-academic issues that students wanted help with. There were administrators or staff members who ran student activities, residence halls, the student centers, the physical buildings, and the employees who worked there. One administrator reflected on what she thought were the advantages of working in this small structure:

Because we all reported to the same dean, we had a relationship with each other, and we were able to work with each other because we all reported to the same person. We all were in the same room at executive meetings; when a program had to be planned each component was involved in it. No component planned a program without talking to the others even if it seemed very specific. And at Rutgers College we probably had the most separate structure, in that there was one of us for each of these, because of the size. At other colleges, the same people played multiple roles, which I think made it even more so. So there was a sense of unity but also an easy way of working together.

One university-wide administrator who has a long history with the university reflected on the original purposes of the federated structure of the university, and how that positively affected the culture of the university prior to the TUE:

The argument that [Rutgers President] Mason Gross [gave], when he originally established the federated structure, was that it provided for smaller environments for students to be able to learn in learning communities that were more controlled in size and access for them. He really brought this with him from Cambridge/Oxford, and

believed it was a structure that would work when he implemented it in the 1960s. ... So he was seeing all of these little academic communities coming together, [but] his vision was never accomplished. But the overall concept of the structure forced the development of Student Affairs in a way that was more intimate for students than existed at larger institutions. That echos on now, in the new structure.

One direct effect of the specialized liberal arts colleges was that the services within the colleges were tailored to the population of students being served. One positive advantage of this system were the power and capabilities of University College, which served nontraditional students. University College spent a lot of time lobbying various departments with its own money to offer evening and weekend classes for its nontraditional students and to reserve sections or space in sections for its students who could only attend class during certain hours.

Another advantage of the previous structure of the colleges is that some people believed that faculty engagement with students at some colleges was very high. Cook College, in particular, was thought to have had a long tradition of faculty engagement with students, because the college always had a faculty directly associated with it (unlike the four liberal arts colleges who shared the FAS). Some administrators thought that the former faculty Fellows system, in which faculty members affiliated with one or more of the liberal arts colleges, encouraged faculty engagement and participation within a college or colleges of their choice. At the same time, other administrators disagreed with the effect of the faculty fellows system, believing that faculty had little incentive or capacity to engage with students outside the classroom because of the structural separation of the colleges and the FAS.

Another often-mentioned advantage to the former college system were the traditions that took place in each of the former colleges. College traditions were unifying activities for students who attended and lived on the campus of each college. Cook College had traditions such as a Leadership Breakfast held every month that was very well-attended, a Responsible Drinking Happy Hour, and other events.

### *Complications of Previous Structure*

Aside from these positive attributes of the federated college structure, there were a lot of commonly mentioned complications with the prior system related to the inequities among the resources provided to students at each college, the inconsistencies of policies at the various colleges, the inefficiencies and repeated programs among the colleges, the lack of staff or administrators who were experts in their areas and instead had a wide array of responsibilities, to name the major areas.

The many inequities among college resources and programs provided were described by interviewees. For example, Rutgers College had two student centers, on Busch and College Avenue campuses, and it earned a lot more money than the other colleges because of the revenue from these popular student centers, providing the college a greater source of funding for events. Another example of an inequity was that graduate Student counselors working for the various counseling centers were paid differently depending on which college they worked for, thus creating a hierarchy of which center was better to work for. Also, the only parent association that was functioning to a high degree was the Cook parents association, leaving many other parents without this resource. These inequities were often thought to be the result of Rutgers College being the “elite college”, causing students at the other colleges to feel like “second-class citizens.” One administrator explained:

What was difficult to explain in the past was why the university had four liberal arts colleges in the same regional campus, and the fact that the competition for each differed caused a situation that no matter what we said, and how much we told people it was all the same because there was one Faculty of Arts and Sciences, people didn’t believe us because the competition was different. So people who got into Rutgers College, which was the most competitive of the liberal arts colleges, they were excited. If they didn’t get into Rutgers College, many opted not to come to the university. Others that didn’t for financial reasons who chose to come to Douglass or Livingston felt like second class citizens, and they were actually made to feel that way by the people here in the university.

The inconsistencies among policies at various colleges were also an often-mentioned problem with the former college system. Many administrators relayed that “before the TUE you had to ask students which college they went to, because if the student was a student at your college, there wasn’t a whole lot you could do to assist them.” The inconsistency in policies among colleges could be seen prior to students attending the RUNB. Each of the colleges and campuses ran very different operations with regard to admissions, and competed against each other with the scholarships they offered. There were different criteria to be admitted and retained in the colleges, and often the colleges competed with each other for the same students. After admission to one of the RUNB colleges, some examples of inconsistent policies were that each college had its own residential life staff, and policies and procedures varied by campus; each college had its own Honors Program, with varying standards for admission and programming, such as that only Rutgers College had a faculty mentoring program for first-year students. Judicial Affairs were handled at each college, which operated under the same university code of conduct, but each college also had the opportunity to create its own code of student conduct. Additionally, students often did not have access to the programming at other colleges. For example, Cook students who were science majors could not live on Douglass in all women’s housing and take advantage of much of the special interest housing that existed there. One administrator summed up the inconsistent college policies in this way:

I think the confusion that occurred for students was that you could have four students in the same classroom with the same major requirements but all admitted under four different admissions criteria. Their major requirements were the same, but their graduation requirements were all different. And even though you were four women, you couldn’t all live together even though you were close and connected and wanted to further develop your academic interests and you couldn’t do that unless you moved off campus. It didn’t facilitate student connections, student learning. Who better to have living together than four students with the same major who wanted to support each other academically, but they couldn’t do that because they were from four colleges.

The problems with the federated structure also often led to the inefficient use of resources, through the repetition of resources, and lack of coordinated collaboration among colleges. Under the former system, basic student affairs programs and services were handled by the undergraduate colleges, so there was a separate residence life program for each of the undergraduate colleges, with the exception of University College which did not have a residence life program. There were separate recreation programs, counseling programs, student life programs, programming associations, orientation programs, student involvement programs and student governments.

Originally, faculty made many of the decisions that resulted in the complex system of rules and undocumented policies that strangled RUNB and led to the “RU Screw.” One senior administrator explained some of the reasoning for this complexity:

There was this thing organized called Faculty Fellows; faculty volunteered to be faculty fellows of one of the undergraduate colleges, or none. Some were faculty who were fellows of every college, and others were intent on their research, and were not fellows of any college. So you had these rump, increasingly inactive bodies of voluntary faculty determining all of the things that real active faculties are supposed to determine, graduation requirements, etc. You also had those fellows setting rules. If you were at Cook you couldn’t major in history. If you were a Douglass College student, you could major in electrical engineering, but you couldn’t live on Busch, you had to live on Douglass. So- if you live here you can’t do this, if you’re a member of that college you can’t do that. The same things applied in the areas of student services and student life. If you are a Rutgers College student, your club can’t use a facility in the Douglass College Student Center. If you had a mental health issue, you can only avail yourself of the services available to your college, which may or may not be adequate to your particular problems. So it had to give.

Another difficulty attributed to the former system was that in the smaller colleges one person often had many types of responsibilities, and therefore was not always an expert at each area of responsibility; they were generalists and not specialists. This complication played out to the disadvantage of many students because there was no centralized office of Disability Services. Prior to TUE there were liaisons at most of the colleges and campuses, with about 15 different coordinators, many of which had Disability Services added to their list of

responsibilities. Therefore, because of individual's lack of expertise in this area, there were many mistakes made with student accommodation information, and often students would not be approved for their modifications in time for tests.

Explaining the differences among the colleges was often very time consuming and confusing, according to many administrators. One administrator said,

You'd recruit and people would say, 'I want to go to "main campus."' What they meant was that they wanted to go to Rutgers College, because they didn't know how to express what they were looking for. What happened most of the time is you'd spend three-quarters of the time you could have done to recruit to come to the institution, explaining the structure and explaining how they apply to be a student here!

This problem in communicating the structure of RUNB was thought to discourage some students from applying to the university's colleges. It is also related to the lack of a cohesive message from the university:

There were five different messages about everything. So for everybody new coming to the university- if you say the same thing in five different ways- it's very confusing. There was no cohesive message about the values of the institution, and what was important, because all being talked about in five different ways. So, my notion of that is, if things are too complicated, students won't work that hard to figure it out. They'll just choose not to get involved, or they'll shut down or they'll get by or whatever.

The former system was not only sometimes prohibitive to the participation and engagement of students, but to innovation of administrators. Because of this complicated system, university administrators often mentioned needing to spend a lot of time and energy negotiating the configuration of the colleges. Some university members believed that the system was prohibitive to starting new programs and activities. One administrator shared that,

Up until the reorganization with TUE, I could estimate spending 20% of my time and energy negotiating the issues of the organizational structure. If RUTV is broadcasting to all of the residence halls, we had to work through four different residence hall leadership structures to be able to do projects, to do services, to provide programs, and in many ways, it complicated things so much, you ended up not pursuing things that could be very good for the institution simply because you couldn't get approval from everyone to do it. If you decided to do something that was very useful, it ended up being so mangled in the process of getting through the discussions and politics that

existed between the colleges or the various structures beyond the colleges on the campus, it would not be recognizable.

According to another administrator, “I think there were tremendous inefficiencies and duplication of efforts. I feel like we could never be truly innovative in the old model. There were multiple ones of us in the same position all maintaining the same wheel.” Another example of the lack of coordination and duplication of resources was in the dissemination of information about the New Jersey state mandate for meningitis shots for all on-campus students. Instead of one person at RUNB coordinating the communication to parents and developing the procedures for tracking the meningitis shots, this was done several times over at each of the colleges. One administrator believed that this type of duplication of activities prevented “true innovation” and prevented innovative activities such as Learning Communities from being created, because they would only have been able to be open to students of one college.

### *The Process of Transforming the University*

This section is also not designed to explicitly explain how the changes were brought about after the President’s recommendations in March, 2006, to where we are today, but to briefly discuss some of the often-mentioned challenges that came with instituting such a large transformation over a relatively short period of time, in order to provide context to the current impacts of the transformation. The brief history of the TUE according to the TUE website is this:

The effort to transform undergraduate education at Rutgers’ largest campus began in 2004, when President Richard L. McCormick and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Philip Furmanski appointed the Task Force on Undergraduate Education and charged the group with examining all aspects of the undergraduate experience at Rutgers–New Brunswick. A year later, a major report was issued: *Transforming Undergraduate Education: Report of the Task Force on Undergraduate Education at Rutgers–New Brunswick/Piscataway*. The 178-page report included a comprehensive series of recommendations covering all aspects of the undergraduate experience, including student recruitment and admissions, core educational requirements, facilities, student life, and the academic structure of the university. After a lively and thought-provoking discussion about the report’s far-reaching proposals, President McCormick issued recommendations to reinvigorate the undergraduate experience at Rutgers by



creating a more satisfying, more coherent, less frustrating, less confusing, and more rational academic environment for all students. On March 10, 2006, the Board of Governors approved President McCormick's recommendations. Over the next year and a half, these recommendations were implemented, culminating with the enrollment of the first students in the new School of Arts and Sciences in the fall of 2007 (RUNB, 2008).

During this process, Rutgers constituents shared their views at TUE working groups, and the administration wrote a number of letters to the university community to keep everyone abreast of the changes.

The university allotted about a year and a half between the recommendations being approved by the Board of Governors before the first class of School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) students arrived on campus at the end of August, 2007. In that time, staff and administrators had to prepare for deadlines such as the admissions cycle for 2007 beginning in Fall Semester 2006, designing the new curriculum for incoming students before classes started, and creating new policies such as what the new graduation requirements would be, to share with prospective students. At the same time, new office infrastructures were created, administrators and staff learned new jobs and met new coworkers, and common goals were decided on. Many offices had to be unified during this time, such as Psychological and Counseling Services, the EOF programs, the Honors Programs. Four previously separate liberal arts colleges—Douglass College, Livingston College, University College, and Rutgers College—all merged into one School of Arts and Sciences, while simultaneously preparing to serve the new class of students and to transition the existing students to the new structure, because these colleges ceased to exist. The transformation, overall, resulted in 152 jobs changes, and 140 people moved to new offices.

Many challenges were addressed during this transition period. One senior level administrator explained:

What we've come to understand is because every program and every college operated under... their own set of policies... that we don't have a reservoir of experience and knowledge to draw on of how things are "normally done" at the institution. Therefore,

it's forced us into writing, reconsidering, and analyzing how things were down, and rewriting policies or forming policies for the first time, to develop a sense of continuity and consistency among the five campuses. There are two problems with that: one is simply the organizational mechanism to do that much at one time, pulling that many meetings together, getting people to write the policies, and getting people to agree on it is very time consuming. And secondly, the discovery in the situation that there is no policy or guidance on how to handle it and it had relied only on judgment [meant] we needed some broad policy guidance to help us in some areas.

The reorganization and new policy making were complicated by a lot of uncertainty at all levels of the university. Relatively minor hitches included not knowing what letterhead (e.g. Rutgers College or SAS) messages to students should be written on, while larger uncertainties loomed, such as the major issue that staff members did not know what their jobs would be after the transformation. One senior administrator also explained this confusion:

Certainly what's been difficult and hard to communicate have been all of the job changes and job title changes, and office changes. And who is responsible for what, how that's being changed. I think they're getting a handle on that now, and all of those things are being clarified. But I'd say that was one of the most difficult components for me was to know who was responsible, or physically where they were, because people changed offices.

Many people were working in new positions, and they had varying experiences with the requirements of these positions, depending on which colleges they had been a part of in the past. One administrator described this process and her strategy to pull everyone together:

I was only person who interviewed everybody. Everyone didn't know backgrounds, philosophies, commitment to position, why did you pursue the position; we just didn't know one another. So there are basics that occur in staff development. (What did you do to bring people together?) We did a lot, retreats. We started last June- 2 days last June, 2 in January, 2 days in June, we do frequent department meetings. Retreats were the most revealing. I think it was in January when we realized there were these past histories and cultures of things that were keeping people still maintaining either thoughts about another person, or because they once had a supervisor who expected this, they didn't know it was okay to do this. There was all this history. So we did a letting go exercise: write it on a piece of paper and throw it away. The past is gone now, and this is a new beginning. I think some of our retreats have been really excellent, in development as a brand new group.

Another strategy to facilitate the structural changes was to organize a series of Thursday lunches where various university offices took turns each week introducing the new office, the

employees, and their new roles and functions, to other offices in attendance. An administrator said that these lunches were organized because,

What's happening is we're calling the people we knew from the past, because they'll get us to the right person. Well that's not efficient, that's not a good use of their new roles. And we're not utilizing people with new responsibilities. We need to develop new colleagues and relationships. No one has had time to do that, because it's been such an intense year. I think we all need to realize that we need to develop all new working relationships and a whole new body of knowledge to truly be able to advise, mentor, and guide the students.

Campus Information Services also held information sessions for staff about the new structure of the university, in the summer prior to Fall Semester 2007.

There was some opposition to the changes that were suggested and implemented. One issue that arose was that some staff members felt that non-faculty members did not play a wide enough role in designing the new system, because administrative staff did not have the tenure security that faculty members enjoyed. Therefore, the perspectives and expertise of non-faculty members may be missing in the structure of the new system. Also, students at Douglass, Cook, and Livingston were vocal opponents to the changes at various points in the progression of the transformation. Douglass College students fought to maintain the qualities of Douglass College so that its women could continue to live and study together, so the university designed and established the Douglass Residential College to address these needs.

Despite these often-mentioned oppositions, the majority of the people interviewed for this study were in favor of the changes as they were designed because they felt transformation was very necessary. However, many also believed that the execution of the changes has often been rocky, perhaps due to some lack of project management or the foresight of complications. Some administrators used metaphors to describe this experience: "It was like designing a plane after take off... You just hoped that the design came together before it landed or crashed, and that's how I felt my first year." Another administrative office used the analogy of the

transformation as “building a train while speeding down the tracks.” An administrator continued, “This is completely valid, I can’t emphasize how much of what we are doing is a work in progress. I don’t think that was intentional. I think it was the nature of the way that they tried to put this process into execution.” Another point of view was that the TUE changes took place over too short a time period. One faculty member said, “My overall impression is that it was put on an accelerated timetable. The speed at which it was undertaken took a tremendous toll on the mid-level administrators. Many assistant deans went without vacation, worked 60-, 70-hour weeks to make this happen.” An administrator shared the same viewpoint: “The energy and time people spent last year is not sustainable. People were working 12-14 hours a day constantly. We’re too small of a staff to pull ourselves in too many directions. I want people to have a quality of life and for people to feel healthy and loving what they do.”

A common statement following a description of the complications faced during the main portion of the transformation was that while the situation was very hectic for the first year, the system is already much more organized, and the focus is beginning to turn to improvement and innovation, now that the basic structure is in place. Many administrators noted, sometimes regrettably, that once the students who were members of the former college system graduate, the system will be far less complicated. Many administrators also believe that some components of the transformation are still experiencing change, and that the transformation is ongoing.

Other administrators expressed how impressed they were by how much the university has changed, mostly for the better, in such a short period of time, especially considering that each college had its own culture and way of doing things; the old systems were quickly adjusted to serve the greater good. One administrator who had been part of the initial task force said,

I think it is amazing. You have to understand that the structure all started with seven people sitting in a conference room in Milledoler Hall. That group met quite a bit- a group of staff, faculty, and some administrators. Over the course of the meetings a vision was developed on how to reenergize the campus, and link faculty closer to the

university and the lives of undergraduates. From a bunch of people sitting around in a room and thinking what can we do, to having it accepted by the whole TUE committee ... the President and Board of Governors, and having it put in place last summer, it's been an amazing transformation. It was a leap of faith for a lot of people that it was going to be a good thing to do. Because there is a lot of emotion attached to the colleges, and a lot of good things about the colleges, we just wanted to make sure we simplified the structure a little bit and keep some of the foundational good things. And some of them I think we've done a good job of keeping, and some we've lost along the way and need to pull back in again. I think for the most part it's been amazing what's happened in such a short period of time.

Some administrators still believe that the TUE did not go far enough in making changes to the undergraduate system in New Brunswick, perhaps because of the continued existence of some federated programs, such as individual school Honors and EOF Programs.

To some extent, the transformation is ongoing, because administrators, students, staff, and faculty members are still adjusting to the changes and are getting used to the new system. Some issues have also come out of the transformation that people would like to address going forward, suggesting there are more changes to come. Other promised changes have not taken place as of yet, such as implementing a permanent SAS Core Curriculum, and embracing the new culture of SAS and each of New Brunswick's campuses.

### *Overall Impressions of the Short Term Impacts of the TUE*

Administrators were each asked about their positive and negative impressions of the short term impacts of the TUE. Because these issues will be described in later chapters, this is a list of these impressions.

#### *Administrator Impressions of Positive Impacts*

Administrators observed and noted many positive impacts since the TUE related to the goal of attracting and retaining high quality students, including underrepresented and nontraditional students:

- The university has been able to improve the profile of incoming students, both based on academics and diversity indicators, with the TUE

- There has been an increased interest in Rutgers by prospective students with the TUE (though probably for a variety of reasons, including the success of the football team)
- RUNB itself is now receiving prospective student attention, because there is less competition among the individual schools
- There is an increased focus on looking at all students holistically, including realizing that the economy will affect not just nontraditional students but all students; university literature and communication is also trying to target and encompass all students, not just with special sections for nontraditional students
- Students in any school can now be part of the DRC or the UCC, if they choose
- Prospective students can understand the university much better with its new configuration, and they no longer receive competitive information from each liberal arts college
- The new configuration has allowed for the more strategic management of scholarships and for students to be notified that they have received a scholarship before they decide whether or not to attend Rutgers
- The Emergency Education Assistance Fund is now centralized and is available to all RUNB students
- There is increased student loyalty to Rutgers University, instead of to the individual colleges
- EOF students feel a new unity now that the college EOF programs have been consolidated

Administrators observed many positive impacts related to eliminating roadblocks and inequities and making services consistent for all students:

*Reduced inequities:*

- There is no longer a class system created by the four liberal arts colleges; non-Rutgers College students no longer have a reason to be looked at like “second class citizens”, because all liberal arts students will be SAS students
- Administrators and staff from the separate colleges came to understand the existing inequities among the colleges, once they started working with other staff members and conversing about their experiences
- The programs offered to students across the campuses are the same, rather than some campuses having more money and programs and others having less
- All student organizations are funded under a similar model; student organizations do not have to go to each college council to request money

*Improved consistency of services for all students:*

- Making consistent policies for all Student Affairs programs and services has been a major accomplishment of the TUE
- Students are all following the same judicial and academic integrity policies, meaning that some students will no longer “get off easier” than others for violating policies
- Students can go for advising on any campus and be served, considering the expansion of Academic Services to Busch Campus, and that all services are available to all students
- High quality recreation services have been expanded to all students and campuses
- Student can live with friends on any campus from any school

- Counseling services have been improved with the TUE, partially because of the centralization, and partially because of their increased funding; a triage model was established so students are seen and assessed quickly
- Usage of some services increased with the TUE, such as Recreation Services, and Health and Counseling Services, suggesting that the lack of barriers to these services has been positive

*Improved coordination and other benefits from centralization:*

- There has been an increased flow of information around university offices because of the coordination provided by the Deans of Students
- The centralization of many services has forced the development of improved IT services so that staff members around the university can have access to the same data on all students
- A Mental Health Task Force was established and helps to monitor troubled students
- There have been many improvements within Disability Services in coordinating services for students
- Less time is being spent by administrators and staff in navigating the multiple college structure to organize events
- There are reports of improved services to transfer students now that this is organized centrally
- There are improved working relationships among many programs, such as SSS and EOF, because of new structure
- One SAS dean has observed that SAS students are very aware of their academic requirements and standing, whereas this was not so much the case before the TUE
- There is increased respect for Sororities and Fraternities because of their new home under Student Life
- The centralization process has been noted as a good opportunity for administrators to compare best practices and share ideas
- Some administrators view gaining new colleagues in their new roles and offices as a benefit
- Some administrators have been excited by their new jobs and their new outlet for creativity

Administrators have mentioned many positive impacts related to improving student engagement with cocurricular activities and with faculty:

- More funding is available for faculty to use to engage students outside of the classroom, through cocurricular activities
- The programming that has been developed by Campus Deans has been well-attended and exciting
- Faculty members are being taught how to engage undergraduates in their research endeavors more, through the new Office of Academic Engagement
- The development of Learning Communities and Living Learning Communities is much easier to do with the Office of Academic Engagement and simplified university structure

- The creation of the Office of Distinguished Fellowships helped four Rutgers students to win Gates Fellowships, and the increased understanding that Rutgers students could win prestigious awards
- The development or expansion of programs like FIGS, Discovery Houses, Learning Communities, and Byrne seminars, to increase student engagement, has taken place after the TUE
- The Vice President of Undergraduate Education now serves on the Tenure and Promotion committee, and has some input in rewarding professors who are good educators
- The process of developing the TUE brought a lot of faculty into the change process, and got them very engaged
- A number of faculty who were not previously engaged with undergraduates are now teaching these students in Byrne seminars
- Departments now are more proactive in maintaining their student majors because of all-funds budgeting procedures
- The first university-wide convocation has helped new students to unify around a common experience

#### *Administrator Impressions of Difficulties and Challenges*

Administrators' impressions of difficulties and challenges that were related to the TUE change process were:

- A number of administrators noted that they started their positions late in the summer of 2007, or late in general, allowing them little time to prepare for the Fall Semester 2007 when the colleges were consolidated
- Trying to figure out how to centralize administrator of services while still providing some campus-based services, such as in counseling, has been challenging
- Figuring out who to talk to about various problems, because many roles changed, was difficult for a long time; at the same time, since many people had new roles they were often unable to answer questions or solve these problems
- A lack of academic dean and Student Affairs administrator input into TUE changes created some resentment
- Staff cultures and previous job experiences at the former colleges made the switch to SAS or university-wide positions a difficult adjustment because of the new focus
- A couple administrators mentioned being "caught off guard on how much work it was to create an infrastructure when you're creating a brand new department"

Administrators' impressions of difficulties and challenges related to attracting and retaining high quality students, including underrepresented and nontraditional students were:

- There has been confusion about whether nontraditional students should go to the SAS dean for nontraditional students or to UCC for academic advising
- There was not enough attention to the population of nontraditional students at the university in the TUE



- Dealing with changes and the simultaneous budget cuts has been especially difficult
- There has been increased demand for housing, because of RUNB' increased enrollment, and perhaps because of the increased flexibility regarding where students can live and with whom, that has caused an on-campus housing shortage, forcing many students to live in a hotel or in study lounges

Administrators' impressions of difficulties and challenges related eliminating roadblocks,

reducing equities, and improve student services through centralization were:

- Some administrators have the impression that the overall bar has been lowered for student services so that they are all equal, as part of the TUE change process, but that this bar will rise eventually
- There was initial confusion of where to go for services experienced by continuing students; a few administrators report still getting phone calls from some confused students, even into Fall Semester 2008
- The new housing lottery system was very complex to establish and run, because of the variety of housing considerations that exist
- The new configuration of Academic Services has not allowed Deans to have much of a say in academic policies; they can only enforce the policies
- It has been challenging figuring out how to organize and pay for the same events that were held in the past, with the new organization and budgeting systems
- There is concern that some students may not gain housing near their classes, such as students in Pharmacy and Engineering, though they would have in the past before the open housing system
- The new size of the SAS population has led some former administrators from the smaller colleges challenged to determine how provide student services to such a large group
- Much of the programming that was put into place in the first year after the TUE was piecemeal and lacking the thoughtful effort it deserved, because administrators were so taxed with the logistics of organizing and creating a new infrastructure

Administrators' impressions of difficulties and challenges were related to increase

student engagement with cocurricular activities and faculty members were:

- There are some conflict in priorities of where resources should be spent: Living/Learning Communities for a few students versus resources for all students living on campus
- Class sizes are currently being made larger because of the influx in students that has been partially associated with the TUE

#### *Administrator Impressions of Negative Initial Impacts*

Administrators' impressions of negative initial impacts were:

- Many staff members suffered for a long period of time in not knowing whether or not they would still have a job after the restructuring, what this job would be, with whom

they would be working, and many other unknowns; some were said to be upset by the changes

- A few staff lost their jobs, including many people working in counseling services who had been working part-time, because all counseling positions became full-time jobs
- Some have the impression that because of the realignment of scholarship money from the TUE, more merit based scholarship money is available for advantaged students and less need-based scholarship or grant money is being given to students in need, which is upsetting to some administrators
- One administrator has noticed that there is less programming for women taking place in the Douglass Campus in its student center, which upset some students
- One administrator is concerned that SAS has not created any traditions yet, such as students not walking through the Old Queens gates until they graduate
- Some administrators perceive a rivalry between Undergraduate Education and Student Affairs
- Many groups of continuing students, especially Cook students, were upset with their loss of community in the new organization of the university; many traditional Cook programs have struggled to survive now that SEBS does not have its own Student Affairs employees; half of the seats on the Cook/Douglass council are unfilled
- A number of EOF students were assigned new EOF advisors, which was upsetting to some students who had built good relationships with their original advisors
- Student Life administrators are given university-wide projects to complete, and Residence Life staff focus at the building level, so some believe there is not much focus on campus-level activities
- UCC does not have much money nor is it able to generate revenue to work with to advocate for its nontraditional students; UC resources used to be used to pay professors to teach night or weekend classes
- The UCC offices have moved from College Avenue, to Livingston, and then to Douglass Campus, confusing many students and others
- Though students can now go to any campus for services, they cannot receive a full range of services the way they used to by seeing a dean at their college, because administrative positions are now very specialized
- The current academic standing policy for SAS students, which now only removes students once a year instead of every semester, may be problematic because students who should not be retained because of poor academic performance, who will not likely improve enough to graduate with the required 2.0 GPA, are being retained longer than they should be, costing students more tuition money
- Some administrators who used to work with students are no longer in this type of role, and some mourn that change

All of these positive, negative, and other challenges will be described in depth in the following four chapters.

## Chapter Five: What Has Been Done to Attract and Retain High Quality Students, Including Underrepresented and Nontraditional Students?

Several topics will be addressed to answer the second evaluation question about what has been done to attract and retain high quality students, including underrepresented and nontraditional students. I discuss changes in Rutgers admissions and enrollment, the academic and demographic profile of incoming students, and information about the retention of these students. The unified SAS honors and EOF programs will be described, as well as all retention efforts targeted at student groups that tend to be at risk of not graduating, including underrepresented minority students, and nontraditional students. The descriptions of the program changes and activities come primarily from administrators with control over the respective program or area.

### *Recruiting and Admissions Changes*

With the TUE, the structure of the Admissions office has not changed, as it has been centralized for a number of years. Additional recruitment efforts are also made by some programs such as the EOF and Honors Programs. However, with a new Vice President of Enrollment Management and spurred by the changes of that led to the TUE, Rutgers has changed some of its admissions strategies. While the TUE was being planned in 2006, Admissions developed an electronic, customizable program for prospective students to utilize in learning more about Rutgers University and its ongoing changes. It has also worked to update high school and community college guidance counselors to keep them abreast of the changes at Rutgers (Alvarez, 2006, September 13). In response to the question of how the recruitment and admission process has changed with the TUE as of Fall Semester 2007, the Vice President of Enrollment Management said,

The biggest change is the interest. There was a 73 percent increase in visits over the previous year, which is staggering and has stretched us beyond our limits. Summer visits were up 65 percent. ... There is an unprecedented level of interest in Rutgers right now. ... The applications for the new SAS are up 11.5 percent. What that means is that you become more selective because there isn't any more space. That will add a lot to students' Rutgers degrees in the future. Already for SAS, 20,254 students have applied versus 17,557 last year at the same date. There is a better sense of clarity now in the outside community about what happened" (Alvarez, 2007, December 12).

RUNB is also working to build a new Visitors Center on Busch Campus for prospective students, which will use virtual technology for residence hall and building tours. According to the Enrollment Management Vice President, in the virtual tours "There will be information about the faculty and the kind of research they do. It will be the academic version of the Hale Center. Instead of Ray Rice scoring a touchdown, we might show Wise Young in his lab" (Alvarez, 2007, December 12). According to one senior administrator, the university needs to continue to improve its buildings and infrastructure to attract students:

I think that the biggest obstacle for us is that our facilities are second-rate. We are running a first-rate research university in substandard buildings, with substandard classrooms. Only 50% of our classrooms have built-in digital projectors, and we have a tiny staff to service those. If you look at the recent article in the New York Times, students complained about the shabby classrooms. The condition of the historic buildings on campus is frightening. A university's campus should be good for recruiting, not bad for recruiting. Undergraduates and their parents care about classrooms, residence halls, etc, and we have a long way to go.

Another recent change is that Admissions is also working to increase its recruitment of out-of-state students. In the past, there was a disincentive to admitting out-of-state students. According to a senior administrator,

The state pays the tuition for the New Jersey state residents, half the tuition. But for the out-of-state students, they made us give back \$6,000 a head, because why should they be paying half the tuition for out-of-state kids. But after a lot of conversation, they've seen the error of their ways and this year they only made us give back \$3,000 a head for out-of-state, and supposedly, next year and in the future, they will no longer have us give back money. So Rutgers will be able to keep all of that extra tuition as paid by out-of-state students.

Now, according to this administrator, “we want more out-of-state students, and yeah we’re recruiting in more markets, and more heavily in the markets where we have recruited. We have a group of 100 trained alumni who recruit for us all over the country. And we are looking to expand that group.” Out-of-state students are disadvantaged when it comes to receiving financial aid, as compared to in-state students, so the need to recruit out-of-state students who can afford the over \$19,000 per year tuition (versus over \$9,000 for in-state students) is recognized by this administrator.

The university has also been working to project a cohesive message about Rutgers, to increase its ability to attract students and enjoy other benefits. According to the university report of progress on 2007-2008 goals, in regard to the goal to implement a comprehensive communications program, including the launching of a university advertising campaign, the following has been completed:

Following the implementation of Rutgers’ new visual identity and the selection of the tagline Jersey Roots, Global Reach, the university began an integrated marketing and advertising program. Elements implemented in 2007-08 included advertisements in multiple major newspapers touting the university’s Gates Cambridge Scholarship winners and congratulating alumnus Junot Diaz on his Pulitzer Prize; pole and building banners, billboards, and buses carrying the new visual identity and tagline; a TV spot produced to air during nationally televised athletic events; and development of a Jersey Roots, Global Reach website showcasing outstanding faculty and major university achievements. Rutgers’ efforts earned a gold medal award from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education in the institution-wide branding category. University Relations also launched a program to enhance Rutgers’ reputation among peer institutions, including colleagues who vote in national reputational surveys (Rutgers, 2008c).

Taken together, the new RUNB is improving its recruitment efforts, much as a result of the TUE. This is partially a result of reduced internal competition for students within Rutgers University, and focusing instead on competition with other similar universities. According to one senior administrator,

The reality of life is that all of the undergraduate schools at Rutgers [New Brunswick] are in competition with one another. But we are in brutal competition with all of the other

schools in the AAU to which students are applying. That is just reality: the reality of life today is that all of us want to get the brightest and best to come here. We'll be out there competing as aggressively as Penn State and Michigan and Arizona are doing to get students to come here. And we'll be aggressive in recruiting not only in NJ, but in the Midwest, in the south, in the West. We are beginning a program at Rutgers to do recruiting internationally. We have a big active recruitment process. We are working together (all schools). This is one of the great advantages of the TUE process. ... And through Vice President McAnuff, we've retained a private consulting firm to assist us with international recruiting. And we've embarked on a process of doing international recruiting fairs. Right now the fall tour has been through India, and up the Pacific Rim through Singapore and Malaysia, all the way up to China into Korea and Japan. And another batch of recruiting will be done this month throughout the Arabian Peninsula, Saudi Arabia, Oman, UAE, Jordan. And that is to basically wave the Scarlet flag; we're Rutgers. People who are managing the recruitment fairs are talking about the individual schools that you can come to as an undergraduate and we are actually recruiting for the graduate schools as well.

A variety of administrators interviewed believe the application process to Rutgers has become much easier with the TUE, because students are no longer confused about which liberal arts college to apply to, and these colleges are no longer competing with one another. According to a senior administrator,

I think generally I would say that TUE has made the process of applying to Rutgers so much easier for students: it's more understandable, they don't have to fill out separate applications, and they don't receive competitive view books from the different colleges at Rutgers, which was confusing for folks. They get one set of information... so I think it's much easier for students, they don't have to fill out multiple scholarship applications any more, any of those things.

Another administrator reported, that with the TUE,

Each year we've gotten more applications. The yield improved. The profile is up. So it's not like we brought in more kids and the profile went down, the profile went up. We were more selective and still more people came. I don't know how much of that has to do with transforming. I suspect a lot of it had to do Rutgers name being out there from being successful in sports. Now our team has to start winning again! If our number of visitors is any indication, we are just overflowing with visitors. ... And diversity is higher.

Overall, most administrators and faculty interviewed believed that the TUE has resulted in an easier to understand university, which might lead to an improved ability to attract and retain high quality students. One faculty member said, "It is a logical approach to education and makes the educational system at RUNB easier to understand for someone coming from outside

the system.” Another faculty member said, “Overall, I think it will be helpful to RUNB for recruiting purposes, and for the attention it has drawn to undergraduate education.” A similar faculty sentiment was, “Overall, I believe the very drive to transform undergraduate education at RUNB sends the strongest possible signal about the importance of undergraduate education, and that is excellent.” It appears that a combination of factors has led to an increased profile and enrollment in Rutgers, over the past few years.

#### *Changes to Scholarships and Funding Awarded*

Offering scholarships to prospective students can help to attract students to attend a university, and awarding scholarships to enrolled students can help students to stay in school for longer and to graduate. Prior to the TUE, the RUNB liberal arts colleges competed against one another through scholarships offered to prospective students, and each liberal arts college had its own system of offering and awarding scholarships to continuing students. With the TUE and the appointment of a new Vice President for Enrollment Management, there have been a few changes related to the awarding of scholarships. Because of the TUE, scholarships are offered to incoming students in a standardized way, based on merit. Students who had already been receiving scholarships awarded prior to the TUE were able to keep their scholarships if they still met the criteria for them. Additionally, now scholarships for continuing students are housed under SAS, instead of the individual liberal arts colleges. Some departments still have their own scholarship money to distribute as well. There have been simultaneous changes to scholarship offerings because of the Supreme Court’s ruling regarding affirmative action, and because New Jersey decreased its level of scholarship awards to outstanding students. Scholarships can no longer be offered based on race or ethnicity.

One focus of these changes is the increased emphasis on giving prospective students scholarships in time to influence their decision to attend Rutgers, as part of a strategic

enrollment plan that allows Rutgers to recruit the best and brightest students in NJ. Because the university awards merit scholarships to incoming students based on student GPA and SAT scores, students can read exactly about what criteria are needed to win a merit-based scholarship to the university, via the university admissions website. Students with combined Verbal and Math SAT scores of 1500-1600, and who graduate in the top five percent of their class, now receive \$21,400 per year for tuition and room and board, and are considered Presidential Scholars. The awards decrease incrementally down to \$2,500 per year for students with SAT scores above 1300 and who graduate in the top ten percent of their class (Rutgers Undergraduate Admissions, 2009). Because of this system of giving out scholarships, there is a fear on the part of some administrators that not enough scholarship money is going to help financially struggling students, but to students who already have had enough advantages in life to earn very high GPA and SAT scores.

*Carr scholars.* Around the same time as the TUE, Rutgers decided that race, gender, and religion could not be a sole factor in granting university admission or student scholarships. This decision affected Rutgers' administration of the James Dickson Carr Scholarships. This scholarship was established to provide funding for underrepresented minority students, university-wide, and was named for the first African-American student to graduate from Rutgers, James Dickson Carr. According to the university website on first-year scholarships, the Carr scholarships are now described in this way:

Rutgers seeks to enroll a diverse and heterogeneous class, and is therefore proud to offer the James Dickson Carr Scholarship which honors the first African-American graduate of Rutgers. This scholarship reflects the university's commitment to achieving a student body that is broadly diverse in terms of experience, socioeconomic background, geography, special skills, and talents. We include the following in our assessment: academic credentials, specialized talents, extracurricular activities, leadership, community service, work experience, awards, honors, attendance in New Jersey's Abbott School Districts, and the relevance of the response to the essay question which must be submitted with the application. New Jersey and out-of-state residents are eligible (Rutgers Undergraduate Admissions, 2009).



The recipients of the Carr scholarships were assigned Carr advisors, who were coordinated through each of the individual colleges, but due to the transformation, the Carr advisors were not systematically functioning during the 2007-2008 school year, though some advisors still maintained relationships with their students. The need to reorganize the Carr Society and admit new students has come to the attention of administrators and others, and they are currently working to recreate Carr advising, for the benefits of existing and new Carr scholars.

*Elimination of the Outstanding Scholarship Recruitment Program (ORSP).* From 1998 to 2006, the state of New Jersey had a scholarship program, OSRP, through which the state partially provided money for outstanding New Jersey high school seniors to attend Rutgers. Though not directly related to the TUE, this program ended in 2006 and this funding source is no longer available to the university. Now, Rutgers itself offers the scholarship money that would have gone to students who qualified for the OSRP, because the state is providing less scholarship money to attract high quality students to Rutgers.

*Need-based aid for students.* The university is providing as much money in need-based grants and loans as possible. In a *Focus Magazine* interview published in December, 2007, The Vice President for Enrollment Management comments on this topic:

Financial aid helps with student retention. It's not necessarily the attraction of the students that keeps an institution's profile raised; it is keeping the students graduating. Rutgers' graduation rate is very good. We are probably in the top ten percent. Our six-year graduation rate is about 72 percent. So it's very good, but it's not good enough. And based on the students we admit, they should all graduate. They have the academic credentials to do so. I know there are personal factors, social factors, and financial factors. Our students are now borrowing \$250 million a year through the university - and growing. The private loan volume, I believe, has escalated almost 600 percent in five years, just for students at Rutgers. What we don't know is what the families borrow through financing mortgages, refinancing debt. I suspect they borrow a whole lot more. As we start our new campaign, a significant focus is need-based scholarship and need-based student aid (Alvarez, 2007, December 12).

Improving aid to students in need will certainly help talented Rutgers students to graduate.

In the first two years after the TUE, the university increased need-based grant funds by about \$2.5 million dollars a year, yet the university still has a need for more of these funds. Currently, about 80% of Rutgers undergraduates are receiving financial aid. The financial aid budget exceeds about \$525 million dollars for the current school year, about \$300 million of which is for student loans. An administrator commented that “The student loan volume is escalating quite rapidly. We really do need to raise more money for need-based financial aid.” Of course, this comment was given in advance of the September 2008 collapse of the stock market, and the picture regarding student financial aid is looking more grim. According to an article in the *Daily Targum*, “as of November 11, the University’s endowment had fallen \$108 million, from \$518 million at the close of the 2008 fiscal year on June 30 to \$410 million” (Clyde, 2008, November 12), and the stock market has only declined since November.

#### *Academic and Diversity Profile of Incoming Students*

Overall, in part due to all of the changes related to admissions and the TUE, the university has successfully attracted a high-performing and diverse group of students to the New Brunswick Campus in the past few years. One senior administrator shared that with the TUE, “we’ve increased the numbers of students of color over the past two years, and interestingly enough, also the academic quality of the students. So not only are we enrolling a more diverse class, but a strategically academically stronger class.” In President McCormick’s speech to the university at the beginning of Fall Semester 2008, he was proud to share that the incoming class of university-wide Rutgers students was richly diverse. “They come from 100 countries and 41 states. More than half identify themselves as non-Caucasian. One-third come from families in which there is no parent who graduated from college [approximated based on self-report on an optional survey]. Our first-year class has 13 percent more African-American

students than last year's, and 15 percent more Latino students" (McCormick, 2008). Much of this diversity is also evident in the incoming class at RUNB. Of the incoming first-year students in New Brunswick, 11% are Black and 11% are Latino. Of the incoming transfer students, 8.3% are Black and 12% are Latino. Taken together, these percentages of students are an increase over the current percentage of RUNB students who are Black or Latino. The president also noted, however, that he believes that the population of Rutgers students is too heavily suburban, with too few students coming from cities.

According to a profile of students in the 2012 graduating class who entered the university during the 2008-2009 school year, the new students to Rutgers University can also be described in this way, as of August 29, 2008:

*Admission process:*

- Rutgers experienced a record number of first-year and transfer applications this fall - more than 43,500.
- Rutgers estimates there will be more than 7,000 incoming first-year students university-wide - the largest number in 30 years.
- First-year enrollment increased more than 5 percent from last year.
- On the New Brunswick Campus, more than 6,000 first-year and transfer students are expected.

*Academic profile:*

- Approximately 132 incoming students were valedictorians or salutatorians of their high school classes.
- Enrollment of Rutgers Presidential Scholars has risen 42 percent from 59 to 84 first-year students. Presidential Scholarships are awarded to students who achieved a minimum score of 1500 on their SATs (Critical Reading plus Math) and were ranked in the top 5 percent of their graduating class, among other criteria.
- The mean combined SAT scores (Critical Reading plus Math) for enrolling students are close to 200 points above the national average, and are three points higher than those of last year's incoming class.
- The top 1,000 students enrolling at Rutgers have an average SAT score of 1400 and rank in the top 6 percent of their class (Rutgers Media Relations, 2008).

The population of RUNB continues to climb, to the level that in Fall Semester 2008, more than 300 students were placed in hotel housing off campus, and in dorm lounges.

According to data provided by the Rutgers Office of Institutional Research website, the numbers

of transfer students who have enrolled in the university has climbed from around 1,100 per year for a few years before the TUE to 1,477 in 2007 and 1,694 in 2008. Of the 26,966 undergraduates currently enrolled in RUNB, 9% are African American, 25% are Asian American, 9% are Latino, 51% are white, 2% are international, and 8% are “other.” In 2008, of the 7,579 students enrolled Rutgers-wide, 6,739 were New Jersey residents, 677 come from out of state (8.9%), and 163 (2.4%) are from foreign countries (Rutgers Office of Institutional Research and Academic Planning, 2009). Between 2007 and 2008, applications to SAS increased 11.5%; as of December, 2007, 20,254 students had applied to SAS, compared to 17,557 December, 2006 (Alvarez, 2007, December 12), and 2008 enrollment in SAS was up 7% over 2007 (Rutgers Media Relations, 2008). Below is the population of students at RUNB for the past few years, the last two of which represent the status of the university post-TUE (Rutgers Office of Institutional Research, 2009).

Table 2: Student enrollment at Rutgers, New Brunswick

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
First-year Students						
Applied	27,311	24,434	25,462	27,560	28,208	29,548
Admitted	14,857	14,961	15,437	16,049	15,877	16,477
Enrolled	4,679	4,817	5,121	5,090	5,519	5,984
Transfer Students						
Applied	6,903	6,401	5,971	6,267	7,258	7,694
Admitted	2,309	2,700	2,179	2,250	2,906	3,228
Enrolled	1,183	1,318	1,028	1,071	1,477	1,694

According to one administrator, this increased enrollment is closely tied to the struggling economy. He said,

Right now it's an interesting situation we are struggling with institutionally, I'm sure they can tell you about this in admissions, but we oversubscribed in the Fall by significant numbers, which were not anticipated, and I think it's related to the economy. Many students who would have left the state decided not to. Now we are in a situation

where we are virtually taking, well some, but compared to past years, we're taking very few transfers this year. We are getting the panic calls from people who left the state and thought they would just return and go to Rutgers now for the Spring Semester, and we don't have room.

Considering this situation, it is likely that applications to the university will continue to increase.

### *Policies Related to Retention of Students*

RUNB currently has many supports to help to retain students. It has several Learning Centers, where students can go for tutoring and course reviews, which will be discussed in Chapter 6, and there are tutoring services available to underrepresented students in the EOF and Student Support Services programs, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Other areas of support include the university-wide Educational Emergency Assistance Fund, Disability Services, which is described in Chapter 6, and the University College Community, which helps to support nontraditional students and is described later in this chapter.

### *Academic Standing and Dismissal Policies and Programs*

Prior to the TUE, each college had different policies related to academic probation, and dismissal of students. During the centralization of academic services, all students who were previously informed of an academic sanction (probation or dismissal) for their performance during Spring Semester 2007 were reviewed according to the newly established SAS policies for academic standing and dismissal, and were given notice of their new academic standing for Fall Semester 2007. Students who were in good academic standing but would be under the new enforcement of policy going forward were not notified of the change in policy at that time. Deans were lenient in determining appropriate academic statuses, specifically, which students qualified for various academic probation lists, in consideration that University College and Livingston College did not utilize term performance to track students' academic standing. For

example, some students were added to one of the probation lists although they would have definitely been dismissed by other colleges in the previous structure.

SAS academic probation policies are currently the following, according to the SAS Academic Services website. Students are placed on Academic Warning if they have a semester GPA of less than 2.0, after having demonstrated good standing in the previous semester. These students are restricted to taking 16 or fewer credits during the warning semester. Students are placed on Academic Probation if they have two consecutive semesters GPAs of less than 2.0, and they are restricted from taking more than 13 credits in the probation semester. Students are placed on Continued Probation if they have three or more consecutive semesters of GPAs of less than 2.0 without having sustained an academic dismissal, and they also are restricted from taking more than 13 credits in the probation semester. For all three of these statuses, students' term GPA must rise above a 2.0 or higher at the end of the "warning or probation" semester to be restored to good academic standing.

At the end of the Spring Semester all students regardless of whether they are on a probation list or are in good academic standing are reviewed to determine if they are making "consistent and realistic progress towards graduation standards" (Rutgers SAS Office of Academic Services, 2009a). Based upon a theoretical four-year enrollment, by the end of each academic year, students are expected to achieve a minimum cumulative GPA whereas at the end of their second semester, students need a GPA of 1.5, at the end of their fourth semester students need a GPA of 1.7, at the end of their sixth semester students need a GPA of 1.9, and students needs a 2.0 to graduate. If student GPAs are below these cumulative averages, they will be subject to potential Academic Dismissal.

Students who are eligible for dismissal have several options by which they may be able to continue their studies at the university. Students are given a grace period during which they

can take classes during the summer to raise their cumulative GPAs above that which was required for their class year according to their terms of enrollment. If they can do this, students are re-assessed to determine if an academic sanction based upon term average is applicable. In some cases students may be restored to good standing. Students can also appeal an Academic Dismissal to an appointed Faculty Committee for Academic Standing if they believe they have extenuating circumstances. In the event that neither of the two previous options are viable, students are officially dismissed but may earn Readmission if they have a cumulative summer GPA of at least a 2.75 in at least 6 credits of coursework (Rutgers SAS Office of Academic Services, 2009a). However, this option is only available to students who are being dismissed for the first time.

The Academic Standing Policy has undergone several changes since the inception of SAS. While all academic standing policies affect student retention, the impact of the current policy has generated some concern about the future affects of the retention of students. In the past, SAS followed a few iterations of academic standing policy that evaluated qualified students for Academic Dismissal at the end of each semester and based on performance from semester to semester. A recent change is that students are only reviewed for Academic Dismissal once a year; at the ends of their second, fourth, sixth, and eighth semesters. This policy has caused an increase in the number of students who are on a probation list, because fewer students are being stopped out of the university prior to doing irreparable damage to their cumulative GPAs. Some administrators believe this may lead to an artificially high retention rate of students, because when left unchecked over the course of a year, many of these struggling students may eventually sustain enough academic deterioration to be unable to graduate, and are therefore being permitted to spend money on tuition that will not lead to a degree. The one year retention rate of incoming first-year and transfer students has steadily increased from 87.7%

retained in 2000-2001, to 90.7% retained in 2007-2008, which was the year following the TUE. Whether this number will change at the end of 2008-2009 may shed light on the impact of this policy. SAS is the only school in New Brunswick that does not perform the mid-year dismissals.

Academic Services in SAS runs a few programs that identify and help students who are at risk of being dismissed from the university. Many of these initiatives were programs previously used Rutgers College, but are now used for all SAS students. The Freshman Retention program provides advising to second semester freshman students who earn below a 1.0 GPA in their first semester. These students are asked to complete the College Student Inventory academic needs assessment, through which they communicate where they need help and support. Students are then paired with an advisor for support and help in navigating the university. Students meet their advisors at least three times, strategically coordinated to occur once prior to the course drop deadline, and once prior to the semester withdrawal deadline. Students are also required to come in for academic advising prior to the first day of classes to learn more about how to succeed in the university and to make appropriate registration adjustments to maximize spring semester performance. Another program run by Academic Services is the Academic Success Seminar, for about twenty students per semester. It is a seven-week course where students learn specific skills to assist them in their performance, learn about support services across the university, and receive individual advising from assigned advisers who have been determined by the results of student's College Student Inventory academic needs assessment. Past results indicate that by the end of the course, approximately 75-80% of students return to good standing academic within the university. There is also a Freshman Advising Initiative that requires new students with GPAs below a 2.0 to see a dean for advising. They must see an advisor before they are allowed to register for the next semester of courses. A few administrators have called for the expansion of these programs to include more students



who are at risk, to hopefully help more students before they are unable to continue and are not able to graduate (Rutgers SAS Office of Academic Services, 2009c).

*Creation of New Brunswick Educational Emergency Assistance Fund*

Another TUE impact on funding for students was the expansion of individual college funds for student emergency financial assistance to a broad program for all of RUNB. In the past, Rutgers College students who needed small amounts of emergency funding for books or term bills could apply for assistance. However, students from other colleges did not have access to this pool of money, though there were some systems of assistance in place at other colleges. Now this program has been centralized and better-defined, and is currently run out of the New Brunswick Deans of Students Office. The funding to students must be used for term bills or books. It is not an advertised program, but it is known to the Offices of Student Accounting, Deans of Students, Financial Aid, and to the Deans of the academic units and professional schools. The existence of this emergency fund is a great example of an accomplishment of the TUE that is related to retention of students, because now all students can have access to this service, and some students may stay enrolled for longer if they can get this extra help.

*Attracting Students through the Honors Program*

The university's various Honors Programs attract many students who may have otherwise attended smaller or more elite universities than Rutgers. These programs also serve to retain bright students who may otherwise transfer to one of these universities, and to help students to continue on to graduate school or to start important careers.

With the TUE, the Honors Programs at the individual liberal arts colleges have been combined into one SAS Honors Program, which serves between 1,300 and 1,400 students, while other college Honors Programs, such as those in SEBS, Engineering, and Pharmacy, remain independent. For example, SEBS maintains a four year general honors program for 40-50

students, and a senior honors program called the George H Cook Honors Program. Additionally, academic departments still have their own departmental honors programs.

Prior to the TUE, each of the four liberal arts Honors Programs offered different services to students. For example, some of the colleges did not have honors housing for students, and some colleges required students to complete an honors thesis. Now all SAS honors students follow the same requirements, including the completion of a capstone project, which can be either a research project or a creative venture. All SAS students also have access to Honors housing on campus. Honors students can visit the honors deans, who are located on each campus near the academic services offices, for general advising, or other honors deans who have more specialized roles. Another change is that each of the previous college Honors Programs had different requirements for admission, and requirements for the programs, as well as different funding sources and stipends for senior thesis work. Now, all honors students can apply for this funding. Additionally, honors students now have a broader choice of honors courses, because they used to be limited to take only the courses offered by their individual college based honors programs. Additionally, another impact of centralizing the liberal arts honors programs is that the Honors Program Tutoring Project, which provides free tutors to university students, has expanded from a Rutgers College program, which serviced only the Kreeger Learning Center on College Avenue Campus, to an SAS program that serves all campuses.

SAS Honors administrators believed that the liberal arts honors programs were in a good position to be consolidated, because they were able to follow the recommendations from a previously written report in which faculty members recommended future directions for the college-based honors programs. Thanks in part to this advanced blueprint, the merging of the college-based honors programs went relatively smoothly. The transition was also helped

because the college honors program administrators have collaborated for many years in organizing the Honors Seminars. They worked together to invite professors to teach the seminars, and decide among themselves which professor would teach in each college program, so that they were not in competition for instructors.

Incoming SAS students are admitted to the SAS Honors Program through two routes: students are automatically admitted when they have a combined 1350 Verbal (minimum 650) and Math SAT score, and are in the top 10 percent of their high school class, or students can apply to the program when they come from small graduating classes or if they just miss the SAT requirement, by providing letters of recommendation, essays, and transcripts. Students may also be admitted as sophomores and even juniors, if they have a GPA of 3.7, giving high achieving students a few avenues by which to be admitted to the Honors program.

The SAS Honors Program offers many special opportunities to its students, including:

- Special interdisciplinary Honors Seminars taught by leading faculty members.
- Honors sections of regular courses, many of which fulfill school distribution requirements.
- Discipline-specific honors courses that fulfill major requirements
- Honors Colloquia: 1-credit forums in which students attend lectures, film screenings, art exhibits, and other academic and cultural events on- and off-campus.
- A Capstone Project typically completed in the senior year.
- The SAS Honors Program offers extensive personalized advising, a Faculty Mentor Program, a Summer Reading Program, and funding for research. Also available are honors residential options on each campus, a peer mentor program, and a variety of cultural and social activities (Rutgers SAS Honors Program, 2009).

The SAS Honors Program collaborates with many departments and offices at the university, which the individual programs did in the past as well, but this collaboration extends to the new offices and the centralized or consolidated structures that have been created by the TUE. With the TUE, the SAS Honors Program has collaborated with College Avenue's Campus Dean to put on events, and it has also worked in partnership with the Dean of International Programs and Research to help develop programming related to the year's theme of Human

Rights, by gearing the Honors Colloquium toward human rights topics. The SAS Honors Program also collaborates regularly with the Office of Academic Services, Financial Aid, Student Accounting, Admissions, Residence Life, Recreation Services, The Office of Distinguished Fellowships, the Deans of Students, the Douglass Residential College, the Dean of Study Abroad, academic departments, as well as with the Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research, to develop assessment tools for Honors Colloquia. Additionally, there are RUNB-wide honors meetings where Honors Deans can learn from one another about what is working, and what is new or innovative.

An overall benefit of the new unified SAS Honors program is believed by one administrator to be its critical mass of students, for which large events can be organized, and which allows for more variety and choice in its programs offered. At the same time, the SAS Honors Program is also seen in some ways as a small learning community, through which a group of students get advisement, support, and a home. One faculty member commented that “the college honors programs had a lot of personality, some of which seems to have been lost, but the new programs in place seem to offer more and better opportunities to students.” Interestingly, a couple of administrators and faculty members brought up the idea of further consolidating the New Brunswick college honors programs into one unit, but this does not appear to be a plan at this time.

#### *Recruiting and Retaining Students from Underrepresented Groups*

The university currently has many initiatives to recruit underrepresented students, including the Equal Opportunity Fund Program, Upward Bound, the Rutgers Future Scholars Program, and recruiting through the Rutgers chapter of the NAACP. The supports for underrepresented students that will be described are the McNair Program, the federally funded Student Support Services program, and the programs delivered by the Office of Multicultural

Student Engagement. According to the Vice President for Enrollment Management, a current focus of the university is retaining students from underrepresented groups. He said,

We really want to examine graduation rates. We want to examine the entire student body as well as students of color. There is a difference in the graduation rates of students of color, and we aim to close that gap. The first thing to understand is where they are falling off. Do we have a first-year issue, second-year issue, a particular academic discipline issue? I suspect we have more of a male issue than a female issue. If you look at the national data, the graduation rate for black and Hispanic females is five times greater than for those males. We are national trendsetters, and we should come up with some national trendsetting solutions that deal with the issues (Alvarez, 2007, December 12).

#### *Equal Opportunity Fund (EOF) Programs Centralized*

Students who are admitted to the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) programs across the state of New Jersey are first-generation college students, New Jersey residents, demonstrate historical poverty, and have academic need as well; they represent around ten percent of each entering class at Rutgers. Admission is contingent upon successful completion of the Summer Institute, during which EOF counselors and others at the university work to ‘give them a leg up’ on navigating the university, and to assess their motivation. Students are given a grant each year that is part of their financial aid package. This past summer, out of the 305 summer institute participants, only 3 did not successfully complete the program. Like the Honors program, the EOF program helps to attract students to the university, to retain them, and to help them move on to successful opportunities in the future.

*What was done during TUE?* Each college in the university used to have its own EOF programs, which were run independently of one another, including with differently-formatted summer programs for the students. As part of the transformation, the liberal arts college EOF programs were combined into one SAS EOF program. Now, according to its website, the following is the mission of SAS EOF, “the program will provide access to higher education for eligible students, help improve EOF students' academic performance, provide the necessary

resources to promote student retention, promote student progress toward graduation, as well as provide effective administrative support” (Rutgers SAS Educational Opportunity Fund Program, 2009). Specific examples of resources provided to students in the EOF program are advisement by personal EOF counselors on academic, career, and personal topics, some grant funding for tuition, a summer orientation program to prepare students to succeed at Rutgers, supplemental instruction and/or free tutoring, and networking access.

*Student thoughts about the new EOF configuration.* Continuing EOF students seemed to have mixed opinions regarding the new EOF structure. Students who entered RUNB as part of the individual college EOF programs probably noticed the greatest changes to the program, compared to the incoming students who did not have existing experiences with the EOF program. One upperclassman EOF student explained,

One of the things that pretty much changed is, because we were already in our second or third year comfort zones, the people we were used to being in certain locations, where we were used to hopping off the bus, running in and sitting in their office- that pretty much changed. Cohorts pretty much were broken up, people that worked in the same location with people for years were broken up. And you had to go to a whole different campus. ... I don't see that as a negative thing, but at the same time [it is a] positive impact because I feel like we are officially one EOF family, more so. ... Once again, that moves out of your comfort zone and becoming a part of EOF as a whole in the university.

Another student shared:

Jumping off that, there was definitely a comfort zone [issue]. I went through three different counselors through this whole merge. The counselor I was with for two years-, some of them got promoted. That's good for them that their professional jobs reached another level, but it leaves me with a new counselor who doesn't know anything about me, where now I have to build a new relationship with them. How they feel about me might be definitely different than what my previous counselor felt about me, the things they do for me may be completely different, the way I may approach them may be different, and the things I can talk to them about may be different now. So that was one of the major issues, because as an EOF student and having an EOF counselor, they are the mediators between us and everything going on at Rutgers. If we have an issue or problem or anything we need to talk about personally or academically, if that relationship is no longer there or you're finding it, who should I talk to, where should I go for this or that, that leaves me to question not the purpose of EOF of course, but it leads me to question what should we do as students, who should we turn to. So I am

left with still dealing with my last EOF counselor, still keeping that relationship with them even though they have moved on to another professional job.

Another student expanded on the topic of a larger EOF community:

I agree with what they both said, and I know that neither of you are saying that it was necessarily negative, but at first it was very confusing. I think at this point, in the second year, the end product for me, as a senior, is wow- look at all this unity within the EOF community, and I've met so many more EOF students than I would have met if I had just stayed at Livingston College. And although I see [someone] who was my EOF roommate from freshman year, it's the comfort that I know new people now, either from different colleges or I tutor students in SAS, and I tell them they are lucky to have so many networks now, a 300 something EOF class, and it's many more people to network with, so the end product that I've seen has been beneficial.

Finally, one student summed up the sentiments about the merging of the EOF programs:

I thought it was chaotic at first, not just for the students, but directors, EOF counselors, some were pretty much understaffed. You had EOF counselors having so many different students they had to guide and counsel. It at one point became pretty much overwhelming. I mean it's beautiful that they have a type of conference like this [Rutgers University EOF Conference] to incorporate all the students, but at the same time, I do somewhat miss that small intimacy. I mean, when I came in, and the same for Livingston College and all of the other colleges, it was a smaller amount of students because it was at different campuses, and therefore you were able to go and meet everyone. You started to know people's names, recognize the faces in your EOF program. Now you have in the summertime 300 something students, all placed into one building. Yes, I do agree the positive side is that you expand your social capital, but the negative side is the intimacy somewhat goes away. You walk out of the EOF program and there are hundreds of students' faces that you don't recognize. I came out of my EOF program- they weren't friends but 100 some odd associates. Hey! EOF! Now I see the students walk right by each other and have no idea that they are both EOF. And that sense of family- it's no longer first cousins, it's now more like a family with 4th and 5th cousins and cousins removed from the family through marriage, haha.

*Administrator reflections.* According to some administrators, the EOF program has some work to do to make their students feel part of a more intimate experience. Similar to the explanations of the students, one administrator reflected that,

I think that prior to TUE, the students identified in smaller groups, college- based situations. Each college had a specific mission and culture. The students who came in new don't have that, and what the culture is is not clear yet. ... Now we're considering the strengths and weaknesses of the second [summer program for all SAS EOF students] and how to improve the third one. Before [the TUE] people knew what to do and how to do it, there was a mission of the college, and a culture, there were smaller groups. For example: is it possible for you to get to know everyone in your summer program when

there are close to 300 students. Students who were in the summer program might pass each other and not recognize each other even though they were in the program for five weeks. That's one of the issues we're talking about in terms of how to improve it: creating smaller communities within the summer program that are themed-based or something like that. You'd get to interact and know more students and colleagues.

Another issue brought up by an EOF administrator, related to student retention, was the concern that some faculty members are not prepared to teach some EOF students:

Faculty tend to engage more of the A-B student, who is more outspoken, but the student who is marginal and not quite getting it—they feel like an outcast. Don't professors have the same responsibility to them? I think so. It's different if you are teaching in a large lecture hall. I think we've gotten to the point where we focus so much on the grades, not knowing that students have different learning styles.

This administrator went on to say, "Even though you have the teaching excellence center, does faculty make use of that to improve their teaching style? Students complain a lot about professor pedagogy. Teaching is an art and a science, and I know we are a research university, but I think if you want to engage the student you have to have the methodology."

An administrator discussed the recruitment of high school students who could join the EOF program:

We have a major strategy to recruit students. We have what is called an open house coming up on October 29th, when we will invite 30-40 high schools to come to campus, so we usually have 20-25 high schools actually come. Admissions will pick up kids from the high schools. It's a full day of programming and introduction to EOF. We also have campus visit programs, college bound programs, Upward Bound programs, precollege programs. Also have [information days] where we go to high schools and interview students who are eligible for EOF who are academically ready for Rutgers. ... We work closely with the admissions office; we have 3 recruitment events next week, [including speaking] to a college bound program in Plainfield. [Also, we have] 30-50 students coming in next week. We're doing a lot of recruitment activities, for all EOF programs.

In addition to working with the admissions office, the new configuration of the SAS EOF program has facilitated collaboration with various other units at the university. For example, because the Student Support Services (SSS) program is federally funded to serve a population of students similar to those in the EOF program, it provides most of the tutoring for EOF students. Additionally, SAS EOF has reached out to many administrators during the summer to speak to



students during the summer program. Many administrators participate in workshops and panels for the EOF program to explain various services available to RUNB and EOF students, including, for example, explain the roles of the Deans of Students on each campus.

The EOF program administration is currently working on a project to assess its programs for students, such as the summer program. The SAS EOF program is one of four programs that are working on pilot assessments to study and improve the effectiveness of programs. Administrators are looking forward to analyzing and learning from these assessment data. EOF administrators are also currently looking to successful Rutgers EOF alumni for scholarship donations for current students.

### *TRIO Programs*

Similar to EOF in the mission to retain students, the Student Support Services and McNair TRIO Programs are federally funded programs that support low income, first-generation college students and students of an underrepresented minority group, in order to help retain these students. SSS offers a lot of one-on-one tutoring, including tutoring in all of the introductory level courses in writing, biology, chemistry, physics, economics, computer science, and statistics, as well as other courses by arrangement. There are about 300 tutoring sessions run in a given week, and the program serves about 350-400 students per year. In Fall Semester 2007, there were 222 weekly sessions of SSS tutoring running, with 162 students being tutored by 31 tutors. In Spring Semester 2008, SSS provided 1,435 hours of tutoring to students, mostly in the areas of mathematics (about 55% of tutoring hours) and English composition and writing (about 33% of tutoring hours). It also offers career counseling, learning assistance for study skills and time management, as well as personal counseling. Throughout the semester, it offers a multitude of workshops on these topics. The program often collaborates with other areas of the university, such as the Learning Center, the Career Center, and other programs that give

workshops, often related to topics such as careers, interviewing, creating resumes, study skills, test anxiety, and preparing for graduate school.

The McNair Program works with this population to get the students admitted into doctoral programs. If a student is interested in a doctoral program, and has shown academic potential, with around a 3.0 GPA, they can be interviewed for the McNair Program. The program takes in about 15 students (rising juniors and seniors) every summer. The McNair Program has an 8-week summer research institute, where students live on Easton Avenue and take classes on College Avenue Campus. They develop their own unique research question, develop a research proposal and present this orally to faculty. The Upward Bound program is the third TRIO program and is designed for rising ninth and tenth graders, who attend summer programs at Rutgers.

With the TUE, these TRIO programs have now found a home under the guidance of the Vice President for Undergraduate Education, and each has a new director. This has put these programs in a better position to collaborate with others at the university. One reason for this is that all of the student support programs are now housed under the auspices of the Assistant Vice President for Student Support, who oversees the EOF programs, the Learning Centers, Disability Services, SSS, and Upward Bound. Now, the SSS program runs all of the tutoring for the SAS EOF program. There is also an Assistant Vice President who oversees academic affairs programs, including the Aresty Research Center, the McNair Program, the Byrne Family First-year Seminars, Career Services, Study Abroad, and the Office of Distinguished Fellowships. In some ways this new configuration has increased the capacity for collaboration, such as the new SSS collaboration with the Aresty Research Center by way of matching faculty mentors to McNair students and helping to prepare them for their research intensive summer program, and

also by encouraging students interested in becoming McNair scholars to work as Aresty Research Assistants first.

Another future plan is for these three TRIO programs to run seamlessly into one another, where students in Upward Bound who decide to attend Rutgers can be immediately served by the EOF and SSS programs, and where workshops are provided to students early enough that they can prepare to apply to the McNair Program. According to a *Focus Magazine* article on the Upward Bound program at Rutgers, this summer McNair Scholars provided some mentoring for the Upward Bound students, and Upward Bound students sometimes took summer courses alongside EOF students, (Alvarez, 2008, September 10) so the collaborations are already evident.

#### *Multicultural Education Programming*

As a result of the TUE, campus efforts to develop intentional engagement programs for underrepresented students was expanded from a solely Rutgers College initiative to a university-wide initiative, situated within the new Office of Undergraduate Education, in the subarea of Academic Engagement and Programming. According to its website, the goals for Multicultural Engagement programs are to:

Fosters an inclusive and rewarding experience for all students at Rutgers by enhancing connections among students and faculty through curricular and cocurricular educational and community development opportunities. These programs include community connections, which provide undergraduates an opportunity to reach out to current high school students; collectives, which serve to enrich the experiences of students who have historically been underrepresented at Rutgers; academic collaborations that provide students with the chance to engage other students, faculty and administrators in meaningful discussions about diverse issues affecting the local, domestic and global communities; and research and assessment that highlights the experiences of students from various backgrounds at Rutgers (Rutgers Office of Undergraduate Education, 2009b).

Since the TUE, the new Office of Multicultural Student Engagement is continuing its collaborations with entities such as the EOF program and the cultural centers. It also is working

with its new resources within the Office of Academic Engagement to collaborate with faculty to put on events for students. It had been able to set up these types of events in the past, but now “in the context of transforming undergraduate education, that relationship [with faculty] happen more naturally. That relationship in helping coordinate those faculty-driven initiatives, allowed for us to work with faculty and coordinate the programming.” One example of this coordination was a collaborative effort with a senior History faculty member to bring a nationally-known scholar to discuss the relationship between hip hop culture, music, patriarchy and the exploitation of women.

The staff members who coordinate Multicultural Engagement efforts place much emphasis upon helping underrepresented students to build communities of support and success. Programs such as the Multicultural Male Connection and Women of Color Initiatives provide Black and Latino students with access to special community development programs through the office of Multicultural Engagement. One of their goals is to:

Create a visible space, where Black and Latino men can connect on campus, and share ways to succeed and as a support network at Rutgers. We create programs to create those opportunities. [We] do a meet and greet program with Black and Latino men and females that connects them with faculty and staff on campus, particularly with Black and Latino faculty and staff.

The staff also organizes “meet and greet” programs with Black and Latino men and women that connects them with faculty and staff on campus, particularly with Black and Latino faculty and staff. While many of the programs are focused upon creating community among a relatively small community of Black and Latino undergraduates, the staff also: coordinate multicultural educational programming such as the Bridging the Gap retreat that create opportunities for students to discuss social identities, power and privilege, and provide supplementary grant support for student-initiated multicultural educational programming, cultural study-abroad programs, and film and dialogues programs with academic departments such as the Center for

African Studies, to expose students to non-Western perspectives and experiences. The staff members also work with Rutgers NAACP:

It does a high school outreach program in the fall for 10th or 11th graders. Their key program is done in the spring, done in conjunction with undergraduate admissions, having an admitted student weekend for African American students, to help encourage them to commit to coming to Rutgers. Our involvement is working with the student organization, and also contributing some resources to make sure that program is successful.

Multicultural engagement programming is also provided by the three Rutgers cultural centers: the Paul Robeson Center, the Center for Latino Arts and Culture, and the Asian American Cultural Center. There is also cultural programming put on by social justice education programs, Student Life, Residence Life and The Committee to Advance Our Common Purposes (an LGBT organization).

#### *Other Initiatives for Supporting Underrepresented Students*

A recent university initiative is the Rutgers Future Scholars Program. According to the university, the aim of this program is to “increase the numbers of academically ambitious high school graduates who come from low-income backgrounds, help them meet the standards to be admitted to colleges and universities, and then provide tuition funding to those who are admitted and choose to attend Rutgers University” (Rutgers Office of Enrollment Management, 2009). Each year, fifty students will join the program from each of the school districts of Newark, Camden, New Brunswick, and Piscataway. During the summer after their eighth grade year they will go to programming that will support them academically, socially, and in planning their careers, and will continue such programming throughout high school. This program is already being supported by \$200,000 in private donations, and is being run through the new position of the Director of Enrollment Management.

Additionally, the Deans of Students office is working to help students from underrepresented minority groups navigate the university. One of the ways it is doing this is through the director of assessment for Student Affairs, who is working to include multiculturalism and cultural competence in nearly all of the Student Affairs assessment efforts. One administrator explained the effort: "Let's make sure we're providing access to all students, nontraditional, commuters, every race, ethnicity, etc. Literally, we're trying to get departments to analyze specific programs they offer to make sure we're not unintentionally excluding students. We just gave a workshop on that last month. We are heightening our sensitivity."

Additionally, some learning communities are targeting underrepresented groups of students. University administrators are recent recipients of a grant from the National Science Foundation that focuses on the retention of underrepresented populations in science majors, by helping them to graduate, and telling them about careers in science. One effort that this grant focuses on is helping students to succeed in the Rutgers pre-Calculus course:

This is a challenge here at Rutgers, not just underrepresented students- 50% who take Pre-Calculus get a D or fail. We are designing learning communities to address that issue. Because that's one of the reasons you design a Learning Community, you look at things in the university that you want to help fix. One LC is focused on commuters- who are focused on science. And all non-residential communities are open to nontraditional, transfers, commuting students; there is no restriction at all.

Despite everything the university is doing to help historically underrepresented groups of students, it could always be doing more, like most other institutions of higher education. One administrator point of view on this topic is that,

You hear these things about diversity and multiculturalism, but there is a financial bottom line to that as well. Ultimately it is financially profitable to be known as a diverse university. But if historically underrepresented and marginalized students are not participating in a university and are not excelling through in comparable numbers to their white and Asian classmates, there is a moral imperative to do more there. That's not to say the university isn't well meaning; most universities don't drill down that specifically. Well we're bringing more in. But is there equity in terms of graduation rates? Or equity in representation of Black and Latino students among those students going to graduate school or participating in highly selective cocurricular opportunities. I

think back to the Fulbright students last year: there were no students of color in that group. I'm not surprised by that. I've seen over the years in graduations, all students with 4.0, typically no Black or Latino students are among that group.

Some ideas of what more that can be done to support students in underrepresented minority groups, and retain these students, are shared by one administrator:

[Even in these reform efforts] there needs to be... some synergy around aligning all efforts focused on equity of diversity at the university and trying to get them in conversation with each other. Aligning them in a structural way where there is some leadership from the institution around those issues. And being able to leverage the assets of those different programs. So you have the McNair research program in place but that is intentionally aligned and connected with EOF, that provides undergraduate access, and certainly those types of programs are aligned to some of the cultural centers, and even the curricular departments, ethnic studies, women and gender studies curricular departments. So my whole point is there is a synergy around these efforts, there is some intentionality in collaborating across departments, versus really depending on human agency.

Currently, many universities around the country that share similar missions and enrollment sizes as Rutgers have senior-level leadership for comprehensive diversity and equity efforts that helps to make these collaborations happen. They provide leadership, help programs to share resources and communicate with each other, and may help in providing common themes to focus on.

### *Nontraditional Student Support*

A common theme in administrator interviews is that there is a need to improving the services for nontraditional students at RUNB, because they are lacking. Their fear is that the diminished services for University College Community students may affect their retention and graduation rates. Before the TUE changes were implemented, a Task Force was also assembled to make recommendations for how best to serve nontraditional students at the university. This task force generated a report that came out in March of 2007, and included recommendations regarding the establishment of the University College Community (UCC), and about which groups of students at the university should be considered nontraditional and given access to be

part of the UCC. The report said that a student (regardless of their school at the university)

should be invited to join UCC if they met one of the following criteria:

- Has been out of high school for 4 or more years at the time of application to RUNB or at time of first registration
- Is part-time taking fewer than 12 credits for 2 semesters or more
- Has had an interruption (typically 2 years or more) of formal undergraduate education either at Rutgers or before attending Rutgers
- Has significant non-academic commitments, for example, documented issues pertaining to work, family, mental or physical health, or finances that would preclude or severely impede a student from obtaining a degree through traditional academic full-time study
- Is not enrolled in a degree program (non-matriculated)
- Is pursuing post-baccalaureate studies primarily in undergraduate courses
- Is pursuing an off-campus degree completion program through a RUNB School (Rutgers University College Community, 2009).

The UCC was charged with providing nontraditional students with “general counseling and advising, certain enrollment services, academic support, and cocurricular and special academic programs” (RUNB, 2007). This report uses the UCC definition of “nontraditional” students at RUNB; “nontraditional” does not only mean “adult learner.”

#### *Who are the Nontraditional Students at RUNB?*

The new Dean of the UCC took on the task of investigating the characteristics of students who were admitted to the former University College. Prior to her analysis of the data, she and much of the university believed that the population of University College had consisted of adult students who were returning to school to get a practical degree, and of adult students who had never earned a bachelor’s degree and who were returning for personal reasons. She found that these groups of students were in the minority, and that instead, a lot of UC students were students who had transferred into the university from community colleges or other schools (73% of new 2007 UCC admits were transfer students, and 60% of continuing UC students were transfer students). In other words, it seemed that a lot of the students that UC served were students who were from working-class backgrounds who could not afford to attend



RUNB in a traditional way, perhaps because they were working full-time jobs to pay for school and were attending on a part-time basis, or because they were parents, or veterans, or had taken a break from school for various reasons, often financial in nature. Often, these students do not qualify for financial aid because their parents are still claiming them as dependents for tax purposes, because part-time students cannot get as much financial aid, and because of the increasing shift from giving need-based scholarships to merit-based scholarships, to improve a university's profile and ranking. While this much is known about UCC students by its Dean, one faculty member commented, "One problem that remains [since the TUE] is the so called University College Community. I don't have a clear sense of who these students are and how to identify them."

*UCC and UC statistics.* Of the remaining UC students in 2007, 81% were under the age of 31 and 58% were under 25; of the new 2007 UCC students, 82% were under 31 and 55% were under 25. In terms of race, new 2007 UCC admits include 58% white students, 20% Asian students, 10% Hispanic students, and 8 percent Black students. Of the continuing UC students, 53% are white, 17% are Asian, 9% are Hispanic, and 14% are Black. There is a notable decline in the numbers of Black students entering UCC in 2007, compared to continuing UC students, meaning that fewer Black students chose to join the UCC than had enrolled in it in years past; overall, 9% of RUNB students are Black. The reason for this decline is unknown, but the percentage of newly enrolled first-year students in New Brunswick that are Black did not drop by much in 2007 (it dropped by less than a half a percentage point over 2006), and the percentage of transfer students who are Black did not change significantly, so the drop is not likely due to fewer Black students enrolling in RUNB. Furthermore, of the new 2007 admits to UCC, 18% are part-time students, compared to 37% of continuing UC students who are part-time. Finally, only 7% of the Fall Semester 2007 admits to UCC are freshmen. The discrepancy

between this number and the 73% of Fall Semester 2007 admits who are transfer students is not understood.

The UCC dean also completed an analysis of the current status of services to nontraditional students at the university, who are often not able to attend school during the typical time period during the business week and during daytime hours. She determined that there were very few majors that students could complete by attending night, weekend, winter, and summer classes. The former UC, because it had its own source of funding generation, used these resources to entice faculty and departments to increase night and weekend course offerings, and to create courses that were for UC students only.

*Veteran students.* Another population of nontraditional students that is increasing, and that will continue to increase, is veteran students. Because of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008, which takes effect in August, 2009, students who met certain military service criteria can gain tuition for the most expensive state university in their state, for four years. This will likely lead to an increase in veteran students applying to and enrolling at Rutgers. The university has already called for mentors for Veteran students, to provide support and to identify and address concerns.

*Commuting students.* RUNB also has a large population of students who commute to campus. This year, there was an orientation designed especially for these students. Now that academic services and other student services have been consolidated, all deans are able to answer questions of any students, so commuter students can obtain these services on any campus. There are also a few student organizations targeted at serving commuters. In response to the TUE, one commuter student said,

I don't feel like I was as much personally affected by the changes because I'm off campus. It seems like it more affects on campus students, with the housing and stuff like that. But any big change that a university does, it's going to have problems with it, and it's going to cause more [problems] and I just think it's bad timing, with the economic

problems going now, now budget cuts and everything. It's hurting this transition and everything else in general.

*Transfer students.* In July 2007, the SAS Transfer Center, with its own deans and director, was formed as a result of the TUE. In the past, each college handled transferring of credits from non-Rutgers colleges differently. The TUE has forced SAS to have consistent rules about which classes transfer and which do not, and to publicize these policies on the SAS Office of Academic Services website. Advocates of nontraditional students at the university have pointed out that the university does not consistently accept credits earned by students taking online courses, and this is a direction that they want SAS and the university to move into, in order to increase flexibility and support nontraditional students.

One administrator described the changes in service to transfer students, as a result of the TUE,

As is the case with the admission of first-year students, each of the colleges admitted transfer students themselves, and they don't have the opportunity to bring together the academic departments and the general advising these students would need before they arrive on campus. Each individual had systems of trying to evaluate transfer credit. By putting together the bits and pieces of people who had these responsibilities, well the people doing it are new, but the effort and person power meant we could provide a program for these students in advance and far better evaluation of transfer credit and advising of these students in advance, and offer them programs during the first year that they are here. Some colleges could do some of these well before, but there was a great deal of wasted effort, and this was an opportunity for us to focus the effort successfully.

As a result, transfer students are automatically enrolled in a 1-credit transition seminar. These seminars are intended to:

- Help transfer students to make a smooth transition to Rutgers,
- Provide the information and self-assessment skills necessary to facilitate successful academic performance and to address developmental needs during the first term,
- Begin the development of necessary information technology skills and provide an introduction to the computer resources available at Rutgers,
- Provide students with information about the services available at the College that will ensure academic success, and
- Promote the student's successful connection with the institution academically and socially (Rutgers SAS, 2009).

Another change with the TUE is that transfer students now have to affirmatively apply to be a member of the UCC, so students can decide for themselves whether they meet the UCC criteria and if they want its services. Some transfer students have appreciated not automatically being assigned to University College, but to the larger SAS.

A Learning Community was recently established for transfer students in STEM majors.

One administrator talked about the process of developing this Learning Community:

We have a Learning Community for transfer students. One of the things we discovered was that it sounded like a good idea and I think it's needed, but we found that you can't really do linked courses for transfer students because they are all over the place in terms of what courses they are placed into in the sciences. They've taken the introductory level courses, so they might be in genetics, systems, organic chemistry, introduction, some may have finished their chemistry. So you can't take them all and put them in one set of linked courses. So what we worked out to do as a linked course is SAS requires a 10-week 1-credit Students in Transition seminar (STS), which is a planned seminar, so you get a syllabus and things to do. Most of it is taught by staff members who do it voluntarily. What we offered to transfer students with an interest in science is if you join this LC, your STS will be taught by a real faculty member. ... There are a whole number of topics that are set up to do. Someone from Health Services comes in to talk about wellness, we're going to Career Services this week to talk about careers, there is a session at the library on library resources and how to use the library, sections on how to register, on advising, they have a passport they have to fill out by going to various events. Just for transfer students. They are required to take it. 1 semester pass/fail.

The development of other Learning Communities for transfer students is under discussion.

#### *Changes from University College (UC) to University College Community (UCC)*

In its new form, UCC has done a lot in the past year to inform the university about the working-class nature of its nontraditional students, and to advocate for improved services and financial aid for these students. The UCC has continued UC programs such as providing mathematics tutorials and advocacy in areas such as helping UCC students to be able to park on any campus to attend classes, advocating for more night and weekend classes to be offered, as well as pushing to increase services that students can access online. Some other issues that have come up are that part-time students are not eligible for football tickets, which the UCC believes

they should be, so they can be more engaged with the culture of the university. Similarly, one idea is for activities, such as speakers, to be broadcast online so students can access this programming from home, if they are unable to make it to campus for an activity that they are interested in. However, UCC, unlike UC, no longer has financial resources to use to help advocate and provide these types of services, though it intends to work on fundraising to help these efforts.

UC used to be located on College Avenue Campus, and during the first year after the TUE, the offices of UCC were moved to Livingston Campus, near to the SAS Deans for Transfer and Nontraditional students. The UCC office was recently moved again to Douglass Campus, to be located near the offices of Continuing Education and Outreach.

SAS also has a Dean for Nontraditional students, who serves students who qualify to join UCC and also various other student groups, such as NCAA athletes, and students with disabilities. However, some people at the university are still expressing confusion regarding how the role of this dean overlaps that of UCC, and where they should send nontraditional students for advisement. SAS also has a Dean for Transfer Students.

#### *TUE Changes for Nontraditional Students*

Before the TUE, University College used to accept students with lower average GPAs than those of the other colleges. Now, Admissions may admit a nontraditional student with a GPA of 2.7, but in the past, students with lower GPAs may have been admitted. This means that some students who would have applied to University College in the past would not be admitted to SAS. For the most part administrators are happy about this situation because they feel that the students with lower GPAs who were admitted to UC often were not able to graduate from the university because of their lower academic standing. Some felt that some of these students were wasting money and did not have a degree to show for their time and efforts. It is not yet

known if the graduation rate for nontraditional SAS students, including UCC students, is the same as that of UC students.

One system change that has affected nontraditional students is the attention they are said to be receiving from the Deans of Students. The Deans of Students are not only in charge of looking after on-campus students, but all other students as well. For example, all Deans of Students are on call one day week in case a crisis happens for on or off-campus students, for an example, to support students during a major off-campus apartment fire. The Deans of Students also have hours extending into the evening this year.

#### *Administrator Perspectives on Support of Nontraditional Students*

Many administrators continue to be dissatisfied with the support of nontraditional students with the TUE changes. Some faculty members also feel the same way, as one shared, “I find the lack of presence of the University College Community to be quite distressing. This is a group of students with little to no voice.” Some administrators believe that at least at first, University College students were not given adequate information to be prepared for all of the changes that were taking place. In some unfortunate instances, University College students, when they returned to campus for Fall Semester 2007, were not aware of the changes that had taken place, and returned to UC offices that had moved elsewhere. Some administrators report University College students being very confused about how they TUE changes applied to them, where they should be going for services, and what the function of the UCC office was.

Some administrators believe that UC should have never been eliminated from the university. They believe that because the needs of nontraditional students are so unique, they are not well-served by the overarching policies of SAS, which are geared more toward the traditional student:

We just don't have the structure for [supporting nontraditional students] and we should decide if we want to have that structure, and then commit one way or the other. Because we talk about it, but we do nothing to require departments to teach their courses on nights and weekends so they can complete the major. We don't publish a list of majors that can be completed on nights and weekends. We have policies that can be viewed as unnecessarily restrictive to true nontraditional students. And we have no way of setting policies different between the two. We shouldn't have eliminated UC; we should have just fixed it. But that's my personal opinion. I think we need to make a commitment. And we offer very little online and distance learning.

There is also the obstacle that each of the colleges interpreted university policies in different ways. With the TUE, these policies are being interpreted and enforced much more consistently for all students. This means that continuing UC students are experiencing somewhat less flexibility in policies than they used to when UC still existed. For example, UC students were used to having access to retroactive withdrawals, where if they had to stop attending a class, they could ask for a refund for their tuition after the course was over, and have F grades turned into a W. Students are no longer permitted to do this. Some students have found policy changes like this difficult to accommodate.

A more positive view on the consistent enforcement of policies has to do with the recent economic downfall. In the past, UC students would have easily been allowed to take a semester off or to be part-time, whereas Rutgers College students were not allowed to be part-time unless it was their final semester. Now with all students being part of one liberal arts college and with policies being enforced consistently, the university needs to take into account the needs of nontraditional students and be more flexible for all students. One administrator believes,

I think with the TUE, because we have a more holistic approach to the students, we can say okay, all students will be affected by the economy, how will we accommodate the needs of those students whether they classify as nontraditional or not; these are different times. So it can sort of take the philosophy of how we address a broader range of issues, than the traditional 18-22 living on campus, working 15-20 hours a week at most.

Some administrators truly understand the value of having nontraditional students as active members of the RUNB community:

The best analogy I can make is if you think of the nontraditional student as the air-conditioning, you'll have the university with window units, the cooling is in some places and not in others. Or you could build a system where it's in place, and it's everywhere. I think the analogy is good because the value a nontraditional student adds to every classroom is huge. The nontraditional student might talk about if they feel old when they go into a room and the students are talking about this or that contemporary issue. [But the younger students] are talking about it from a position of observation rather than experience. ... [RUNB either has] a commitment to diversity or we don't. If we do have a commitment, we have to be committed to all kinds of diversity. Nontraditional can't be thought of as just old. We are also the state institution, and the flagship of the state institution, and being that, we have an obligation to accessibility for all residents of state of NJ. And that's part of our history, that's part of our future, and the Task Force on Undergraduate Education, what they doing-- they are improving the quality of the undergraduate experience. And that can only be accomplished by meeting the needs of all undergraduates. It's a reinforcing thing. If you make it better for the nontraditional, you've made it better for everyone. And again, you can look at the issues about the economics. How can we use what we learned about meeting the needs of the nontraditional student, because the joke is there is no more such thing as the traditional student, because that's what bad economic times does.

Another administrator shared a similar sentiment about how the university as a whole can benefit by being responsible for all students, not just the type of student that was served by one of the former colleges:

We talked a lot about the fact that where institutions can be successful is that they integrate the idea of working with nontraditional students throughout all of what they do. And that is not possible in our old structure. I'm seeing now that people are thinking: if you are a student at RUNB, you are a student. Whereas before it was easy to say well who are you, are you a student here, and administrators were able to say, you don't fit under my area, you are there and you are their problem. That doesn't exist anymore. Although I don't have proof of it, my anticipation is that I think nontraditional students could benefit or are benefiting from the new structure because there isn't a debate anymore about where they fall. But again I can't prove that, and you may be hearing differently from them. In the bigger picture, I would think, that from the discussions in the field, this is a better structure for them to succeed.

According to one administrator, an optimal strategy to increase services to some nontraditional students is to create a School of Continuing Education Studies. This school would have its own policies, faculty, and services for adult students.



### *Student Perspective on UCC*

I spoke to a group of nontraditional student leaders, some who had come into the university under UC, some who had entered under SAS, and all of whom were current UCC members. They had a lot to say, such as that having the UCC office moved around a few times has been confusing and inconvenient for them, especially now that it is not centrally located on College Avenue Campus. Many of the students enjoyed the convenience of the UC Dean's office, where they were able to go in the past for all of the advising and services they needed. Some nontraditional students utilize the advising offered by UCC instead of talking to SAS deans, because of the personal attention offered by UCC. Interestingly, most of the students at the meeting were not aware of the existence of the SAS Dean for Nontraditional students.

A few of the students said that they were happy they would be receiving a degree from SAS rather than UC when they graduate, because they thought this would be more prestigious, and they would not be discriminated against by employers for attending a college for nontraditional students, especially since they believed that many people in New Jersey believed that the standards to be accepted into UC were lower than other colleges at Rutgers. Other students are happy that they can get support as nontraditional students without having to sacrifice any academic prestige:

Instead of in the past, where it was confusing and you got degrees from all over, Livingston College, Douglass College, University College, Rutgers College, now it's just SAS. Maybe some students would have felt that they didn't want a degree from UC, etc, they wanted to be wanted to be Rutgers College, but still wanted to identify with the nontraditional unit. Now you can be SAS, but can still be in the UCC, where in the past you had to decide between Rutgers College and UC. Now it's combined, now it's just one identity, without the competition. I think it's good, and much less confusing, and at the same time you have UCC and the dean's office, and that's not really affecting you on the academic side.

At the same time, the graduation requirements for SAS students are different than they were for UC students in a few ways. Now, SAS students are required to graduate with a minor,

which some UCC students believe will cause them to take longer to graduate. It also requires many students to pass the Calculus course, which is also thought to be an additional challenge for nontraditional students, many of whom have not taken mathematics courses in many years.

One student commented,

I guess you are walking a fine line because you're getting the same degree as everyone else, but some expectations looked into, like not having a minor, not requiring certain kinds of math for certain majors. It was better for- if someone wants to come here part-time for a major, taking night and weekend classes- it already takes them forever to do that. Now you want to throw a minor in there when you don't offer enough classes to do the major?

These students lamented the loss of other benefits that they felt UC provided to students, such as specialized classes:

There were some, I don't know if they still exist, but classes that were only open to UC students. But if you here is freshmen UC students, Expos, all the requirements, there were some classes just for UC students, where I met people. And those classes, my point is that since all of us in that class were UC and adult students, the professor knew how it worked, we were adults. I'm glad I took it through that section instead of a regular section with regular students, because I felt like it would have been harder. I don't know if those classes still exist with this transformation, and if they don't, that means we have to take those classes with everyone else and that might make it harder.

Some students believed that the specialized services that UC had offered had facilitated their retention in the university. One student said that being a student in UC did not affect his choice to apply to or enroll at RUNB; however, it has helped in his ability to continue:

I didn't know, they just kind of threw me in [UC]. After I was in it, I was glad it existed because I noticed a difference. I am a full-time student, unlike lots of part-time UC students, and I came here as a freshman. What made me different was I was a veteran, I didn't go to school for a long period of time. Knowing that they did cater to adult students, I felt more comfortable to stay here. And I felt like because of UC, I'm still here.

Other students expressed the hope for more scholarship money for UCC students, many of whom are often part-time and are not as eligible for grants and financial aid.

Some students believe that one of the best services that UCC can and does offer is the understanding of nontraditional students and where they are coming from. When

nontraditional students get advising from UCC or the SAS Dean for Nontraditional Students, they are not viewed as the odd student out, but that the administrators are trained to help them and their somewhat special situations. One veteran student shared, “There is a resolution now about veterans, for G. I. Bill, and the payments come monthly, so we can never pay the whole term bill on time. So we have to register late no matter what. And end up paying a late fee, and it gets confusing. Since we have UCC, we know there are ways around that, different ways to fix problems.” Another student had this experience:

[UCC staff] can actually talk to us in a more adult fashion, which is nice. The transfer dean is really not set up for nontraditional students. (Why?) Well you can start by looking at the mandatory transfer program. I had to take a course in how often to change bed sheets, what to bring to a party, um I’m 35. Stuff like that was mandatory. You talked to the UCC or UC and they just have rapport established with people. I understand why you would hire a transfer dean that speaks well with young people, but that doesn’t always translate to someone who is older with a different set of priorities.

UCC also provides social connections and networking for students. “When the UC had the Dean’s dinner in the fall, a lot of the adult students were able to interact, meet each other, the veteran’s dinner in the spring, events from the UC dean’s office, that are a necessity for veterans to meet each other, be thanked for their service, for adult students meet their dean, meet each other.” The students are hoping to have a lounge area provided for them in the new UCC location in the hotel on Douglass Campus. One student was interested in more networking and facilitated communication with other UCC students:

As adult students, a lot of times you’re interested in networking with other students to make the academic part of your life easier. You’re not looking for a social life. There is such a push to get involved with fun, but in reality I’d like to have more access like how students do in the dorms, just to find out about professors, did you know, more of a forum and information about the school itself, instead of enriching your social life.

It should also be remembered that although concerns were expressed about adult students, the UCC’s definition of “nontraditional” includes a broad range of students.

In conclusion, these students recognize that they are going to be graduating with what is thought to be a more rigorous degree from SAS, but that they will have a more difficult time getting to the point that they can graduate, because of the new curriculum and their perception of fewer supports. Nontraditional student leaders, some faculty, and some administrators agree that more can and should be done to support the needs of nontraditional students.

Considering everything, RUNB has made many changes to address the goal of attracting and supporting high quality students, including underrepresented and nontraditional students. Its main scholarships are geared toward attracting students with very high SAT and GPA scores, and a diverse group of students. The Honors Program and the EOF program are other attractions to the university for high quality students. The university is now strategically recruiting out-of-state and international students as well. The changes from the TUE, and a number of outside factors, have led to an increased enrollment in the university, and an improvement in the profile of incoming students, meaning that RUNB is doing many things right to attract many students to apply and enroll.

To retain students, a few programs exist for very low performing students to teach them study skills and to help students navigate the university. Emergency funding also exists for students who cannot afford books or necessities and who might otherwise drop or stop out. Many support programs target underrepresented students, including EOF, Student Support Services, and the McNair Program. To support nontraditional students, the University College Community has been created to take the place of University College, and provide assistance to nontraditional students who choose to join. However, many administrators are aware that nontraditional students need more support within the university.

## Chapter Six: What Has Been Done To Reduce Roadblocks and Inequities and Improve the Delivery and Consistency of Services For Students?

Attempts have been made to reduce the pre-TUE roadblocks students encountered in accessing services at colleges other than their own. Some other documented roadblocks have been the confusion of where to go for services, the unequal distribution of resources, and the inefficiencies in many university systems. Each of these difficulties contributed to the RUNB community's perception of perpetual student encounters with the "RU Screw." The former college system was also thought by some to be discriminatory toward less-privileged students because "second-class colleges" had fewer resources before TUE. In order to answer this evaluation question, this chapter describes the efforts to reduce confusion within and outside the university, the centralizing of resources to provide more efficient and less redundant services, and improving the equity of services provided to students. Because these changes occurred for many reasons such as through the centralization of resources, changes to the university budget, and the expansion in use of online services and databases, these overarching changes will be described as well.

Since the TUE, there are reports of less confusion about the structure of university by members of the community and prospective students. This includes less use of administrator time in explaining the structure to potential students and parents. Also, there is now usually one person in charge of a particular program or function, instead of four individuals. Many services have been centralized or consolidated throughout the TUE process. These changes have also facilitated more systematic collaboration among departments, now that positions are consolidated and specialized and roles are clear. Another immediate effect of this new structure is that schools and departments no longer have to protect their resources for use by their own students, and can share and collaborate. One administrator has found that with the TUE,

“collaboration has been WAY better. I feel like there is less of a territorial nature. [Before] there was always a sort of ‘well we don’t do that here, we can’t do that here, you have to go [there] that.’ I think I see less of that now.”

This problem of some colleges being considered “second class” was not superficial, because it had real consequences for some groups of students. One administrator explained the implications of the situation well:

In theory it’s been good to provide equitable opportunities for students that are no longer college based. Because in the past, and this is one of the key arguments of TUE, [and in] promoting it—if you were in a certain college and the criteria to get into Rutgers College was higher than for other colleges, and Rutgers College being the largest had the largest enrollment, most resources, most programs—it becomes a class and race stratification along opportunities, by virtue of being or not being a Rutgers College student. I’m glad that that has somewhat been alleviated.

Another interesting effect of students all being members of one liberal arts college is that some students think graduating with “School of Arts and Sciences” on their diploma instead of one of the “second class” colleges will mean less discrimination when they look for jobs in New Jersey, because of state employers’ familiarity with the reputations of the former colleges.

A differing view point about the TUE and the elimination of the colleges to reduce roadblocks for students is that making all services consistent for all students does not recognize the variation in the student body. One administrator thought that,

The risk of the TUE and getting rid of the colleges is that the colleges didn’t come about by accident; they were all created to meet specific needs. Those needs do change, but at the same time you can’t throw out the baby with the bathwater. And we are an extremely heterogeneous population, and one size does not fit all. And the challenge is to address all those needs within a unified structure. We don’t have the natural process for that any more, but we still have the diversity of student need- how do we accomplish that with a unified system?

This complexity in the centralizing and consolidating of services will be described in this chapter. The descriptions of the program changes and activities come primarily from administrator(s) in charge of the respective program or area.

### *Centralization of Overarching Administrative Functions*

#### *Refinement of the Dean of Students Role*

One overarching change that has led to better coordination of services and that has aimed to reduce confusion on the part of the university community is the refinement of the role of the Deans of Students (DoS). Each campus has a DoS housed on location, and these administrators serve as a clearinghouse for many student services. Both residential and non-residential students can get help from a DoS, which was not necessarily the case in the past for non-residential students. The Deans of Students have three major roles. One responsibility area is helping to coordinate crisis management. Staff and faculty as well as students have been instructed to contact one of the DoS if a student is having a difficult time or an emergency situation, and needs logistical help in navigating a policy or obtaining university services. Secondly, the DoS are preliminary judicial deans, and can conduct an initial review of suspected violations of the student code of conduct. Finally, the DoS are supposed to help to create community on their home campuses, through actions such as attending campus council meetings. One administrator has observed:

I think it's nice that [Deans of Students are] centrally organized. I really think that speaks to the type of information that is shared; before, information was not shared across campuses. Now that things have become centralized there is more of a free flow of information. Things that we might not have known about [on one campus] we now know about because there is that central organizing office.

Each DoS takes turns being "on call" to respond to major off-hours emergencies such as the death of a student or a major fire, both on campus and off campus. Residence Life responds to most other situations or emergencies, and the DoS are notified of these incidents the following day. If a student has a sudden emergency, such as getting into an automobile accident, a DoS can contact the student's professors, and talk to various offices to arrange a leave of absence for the semester. There have been reports that the coordination of services provided

by the DoS have actually helped to save the lives of a few suicidal students. They can jump to action to get counselors to a student, and to inform parents of an emergency. One administrator commented on this improved communication that has come out of the DoS role:

Now because we are centralized, folks know they can go to any office and we can help any student. So it's a much more streamlined process to get students the assistance that they need. [For example if] a student is struck by car outside a residence hall: residence staff knows to call over here and we contact the faculty, get them excused from classes, we try to work through what they need to do, we work with the counseling centers, work with disability support services to get them transportation when they return to classes, we work with academic services to reduce their course load, and the same thing happens in any one of those crises, like for suicidal students. And I think because it's a central place on each campus, it's easier to remember, instead of having to track down 5 to 6 different people, they know they can come to me with a student in crisis and I can connect them with all of the pieces they need. Also, because it's one person, it's a much deeper relationship there. So it becomes not just crisis consultations but an everyday thing. It might not be a student in crisis because we've already developed a good rapport, and we have a good collaborative relationship from all of the different projects we're working on. There's an everyday kind of consultation that goes on: we're thinking of doing this, do you have any thoughts; can you sit on this committee to review that? So even when folks are implementing changes, because of the crises that might have come about that forged those relationships, there is a greater opportunity to provide input and bounce ideas back and forth.

One recent change to the role of the Dean of Students is the elimination of the policy of writing "sniffles letters" [a letter of excuse from class]. A policy was in place for many years that if students missed a class, they needed a letter of excuse from a Dean of Students to give to the professor, even if they had a note from a physician. One DoS said meeting with students to generate these letters around finals and midterms would use an average of 4.5 of 6 hours of office time per day; 9,000 of these letters were prepared each year. While meeting with students to write the letters helped the DoS to identify some students who needed to be referred for counseling for various reasons, it also took a lot of time away from students with more complicated issues. Now, students are told to go to DoS for one of these letters for more serious matters such as missing a midterm exam or several classes due to more serious emergencies. The hope is the DoS will have time freed up to do more proactive work, such as



meeting with student leaders and student employees, or students who need assistance in making academic action plans to make up for missing two weeks or more of classes. One DoS said he still tends to write these letters, especially for students in larger classes where faculty and students do not have much of a trusting relationship.

One Dean of Students reflected on the new conceptualization of their role and the more seamless services to students that they can provide,

Our office on each one of the campuses is the nexus where those two things come together and can be more smoothly negotiated. So whether that student is trying to find academic assistance, stemming from some personal problems that came out of something that happened in a residence hall, counseling center, or something that came out of a classroom experience that needs to be translated and renegotiated for the student as well. So I think there have been a lot of interactions there that in the past might have given the students the RU screw where they get bounced around because it was generated in one unit but they didn't necessarily have a solution there. I think within our offices it's been a good piece that we've been able to kind of blur that line a little bit and bring both pieces of that together in a way that's better for students.

Because the position of DoS and their role is still somewhat unfamiliar to students and staff, many do not understand the difference between the Dean of Students and the Campus Deans. One faculty member said, "Students do not know which deans perform which functions. What does the Campus Dean do? What does the Dean of Students do? If I want to be excused from class because of a death in the family, where do I go?" These positions sometimes work together to plan community activities, but Campus Deans are actually faculty members who are charged with helping other faculty members to become more engaged with undergraduates, and help them to plan cocurricular events involving undergraduates. Some administrators still have the opinion that students were well-served through the small colleges like Douglass College; one said,

I think within the colleges there were alliances that were very productive for students, and have been temporarily disrupted, and haven't yet had the opportunity to reform. I'll use Douglass as an example: within Douglass, which was a much smaller community, we had a very tight working relationship between student life, residence life, and academic services, and when a student was in trouble in one of those three areas, we had a

network and a team approach so we could get that student connected to all of the relevant services. I don't think the same kinds of things have fully matured, yet, I think there are still some gaps, particularly for the marginal student, and for students who feel marginalized.

Based on this opinion, there is still work to be done to cement new, trusting relationships among staff, and to make the RUNB community realize that this type of coordination is now the role of the DoS.

#### *Move to More Database and Online Resources*

The TUE had wide ranging influence on many areas of the university, and university departments responded by undergoing a major overhaul to provide updated information about the new structure and policies of the university. When all of the liberal arts colleges were combined into SAS, their websites were removed and information was unified in one SAS website. One administrator explained the significance of this accomplishment: "We haven't done a good job [collaborating among colleges] in the past, and the reason we couldn't do it is we couldn't pool resources, because everyone had to have their own website, we couldn't have one, we had five separate, and nobody could pull that together, and it took some organizational control." Databases and student data were also consolidated, so that staff had access to information about all students, not just students in their previous colleges. Some examples of online services include:

- A system to refer students to the counseling center
- The online housing lottery for on-campus housing
- An application system to join Learning Communities
- A website of all student life activities
- A scheduling system for Student Support Services tutoring sessions
- Fitness classes and intramural sports scheduling and registration
- Learning Centers tracking of tutoring activities using ID swipes and a database system

The consolidation of Academic Services necessitated the creation of a university-wide database system to keep track of students. A system to store paperwork electronically is also

being put into place. One administrator explains the shift to and need for this new system, called MyAdvisor:

[Before TUE] there weren't really databases, so we've created some significant database information, partly because we had to. Because being spread in four physical locations, if we're going to serve students equitably, everybody needs to be on the same page. If any one student shows up at any place, everybody needs to know all of the information about the students. So we've set up a database for advisors that allows all advisors to see what has been told to the students. We didn't have that before. No one had that electronically before, just paper files. We are in the process of setting up a complete electronic file system that will allow our advisors in all offices to see students' complete files, including scanned copies of paper information. We didn't have this before. Under the old system, students would show up at the advising office of other colleges and couldn't be advised and had to go back to their home college. We don't do that now. And as we move forward, we won't be dependent on moving the paper file. All of the information goes with the student—if they take a course somewhere else— it's a part of the file. Various things like official communication to the students, for instance students with scholastic standing problems, those just used to be paper documents in a file, and now they are electronic in this system, so a part of this system allows for electronic input.

Staff members that have access to the Academic Services database can do searches by student class or major, for example, and send that specific group of students an email about something like a research assistant opportunity.

SAS EOF also developed a database system where all counselors can share information and notes about their students. One EOF administrator explained the benefits of the EOF database:

I am the m of Access [a relational database program]. I maintain all of the academic databases for the program. If someone contacts us and says we have a scholarship—and our students are a great population, because they have the financial need, so if they can match the merit requirements—so they say we're looking for a woman, African-American decent, majoring in this, I do the search and come up with names. Before that, we had a database that had been part of the University College's academic advising database, and we've tweaked it with the help of our IT folks. So when a student comes in, we can write down who the student is, the student's status, a little bit of commentary about the nature of the visit. One of the things we can do is go in—and the counselors also have this ability—and we can look at the meetings with students. If a student contacts me about a follow up about something, I can go in and see all of the past interactions that counselors had with the students, so I am on board when the student comes in. This information feeds into the annual report to the state.

Using Access, EOF administrators could easily see that the program had 10,075 student contacts during the 2007-2008 school year, whereas this information had to be counted by hand in the past to generate yearly reports to the State of New Jersey. Some EOF counselors also have access to the Academic Services database, MyAdvisor, because they also do some retention-related counseling for SAS.

One remarkable demonstration of centrally organized services moving online was by the Rutgers Learning Centers. Since the TUE, students can search for group tutoring services by content area or by campus via the Rutgers Learning Centers (RLC) website. Online schedules of tutoring sessions are published each week. Students can also apply to be tutors online, and applications are reviewed centrally, instead of by an individual learning center. Once students register for tutoring with Honors Program tutors, confirmation emails are automatically sent out to tutors and students with information about the time and place for tutoring. In addition, online tutoring is also available. Students can log into Knight Line: Rutgers' Electronic Tutoring Program, and view tutoring availability by their personal class schedule. Also, online tutors are available to answer questions, from 9:00 p.m. until midnight. Students can also view the office hours of introductory level professors who staff the Math and Science Learning Center on Busch Campus, electronically; the RLC webpage also lists the office hours of those faculty members who hold their office hours at the learning centers.

The RLCs also have a swipe card system that stores information in a database pertaining to student use of tutoring services, academic coaching appointments, and other resources that have been utilized. Based on this information from this database, students are sent electronic surveys about the quality of the tutoring services they have received, for assessment purposes. The RLCs recently developed an assessment instrument to gather data on self reported learning strategies and their relationship to learning performance for a sample of students who use

learning center services; this project has been facilitated by the data kept by the RLCs. The RLCs have also centralized workshop and academic coaching requests, which can be made through an online form. The RLCs are currently developing a way to facilitate online writing tutoring, as well.

Overall, an important impact of the TUE has been to promote the need for and use of information organization through databases and online services. Now, redundant efforts and resources by individual schools do not need to be spent on the development of these systems. These data collection and management systems also make responses to accreditation requirements and other accountability agencies easier to document and share.

#### *Budget Centralization*

Before the TUE, the colleges controlled their own funding allocations: student fees were paid to the college, with amounts of fees varying by college, and the college administration distributed the fees based on the specific needs of each college. Now, the budgets for campus-based services such as student centers, programs and recreation have been centralized and are funded through a campus fee, and the services provided by individual schools are supported by a school based fee. Full-time undergraduates pay about \$1,913 in campus fees each year and \$76 in school fees. In the past, there were dozens of “little fees” that have now been consolidated into fewer fee categories. The Campus Fee is broken into four components: University, Health, Programs and Services, and Athletics fees. The University Fee goes to areas such as electric bills, debts service, and maintenance. In RUNB, the bulk of the Programs and Services Fee goes to Student Affairs, with smaller amounts supporting transportation and the Office of Undergraduate Education. One change that has occurred is that more fee money is going toward cocurricular activities that have ties to the academic core. Separate from the Campus Fee, the School Fee has two components: the Student Government Fee, and the

Decanal Fee. The fees that are paid to student governments are equal across all schools, and this money is said by administrators to be “sacred”, in that student governments alone decide how it is used. With the equalization of the fee system, it was hoped that all students would feel welcome to attend all events and use all services offered within the university.

Another budget change that impacted the TUE is the change to an all-funds budgeting system. According to this system, after university-wide expenses are paid, departments are given funding in conjunction with the number of new and continuing students that enroll in their school and in proportion to the number of credits in courses that are taught by each school. Before, funding for departments was not as tied to enrollment numbers. With this change, one administrator explained:

Departments play a strong role in making the enrollment direction plans, their growth plans, and then [we] work with them to make sure they have the revenue needed to run the program. State revenue dries up, and tuition and fees become the primary source of operating funds, so it becomes critical that everyone has an understanding of what those funds are, that departments understand the discount, which is what the scholarships are, what they’re going to lose, and understand what the net revenue gain that they’ll have to operate departments is.

Another TUE-related change is that the Office of Undergraduate Education now has a single centralized business office that handles all business related to financial management, accounting, budgeting, auditing, and human resources. At first, some staff members and administrators found this budget office to be confusing. These administrators used to control the budgets for their individual programs, and it was an adjustment to no longer have immediate oversight over these budgets. The Office of Student Affairs still uses multiple business offices that individually control the finances of Housing, Recreation, and others.

A final budget-related change associated with the TUE started with a large donation to the university from the Byrne family. This endowment has allowed the university to fund The

Byrne Family first-year seminars, and will eventually be used toward funding more cocurricular activities, such as faculty lead trips to museums or invitations to guest speakers.

*Alumni and Parents Associations Consolidated*

Another result of the TUE was that the respective Alumni Association and Parents Association for each liberal arts college were consolidated by the university. The Rutgers University Alumni Association was created, as well as the Rutgers Parents Association.

*Rutgers University Alumni Association (RUAA).* With the TUE, the RUAA was created to encompass the 19 existing alumni associations. Alumni admission to RUAA is free to all students and alumni. Development of RUAA was done in response to an Alumni Relations Task Force Report given in August, 2007, and RUAA was created in April, 2008. RUAA began sending *Rutgers Magazine* to all graduates (Rutgers has 370,000 living alumni worldwide). Other alumni organizations were allowed to continue to exist, but they can no longer collect fees, and they are not funded by the university in any way. One administrator commented on what he perceived to be the perspective of many Rutgers alumni,

I don't know if loyalty is the right word, but the concerns of graduates, alums and all, have been about the community they were in. And a lot of them feel the community kind of just got dissolved, into bigger RU. And they don't have an opportunity to reconnect with the smaller community the way they used to. And I think that is a concern, and we see that in the way the alumni association is transforming. I think the university wants to have a RU alumni association which I think is great, but I think each of the individual alumni organizations, the 19 that existed, most of them want to continue to function as a part of this larger organization. Many of the 19 were 501C3s and now there is one- there used to be a sort of an umbrella organization holding them together, and now there isn't that- there is an umbrella but it's coming from the university- RUAA. There are no dues, things have changed. They don't have dollars to function. A lot of the organizations- again, there were objectives and mission statement and everything. I guess university was thinking we'll be combining this into one. And each of the organizations said, eh, we'll stay our own, and you can divide up the money, and we'll kind of all work together. I'd say that is kind of unexpected- I don't think the university thought it would be as difficult as it might have been to get the alumni to jump on board.

The perception and impact of these changes on alumni active in the previous organizations is not known.

*Rutgers Parents Association (RPA)*. Because of the TUE, RUNB now has a university-wide Parents Association, with free membership for all parents of RUNB students. Prior to the TUE the only highly functioning parents association was for Cook parents, with 700 out of 2,900 families actively participating. The new RPA sent brochures to the 28,000 families of undergraduates at RUNB, inviting them to join the RPA, resulting in 1,600 families signing up for active involvement in the first year of existence, about 800 of which were parents of Cook/SEBS students (most of whom were already signed up because their Cook Parents Association membership carried over). They were also sent membership cards, which give parents access to many discounts on restaurants and other businesses in the New Brunswick area. Also, a 25-member RPA board has also been created, with 19 parents representing various parts of the university. While many more parents can now benefit from RPA, it will be challenging to expand the community-based Cook Parents Association to the entire university.

A RUNB-wide RPA Parents and Families weekend was also held for the first time in October, 2008, with many scheduled events and tours. All parents are being invited to Rutgers Day in April, 2009, which is a day where the entire community can come to RUNB and learn and experience what the university has to offer. The RPA is also working to organize activities for parents at the seven spring welcome days and 16 summer orientation programs for new students. The Parents Association also hopes that football tickets can be set aside for sale to parents to include them in this experience. 2,000 football tickets are currently reserved for parents to access during Parents and Family Weekend in Fall Semester 2009.



### *Centralization of Academic Undergraduate Education Offices and Services*

This section will explain some of the short term impacts of the centralization of offices and services at the university that characterized the TUE. It is important to note that in this report, “centralization” does not refer to moving to a single physical location, but to the merged coordination efforts of an office.

#### *Academic Advising Services and Policies Consolidated and made Consistent*

Academic advising for students in SAS has been centralized, as a result of the TUE. There are currently 19 SAS Deans serving 22,000 undergraduate students. Most of the SAS academic deans have specializations in areas such as first-year students, senior students, nontraditional students, transfer students, honors students, and students with poor academic standing and dismissals. These advising Deans currently are responsible for knowing several sets of graduation standards, one each for Rutgers, Douglass, Livingston, and University Colleges, and one for SAS. They are also responsible for processing graduation certifications, evaluating whether or not students have met graduation requirements, providing academic advising for all SAS students, putting out the Dean’s List and the lists of students in poor academic standing, and assisting with registration. Currently, academic advising is also being offered to students through the University College Community, and through the Douglass Residential College’s Pathway Advising, as well as through the EOF program. In the survey of faculty chairs (and TUE faculty committee members), many described their perspectives of the effects of the TUE on Academic Services because of their exposure to this office through student interactions with it.

In the past, students saw advisors from their respective colleges, who typically knew the graduation requirements and other policies for that college only. Now, SAS students can go to deans on any campus for advising, including Busch Campus, which never had academic advising

offices before—Rutgers College students living on Busch Campus had to travel to College

Avenue Campus for advising. One dean reflected that before the TUE,

When I'd see students on [Busch Campus], if I went to residence halls at night, I'd tell them to come to advising, come see somebody, to College Ave. It was moving mountains to get them down to the lounge at night, but getting them across the river [was much harder]. So what's been fun is now they've discovered advising on Busch, and they see they now have the services right on this campus. Especially the upperclassmen- they are not used to having us here. Especially one guy, we gave him the form to fill out and he said, 'so I have to take this to Milledoler?', and we said, 'no we can take the form, we are here.'

Another dean has noticed that new SAS students are very aware of their academic status,

"Students that have started at SAS since the restructuring are coming in with a much greater sense of: these are my requirements, these are my policies, these are my resources, these are all of the places I can go for help, whereas before that wasn't always very clear to a student."

Not only were academic advising services centralized, but graduation requirements and other policies were made consistent with the new SAS requirements. In Chapter 5, the standardization of the academic standing and dismissal policies was discussed, as well as the effects of the new graduation requirements on nontraditional students. One faculty member reflected on the former system in which students in the same class with the same professor followed very different academic policies:

I think there was a problem before—there were individual colleges that were autonomous units for academics, and for student life. And they had different rules, admissions outcomes, and different policies with respect to handling, for example, judicial affairs issues. So you had situations where a student would be kicked out of housing on one campus for doing something that would result in nothing more than an in-house disciplinary action. You had academic problems going back and forth among colleges. So there was a sense in which as a university it was so diverse and disparate in terms of fundamental policies, there was a sense that you were in a different place, and that's negative, I don't think that's a very positive thing to have. And then you have the perception that Rutgers College was the elite college, and Livingston College was where you went if you couldn't cut it. And Cook and Douglass were sort of in the middle in terms of that academic hierarchy, and of course that was fairly ridiculous because the students in Livingston College were doing everything exactly the same. So doing away with that was very positive.

In this study, it was very common for administrators and faculty to hold this point of view; it was widely agreed that the elimination of the variation in academic and other policies was beneficial for students, and for breaking down the impression of a hierarchy of colleges.

In 2011, a new Core Curriculum is supposed to go into effect for SAS students, which faculty members are working hard to develop and pilot in the next few years. One issue that has come up with the restructuring of the colleges and making of a new curriculum and graduation requirements is that prior to the TUE, the academic deans had input in the curriculum and graduation requirements for students at their respective colleges, but this is no longer the case; deans do not have a vote in decisions about the new SAS academic policies. One administrator described the current difficulties occurring in the process of faculty creating the new curriculum and graduation requirements for SAS:

It's only been one year, but I don't think faculty members are particularly interested in these issues. Or if they are, they are interested but not to the expense of the other things they are interested in. So I don't think it's getting the kind of considerate attention it used to get at the colleges when people volunteered to do this role for the colleges. Colleges all had faculty involved, but they chose to be involved. At SAS, people have been appointed to committees. And they don't put people on committees who say I don't want to do it, but they do put people on committees who need to do service for the department and they aren't doing anything else, and they aren't necessarily really into it. Most of the Assistant Deans actually have a background in Higher Education, master's degrees or PhDs where they actually studied Higher Education, so they know a lot of theory and are up on the literature and the faculty members are not, and don't want to hear it. ... They don't look at studies that say this is the trend; they just react from the gut of what they experience in their classrooms, or what they want to be experiencing. Or worse yet, something we all fall into is: 'This is how we did it when I was in college.' So I think that will take time to develop, and I'm sure it took time to develop in the colleges; it was just already here when I got here. But it's getting there and there are some really caring people.

From this administrator's perspective, considering the time pressure of creating policies before the first class of SAS students entered the university in Fall Semester 2007, the interim set of requirements for SAS students was a mash of the individual requirements from the former colleges, which need to be changed. The faculty is currently working on a new Core Curriculum:

The new sets they are working on are going to be better, because they are thinking about learning goals instead of labels, which is nice. It's being come up with by the faculty, so it took a year to get to a point where they had something to even talk about, and it'll be another year before anything really happens. They excluded the people who used to be involved in this process, who used to- the college people- from the committee, and that alienated a lot of [academic deans]. As I said, they have PhDs in higher education, and they could have informed the discussion, and instead were deliberately excluded from it, and many took it personally. I don't think it was malicious, but I do think it was deliberate.

The impressions of faculty regarding the new Core Curriculum are discussed in Chapter 8.

Another related change in the works is implementing the use of the MyAdvisor online system, where Deans can make notes about their meetings with students that others can access at later points in time or from different physical locations. This is important, because students can see any of the 19 deans for assistance, who are located on four campuses, so this should facilitate the sharing of information by deans. Another online system used in academic advising is the Degree Navigator program, which is a degree audit tool available to students and faculty advisors. One faculty chair believed this Degree Navigator system has been very useful, but that it does not replace face-to-face advising. Another faculty member mentioned having some serious problems with the system informing students that they will not be graduating, even though that was not the case. Academic Services acknowledges that it is not a perfect program, and that students should always go to see a person for confirmation of their academic standing. Some academic departments report keeping separate databases that track their students' accomplishments, and hold the impression that academic services is understaffed, which they believe has lead to challenges and the need to keep track of this information. Academic Services is currently working with departments to replace departmental databases with Degree Navigator, which departments can still use to keep department-specific notes. A positive result of Degree Navigator is that students and advisors can access important academic information,

giving this process transparency, and students have the ability to be aware of their degree standing.

Another criticism of Academic Services is that, even after the TUE, the process of declaring a major is believed by one faculty chair to be difficult: “the major declaration process has not gotten easier yet. In fact some changes in how students declare their major were made without our knowledge. Once we figured out what was happening, we were able to communicate our concerns and changes were made.” Additionally, one of the most common impressions of faculty members is that students are not aware of the existence or role of Academic Services or its deans, and that the students turn too often to faculty and departments with academic policy questions, instead of going to Academic Services or its website. One administrator believes the reason that students do not access Academic Services as readily is because they are told that RUNB is governed by the faculty, and that they are the authority in academic situations. One returning nontraditional student shared,

I find the new academic advising a little confusing. I went back to the UC dean’s office for academic advising in the fall because I didn’t like the new system. I’m glad they can still do advising in the UC dean’s office this year because I like going this year much better. I guess once all of the old UC students graduate, I hope they still have the ability to do advising, because easier to talk to UC deans than SAS, because there are always longer lines, it’s harder, and UC gives you the small feel in a large university.

It should also be noted that five out of seven student leaders at the UCC meeting did not know there was an SAS Dean for Nontraditional Students. Faculty views of academic services are described further at the end of this chapter.

### *Disability Services Centralized*

Prior to the TUE, there were representatives coordinating disability services at every college in the university, with about 15 coordinators in all, most of whom were deans and administrative assistants within the college. The university conducted a study of this system in

2005, and discovered that the best way to organize Disability Services was through a centralized model with three to four full-time staff members organizing the services. The changes were instituted with the TUE, and now that there are full-time employees who are experts at coordinating disability services an administrator said,

It works out a whole lot better that students have better access, and that there is continuity because people are doing this on a regular basis. One of the downfalls to the old system is when you have people with units where there are a small number of students to provide accommodations... Because they did this on such a limited basis, when it came time to employ the process where it was necessary to review the documentation and assign accommodations, a lot of times that process got bogged down, simply because people did it so infrequently, they didn't know how or when to do it.

With the new system, when students with a disability come to the university they are assigned a coordinator based on their disability. The coordinators are specialize in physical and psychological disabilities; learning disabilities, attention disabilities, and traumatic brain injury; and students who have a combination of disabilities. Disability Services hopes to soon have a coordinator who can solely serve students with psychological disabilities. After they are assigned a coordinator, students provide documentation of their disability and this is reviewed by committees specialized in the various types of disabilities. Once the paperwork is reviewed, students are informed about what types of accommodations they are eligible for. If they have not been approved for any accommodations, the student is notified of this and the justification for the decision. After the student is approved for accommodations, Disability Services produces a document for the student to share with their instructors about the accommodation (but not about the disability). In the past, mistakes were made during these various steps causing some students to not receive the accommodations they needed for testing or other needs.

This new centralized system is working well for many reasons. According to one administrator,

Because things have been centralized, we have all the files now for students. It's easier for us to maintain distribution lists and email lists; it's easier for us to contact students. We see the students on a fairly regular basis. Another way this has helped students—the financial aid office this year contacted us about scholarships specifically for students with disabilities, we were able to get that information out immediately to students. In the past that would have been for lack of a better term a bit of a disjointed effort, because there were so many different people involved.

One immediate benefit of this system is that Broad Street Partners, an organization that puts together job fairs with top employers, was able to attract 25 RUNB students to a career event in Manhattan, using the new Disability Services resources and database, versus one to two RUNB students who would have attended in the past.

Students seem to appreciate the new Disability Services system. One administrator shared that “on an anecdotal basis I’ve heard so many favorable comments by students about how much better organized things are now, how much clearer the process is for them.” One system that students like is that Disability Services has set up a clear protocol of what students need to do to obtain exam accommodations. Students are reminded of this process at the beginning of the semester, before midterms, and before final exams. They have to return an email with information about their exam times and locations with at least five business days of notice, so Disability Services can arrange accommodations. An administrator shared that, “I think it’s worked out much better for students, not just because it’s centralized and more organized and they have someone working on their behalf on a full-time basis, but also because we’ve eliminated a lot of the need for them to come back and forth to just do clerical things, and logistical things” such as signing up for exams.

One of the concerns of Disability Services is its current lack of a testing center; it works with very little dedicated space to accommodate student testing needs. Also, not having a local disability services office in each school is sometimes a concern to faculty members who are reluctant to release their tests. One administrator explained:

Most of the faculty members have been extremely supportive, and most seem to be fond of the new system. There are some however who are a little concerned because they liked to have things locally. ... So one of the things that we try to do is we try to situate exams near where the exam is taking place for the class, so students have access to their professors during the exam, or their TAs, so if they have questions, they have access to the instructor and TA, like the other students. One of the drawbacks to that is because we don't have a testing center you can't always situate the exam near the class. So we have to make do with what we can. For the most part, that's been probably the only real concern that faculty has had, but that's due more to the geography of the university than the decision to centralize things. Because, even if you were to put testing centers on all five campuses, a lot of professors still have a lot of anxiety about releasing their exams, because they are concerned about the integrity of their exams, so even if you had a testing center on each of the five campuses, that still doesn't address that anxiety piece.

Disability Services work closely with the Scheduling Office to book rooms for student testing because they only control one room on College Avenue Campus. It also faces coordination challenges because once a student informs the office about a test, staff has to schedule a proctor, a room, and obtain the test safely from the professors, who sometimes do not check emails nor work from the administrative hours of 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Often, testing at RUNB takes place late at night or on the weekends, which is an added logistical challenge.

One unexpected outcome of the consolidation of Disability Services had to do with not knowing how many students with disabilities would need to be served in RUNB:

We didn't anticipate the numbers that we got. Because everything was so disjointed for so long... [We] never really had a clear understanding of how many students we were serving. It was hard to do that if you have a large number of people involved in this enterprise, so it was hard to get good solid data on the number of students we were serving. I think an unintended or unexpected surprise, well a surprise I found from this restructuring, was there are far more students that we are serving than I anticipated. For instance, we are serving roughly, and this is conservative, double the number of students we were serving 4 years ago. So right now we serve about 900 students in RUNB. So one of the challenges we have is trying to accommodate students for exams; that's a major challenge without a testing center. We do 600-700 exams for each fall and spring term. That may not sound that impressive until you take into consideration that each student with a disability has unique needs.

Overall, the centralization of Disability Services has improved the services to students with disabilities. More space for student testing, and the increased faculty awareness of and



cooperation with the office are still needed. The university is working to establish testing space on Livingston Campus, and perhaps in the Math and Science Learning Center, and senior administrators have worked to inform faculty about the new systems of Disability Services through email campaigns.

### *Learning Centers more Centralized*

With the TUE, various tutoring resources at the university have become more centralized. Many of its many services have also moved online, facilitated by this centralization process, which is described in the section entitled “Move to More Database and Online Resources.” Before the TUE, the Rutgers Learning Centers (RLCs) were always open to students from any college, but it now has centralized operations and management. Now there is a staff member in charge of each of four areas: 1) tutoring recruitment and scheduling, 2) academic coaching and televised reviews, 3) tutor training and assessment, and 4) outreach and special programs. There are RLCs on College Avenue, Livingston, and Cook/Douglass Campuses, which are available to all students, and tutoring and academic coaching also take place on Busch Campus in the ARC building, although there are no learning center professional staff at this location.

The TUE has promoted the RLCs’ collaboration with other areas of the university. For example, now the Learning Centers train tutors from SSS, Athletics, and the Honors Program, along with their own tutors. Additionally, one RLC staff member has worked with the summer EOF program, providing study skills and writing strategy information. Learning Center staff has also facilitated study strategy and MCAT preparation workshops for students through the Office for Diversity and Academic Success in the Sciences (ODASIS). RLC staff members also help to plan and provide programming during Orientation—three staff members have taught the Transfer Seminar and the Retention Program. Students in the Retention Program have to meet

with RLC learning specialists and academic coaches two or three times a semester. RLC staff members also facilitate two workshops as part of the seven-week Academic Success Seminar.

The RLCs have been impacted by the budget cuts that happened simultaneously with the TUE changes. They have been unable to hire two learning specialists for two years, or to hire a permanent director; an interim director has served for three and one-half years. In terms of volume of service, between the Summer Semester 2005 and Spring Semester 2006, the Learning Center saw 23,571 visits to the Learning Center, and this decreased to 21,375 visits for the 06-07 school year, after budget cuts. After the TUE, the total number of visits from Summer Semester 2007 through Spring Semester 2008 was 22,528 – the most students served since the founding of the learning centers. The total number of visits for Summer Semester 2008 was 2,487, versus 1,825 the previous summer, which is also the largest number of students served when compared to any previous summer.

This increase in tutoring visits is attributed to the sharing of the Summer Session database with the RLCs, which enabled RLC staff to strategically set up tutoring near classes, and advertise the services to students around the time of their first exam. RLC staff also made several personal visits to classrooms to inform faculty and hand out flyers to students regarding tutoring schedules. There were also several posters and flyers displayed in classroom buildings about RLC services; Learning Center staff also e-mail summer instructors with a link to tutoring schedules. Perhaps the increase in tutoring use was also tied to the dissolution of the college structure as campus and college-based barriers were broken down. Another source of the increase in tutoring use may be from improved communication of available services to staff and programs, such as to the SAS-wide EOF summer program. Interestingly, the Learning Centers have noticed that the profile of students who come in for tutoring is not just composed of struggling students with low GPAs; there are many students who use the center for help in

maintaining a high B+ or A GPA. The GPA/percentage breakdown is: < 2.0 (14%); 2.0-2.49 (18%); 2.5-2.99 (24%); 3.0-3.49 (26%); 3.5-4.0 (18%).

Tutoring services have not been completely centralized. The University College Community provides some of its own tutoring in mathematics to students who have not taken a mathematics course in a long time, through a Saturday math tutoring program. The Math and Science Learning Center also provides tutoring assistance to students. Students who are members of Discovery Houses (Learning Communities for first-year students) can also get on-site tutoring in mathematics and writing, though some of these tutors are provided by the RLC. Tutoring is also provided to qualified low-income students through SSS. The Honors Program also works with the Learning Centers to coordinate tutoring by volunteer Honors students. In Fall Semester 2007, right after the TUE reorganization, 30 Honors Program tutors provided 217 hours of individual tutoring, and there were 36 tutors providing even more help in Spring Semester 2008. Many academic departments are also providing tutoring for their students.

There are a few future goals for tutoring conducted at RUNB, as described by one administrator,

The next thing we are working toward is having SSS and the RLCs work more closely together. So if SSS can't meet its demand, the RLCs should be stepping in to do that. We ought to be more fluid, and the long term work for the learning centers and the Math Science Learning Center together is that we'd be having a single person that works for each department to recruit and choose and train tutors, who could work for any of these programs, but they would have a link back to a training program and selection process that is tied to their departments. So you don't have people unrelated and unknown to the physics department, who are hiring, training, and putting out physics tutors. This is what happens now. This is a next step.

Currently, there are about 14 different entities at the university that run tutoring, so tutoring seems like it can still be run in a more centralized manor. One administrator explained future goals for the coordinating the RLCs,

We did go talk to RUNB faculty council about the RLCs and the things we planned to do, and trying to get them to understand that academic support is more than just peer

tutoring; there are lots of different ways to do it. And there are lots of people doing it. And they needed to understand that every time a student said, a tutor told me that, you really needed to know who the tutor was, if you weren't happy with what the student was told. There is an assumption that there is one place out there.

A goal for tutoring coordination would be for academic departments to only have to speak to one central person to set up tutoring services, rather than to a variety of programs around the university.

### *Judicial Affairs Centralized*

Like other aspects of the university, each liberal arts college used to have its own policies and procedures regarding judicial affairs. Now, Judicial Affairs has been centralized, and services are now coordinated through the Senior Dean of Students office, following one set of University-wide policies and regulations and codes of conduct. There is a coordination of efforts between Dean of Students and the Judicial Affairs office, because the Deans of Students also serve as preliminary review judicial deans for Judicial Affairs. Under the new system, faculty has the discretion to investigate student conduct with regard to committing minor offenses that do not lead to suspension or expulsion from the university, which they could not do in the previous iteration of policies. Students can also address any level of offense within the judicial system, which before only heard the separable offenses. Also, all university policies regarding what actions are considered an offense and what the consequences are for each level of offense, as well as the process of adjudicating offenses is clearly available to the university community on the websites for Judicial Affairs, along with the university code of conduct. As part of this centralization process, 7,000 judicial files from around New Brunswick joined the 14,000 Rutgers College judicial files, and are now housed on College Avenue, with the Director of Student Judicial Affairs. Recently, Judicial Affairs set up a database program to manage all of the judicial

cases and Residence Life incident reports; this information will be part of a student records database, which will also track student club and organization participation.

In the process of writing the new interim set of judicial policies, administrators looked at the consistency between the sanctions from the past few years and the written code of conduct, to determine how to proceed, in order to create a more consistent code of conduct and consequences. With the TUE, Judicial Affairs is also still going through the modification of academic integrity policies. One administrator reflected,

I think you have to look at that as Phase 1 and Phase 2. The major thing that is different is we created academic integrity facilitators [in response to the] criticism that faculty did not want to present [judicial affairs] to Student Affairs—they wanted it to be through an academic unit. ... Also, you don't know if [offenses] got reported in the past. It's required that everything will get reported. Whether or not it gets acted on or how it happens in this process, but at least data-wise everything will get reported, which did not happen in the past- there were lots of variations on that. In phase two in two years we'll permanently fix academic policy. There are questions here: Do you permanently hurt someone on their transcript? How long does it stay— does it go on for law and medical school? We need to have conversations about how strict the honor policy is, if it is a traditional honor policy or a hybrid. So I created the Academic Integrity Task Force of Campus Deans [?] and faculty. One of the complicated things here—for programs like pharmacy which is both undergraduate, graduate, and has professional standards—do they get treated differently because of their professional standards? But conversations have started out of those task forces.

#### *Study Abroad and Career Services Centralization*

Another result of the TUE is that the Study Abroad office, as well as Career Services, and Scheduling, were brought under the wing of the Office of Undergraduate Education, and are now serving all undergraduates. One administrator believes, "I believe Study Abroad, Career Counseling, and Scheduling are especially pleased to be under the rubric of Undergraduate Education - they serve all undergraduates, not just SAS students, and they like the association with undergraduate academic affairs. It makes sense for them to report up through the central administration."

According to a fact cited in the Report on Progress toward 2007-2008 Areas of Emphasis and Effort, since 2006, the new dean in charge of Study Abroad has improved its academic standards, and the number of students who participate in Study Abroad-administered programs has doubled (Rutgers, 2008c). One administrator believed, "Study abroad efforts that the cultural centers have done by and large serve a lot of black and Latino students, who are having the cultural immersion experiences. There certainly needs to be some attention focused on that, in new ways, making sure that these departments that serve these purposes are resourced well and equitably."

Another perspective on the move of the Study Abroad office comes from an SAS faculty member,

The only negative development during the last two-three years is not really the result of the formation of SAS, but it will affect it, unfortunately, for years to come: the move of the Study Abroad Office to Central administration. While the administration of the office has certainly improved dramatically (what took place in the previous twenty years, in the Study Abroad Office, was outrageous in its lack of faculty oversight), the fact is that the ties between the Office and its most important clientele, the Arts and Sciences undergraduate students have been essentially cut. The absurdity of this situation is underlined by the fact that in almost every other University in the country, Study Abroad Programs are becoming more, not less important in the education of the Arts and Sciences students. As long as SAS will not have full control over the programs for its students abroad (as do all other units with similar interests: the School of Social Work, SEBS, etc.), Study Abroad will not be a real option for its twenty thousand students.

While the vast majority of students who do Study Abroad are from SAS, at the same time, an administrator from SEBS implied the school's expanding interest in Study Abroad,

With Lily Young [P2 professor of Environmental Microbiology] being recruited to taking over the role of international dean that allows us to dovetail on other things we want to do with international education: classic study abroad, and other kinds of internships, like the UN internships. We'll be a full participant in the other things that undergraduate colleges at RU want to do; we will be there to do it as well.

Not much else is known on the short term impact on the changes made to the Study Abroad or Career Services offices, because these topics were not directly assessed in this study.

### *Centralization of Student Affairs Offices and Services*

This section describes the short term centralization impacts on the offices of Recreation, Health Services and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Student Life, student government, and Residential Life. According to a Student Affairs update of changes leading up to Fall Semester 2007, as a result of the TUE, 153 were placed in new positions within Student Affairs and 21 various Student Affairs departments were consolidated into 9 new departments (Rutgers Office of Institutional Research and Academic Planning, 2008).

#### *Health Services and Counseling Centralization*

Nationally, the demand for counseling is increasing, and the same is the case at RUNB. According to the Home News Tribune local newspaper, “more than 3,400 students used university counseling services in the 2007-2008 school year” (Harbatkin, 2008, December 18). In the past few years, coinciding with the TUE, more attention has been paid to counseling and psychological services because of attention from tragic events such as the massacre at Virginia Tech, and some very public suicides of college students. There has been a greater outcry from parents and faculty for improved counseling services for students, as well as the recommendation for more coordination of mental health services for students by the Middle States accreditation committee (Evaluation Team representing the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2008).

Considering this context, the TUE consolidated all counseling services into (CAPS), including Psychiatry, and the Alcohol and Drug Assistance Program for Students. Prior to TUE, Health Services, which was composed of Medical Services, Pharmacy, and Health Education Administration, was already centralized, with students from every college being able to access services at any health center. With the TUE, CAPS is now housed under Health Services. In the past, there were counseling centers on each of the five campuses, and all were run

independently of one another, with their work tailored toward the needs of their particular students. Services offered at each of the centers were frequently not consistent, with some centers offering students more long-term counseling, and others emphasizing group counseling services. With the TUE, changes to counseling and mental health treatment have continued. According to the June, 2008 Report on Progress toward 2007–2008 Areas of Emphasis and Effort, the following changes have recently been made to CAPS:

The Rutgers administration appointed a Mental Health Task Force to study Counseling and Psychological Services. Based on its recommendations and those of other student affairs professionals, a permanent director was hired, an outside evaluation was completed, a new electronic database for managing counseling center records is being installed, and a feasibility study has been completed on a new building to consolidate four counseling centers. Most part-time staff will be replaced by regular full-time counseling professionals. In addition, the university implemented a policy on involuntary withdrawals to address concerns about students with mental health issues that are significantly disruptive to the university community (Rutgers, 2008c).

Within the newly reorganized CAPS, services are now accessed through a phone triage system, including a new system of initial telephone contact within 24-48 hours of the initial inquiry, which has greatly improved student access to services. Getting in touch with CAPS is designed to be easier than ever; there is now only one phone number to call for information and access to all services offered through CAPS. Staffing levels have been increased at CAPS and the professional staff is comprised mostly of full-time psychologists, social workers and psychiatrists, who provide a range of mental health services to both students and the university community. Additionally, an increase in funding has allowed CAPS to expand their pre-doctoral internship training program to include a total of six full-time, funded positions, and CAPS is now poised to apply for accreditation from the American Psychological Association. A Safety Net Committee and a Behavioral Health Advisory Committee have also been established to monitor and coordinate services for students with complex needs. While CAPS is still significantly understaffed, it is in much better shape than it was a few years ago, and the university is still



working hard to increase its funding. According to an administrator, during the first year after the TUE, “we did have some data about the number of students showing that students started using services on campuses other than their ‘home campus.’”

The consolidation of all of the counseling centers into one has led to some short term logistical challenges for CAPS. Because CAPS currently exists in six different spaces over five campuses, finding space for 35 staff members for RUNB-wide staff meetings is challenging. A new CAPS building is being constructed on College Avenue Campus, which will address this issue. At the same time, the centralization of services will make it easier to do many things that are essential for a mental health facility. For example staffing a reception area and answering the telephone will be much easier to maintain with fewer sites. Interdisciplinary communication and collaboration, vital in many areas of mental health, will be enhanced by consolidation. For the past eight years, the Rutgers College Counseling Center used a database management program to schedule appointments and to record clinical notes. The other counseling centers did not have such a system, so bringing the other centers online and off a paper system has been challenging. Following the recommendations of the Mental Health Task Force, CAPS is putting a new data management system in place for use by all areas of CAPS. Finally, there is a greater emphasis on group therapy than in the past. Treatment guidelines and uniform policies and procedures are being established.

A combination of the capabilities that have come from TUE and the national attention to college counseling services has led to a lot of attention on CAPS, and its new and evolving changes:

I think we’re more visible now. I think we’re getting out into the university community more, we’re meeting with faculty and staff on a regular basis. Partly driven by the VA Tech tragedy, a lot of faculty and staff are scared and unsure about how to handle disruptive and problematic students. They’ve been asking for programs aimed at helping them respond to troubled students. I’ve been on several panels comprised of representatives from Counseling, Health Services, University Counsel, Public Safety and

the RUNB Police Department; information is provided by the panel members and is followed by a question and answer session. Student Affairs has also initiated the development of a Safety Net Committee. This committee meets regularly to discuss problematic or high risk situations impacting both students and the broader university community. The committee members include a variety of professional staff members from several university offices. A new Medical Leave of Absence policy has also been developed to allow students the time off they need in order to attend to medical and mental health concerns. I think this new policy is important to have in place. In the past there were informal ways of accomplishing the same thing but now we have more formal policies in place. One of the key new positions we were fortunate enough to get this past year was a clinical case manager - it's the first time we've had such a position. This position is filled by a licensed clinical social worker who acts as a liaison between CAPS and the local hospitals, Acute Psychiatric Services (APS), and several local psychiatric treatment facilities. When a Rutgers student is psychiatrically hospitalized, the case manager coordinates the students' re-entry back into the university. It is university policy to have a psychological evaluation by CAPS following a hospitalization to recommend appropriate support services.

These changes have already led to noticeable differences in the university's ability to address the needs of some students. One role of the Deans of Students is referring students in need to counseling services. There have already been instances of student suicide prevention because of the establishment of committees to monitor at-risk students and through more effective coordination of emergency reporting through the Deans of Students office. CAPS is continuing to work with faculty and staff to make them more aware of who to call if they have concerns about a student.

CAPS has recently established new collaborations with other units in the university. It is collaborating with the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP), Graduate School of Education, School of Social Work, and other departments. Health Sciences' new department of Health, Outreach, Promotion and Education (H.O.P.E.), which lost two of its four staff lines, has tried to make up its losses by training peer educators, where students work to inform other students about wellness. H.O.P.E. has also worked with Dining Services to plan programs related to nutrition and health. One program was the Fit Challenge, which was a takeoff on the television show *The Biggest Loser*, where 35 students had access to medical

exams, fitness services, and nutrition consultations in order to lose weight and improve their health. One administrator shared that Health Services wants its future focus to include:

[The] integration of medical and counseling; it doesn't mean that everyone who is counseled will be seen by medical, but we'll have mutual patients. We're looking to provide a total team approach for students. Students sometimes get really concerned about confidentiality and privacy, but certainly if someone doesn't want to have something released, we won't release it, but I think a team approach and working for the benefit of the student is always better.

Overall, Health Services and CAPS have undergone many changes in the past few years, which will culminate with a new CAPS building being constructed on the site of the old 17 Senior Street office on College Avenue Campus. The new building (to be completed by late summer 2009) will be the new primary office for CAPS, and will include counseling, psychiatry, and alcohol and drug programs for students. An additional office will be maintained on the Douglass Campus at 61 Nichol Avenue, for student convenience.

#### *Residence Life Centralization*

Prior to the TUE, each college had its own Residential Life program and housing system. Students from one college were not permitted to live in the housing of different college. Months before the rest of the TUE took place, housing sign-up was opened up and students were given the option to live on any campus they wanted, pending they received a lottery number that granted this choice. Residence Life and its 144 residence halls are now centrally organized, though there are still Residence Life offices for students to visit on each campus. Residence Life has worked hard, in the mean time, to create consistent housing policies, and to equalize Resident Assistant compensation. The university has also invested a lot of resources in improving the facilities available to students residing on Livingston Campus and is building a new student center there.

Many administrators and students discussed the advantages of the new Residential Life system. One impact of the TUE is the development of many different Learning Communities and Living/Learning Communities on most campuses. Since students can live anywhere now, many engagement opportunities have been opened for students. For example, SEBS students who want to be part of a learning community can live on Livingston Campus in a Discovery House, and learn about Health and Medicine. Likewise, if a female pharmacy student is interested in being part of the Douglass Residential College, and living on Douglass Campus, she can do so, even she is a student in the Pharmacy school. Male students are also living on Douglass Campus, which means that every bed on that campus is being used efficiently and was occupied at the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year. For the most part, from the point of view of administrators, students enjoy being able to live on any campus, despite their school or major.

However, there are some perceived difficulties that are arising with the new living choices, and temporary difficulties that were faced in the first year of the changes. One issue that has been raised is that some student leaders and administrators fear that, because of the popularity of living on Busch Campus in its apartment and suite-style housing, the Engineering and Pharmacy students who have all of their classes on this campus might eventually not be assigned the housing on Busch Campus that they have been guaranteed the past. According to an administrator on Busch Campus,

There have been a number of petitions and conversations floated by student bodies to try to give preference to those folks. So that for example students in engineering and pharmacy have brought forth petitions to try to be granted some sort of preferences during housing assignments because their programs are housed exclusively over here. Some other natural science majors have also put in the same piece. It is a little tension filled right now, because we want to keep it open to everyone, and there is a commitment to make each campus as accessible as it can be—as opposed to reverting to what existed in the past about how you have to meet certain criteria to live in certain locations.

One Rutgers College student described being upset about having to compete with non-Rutgers College students for the preferred housing on College Avenue Campus:

I feel as though now that the campuses are merged, now everybody has the opportunity to move anywhere they want to. And being an Rutgers College student, and I'm sorry but Rutgers College has the majority of the Hot Spots- Easton Avenue, Rockoff, wonderful apartment buildings such as that, there is no longer- I don't feel like I have priority even though I am Rutgers College, even though Rutgers College will no longer exist after the class behind me. I just no longer felt like I had a priority, and now I wasn't just competing in the lottery against Rutgers College students but now all the students in Rutgers University—thousands.

A couple of administrators believe that because students are allowed to live on any campus the culture of a campus is likely to change every year, and that the sense of community on Cook Campus within SEBS, for example, will not be as strong because of the non-SEBS students living there. Livingston Campus houses a great number of first-year students, many of whom expressed a desire to live elsewhere in their second year, demonstrating that the problem of maintaining a sense of community is real. On the other hand, because there is a critical mass of first-year students on Livingston Campus, residence life staff can work together to provide programming for these first-year students. One other problem that might arise with students being able to live far from where they take many of their classes is the possibility of decreased engagement with the community and student life of that campus and its academic programming; students might not want to travel up to 40 minutes each way by bus to attend events on other campuses, even if the events pique their academic or social interests.

Another issue that was raised in the first year after the TUE was that because Resident Assistants (RAs) are hired at the university level now, some women RAs were assigned to Douglass Residential College (DRC) dorms who were not members of the DRC. Some DRC students were upset because they believed their RAs knew little or nothing about the DRC and that they could not relate to them in this way. This problem was raised, and now Residence Life is trying to use DRC women as RAs in DRC dorms; Residence Life was said to be very responsive

to this problem. Some DRC student leaders, however, believe that the DRC should have its own Residence Life staff again. The DRC will be described further in Chapter 7.

Residence Life has also been challenged by logistical problems with finding space for the 25 current living/learning communities, and scheduling housing for students interested in living in these communities in a manner that is timely, and still allows for other students to be quickly assigned to housing. Running a university-wide housing lottery has been a complex task, as well, but the system has worked well so far. One administrator explains the logistical challenges of the lottery:

It is complex because of the fact we have five campuses, we have students who take most of their classes on one campus rather than other campuses. We have a lot of different types of residence halls; we have traditional, apartments, suites. A number of special lifestyle units, Living/Learning Communities, and Discovery Houses place another kind of system in it. We have a system of housing in which some of our campuses are more popular than others. For example there are things that people like about College Avenue Campus— because of its access to student life on Easton Avenue—and things people like about Busch—because of its access to labs and other things. So housing is very complicated to do here. To make it more complicated yet, we have more demand for housing than we have rooms at this time. So it means that some students don't get housing. And we're trying to accommodate that, this year [2008-2009] we did that by putting students in hotels and floor lounges. Next year [2009-2010] is becoming a more serious problem, we suspect that as the university grows the demand will also increase, and we'll have to address the shortage. We are looking now to build additional residence hall space on Livingston, about 1,500 beds, and an additional 500 beds on Busch, so 2,000 beds altogether, but optimistically, the earliest we can have that up is probably 2011. So that I think has been an issue. For many students ... it was a new experience going through the lottery system, because their college in the case of Cook, Douglass, and Livingston, had not used it, but Rutgers College had used it previously.

During the 2008-2009 school year, around 350 students, mostly juniors and seniors, were living in a hotel off campus until the end of the Fall Semester 2009; 125 students were also living in converted study lounges. Residence Life adapted to this challenge by allowing students to cancel housing contracts and by providing buses for the continuing and transfer students who lived at this hotel. Residence Life does also allow students to move back on campus after they have lived off campus (Sparta, 2008, September 17). For the 2009-2010 school year, there have

been 10,600 continuing students who have entered the housing lottery, but there are fewer than 8,000 spaces on campus for continuing students, so this issue continues to be a challenge (Ozuturk, 2009, February 15).

Residence Life has partnerships around the university. In addition to working with the Office for Academic Engagement and Program to accommodate Learning Communities, it works with offices such as the Honors Program to arrange housing for Honors students. The Aresty Research Center works with Residence Life to advertise and promote programs such as student research opportunities. The relationship that Health Services has with Residence Life is described in a previous section in this chapter. Residence Life also runs special interest floors in several dorms that are not quite at the level of academic coordination as Living/Learning communities.

*Residence Life Survey.* The information above provides the impressions of a few students and administrators of Residential Life services. According to a Residential Life survey administered online to all on-campus students every one or two years, students are satisfied with most aspects of their Residence Life experiences. According to data from the 2007-2008 school year, collected just after the TUE took place, as well as data from the 2008-2009 school year, students were satisfied the most with their hall staff and Resident Assistants, and with their safety and security. They were slightly less satisfied (but still satisfied) with residence facilities, the process of changing rooms, the programming that goes on in their residence halls, the environment of their floors and halls, and dining services. Comparing the 2007-2008 survey results to data from two years prior (before the TUE), recent students gave higher ratings of satisfaction to most questions, and noticeably higher ratings in their satisfaction regarding the process of room assignments and changes. Perhaps part of this change is due in part to

students' new ability to live on whichever campus they choose, if the lottery allows it. Overall satisfaction ratings also increased from the 2007 to the 2008 administration of the survey.

The survey also included a measure of "community" which is comprised of students' feelings of respect, acceptance, and trust of other students, each rated on a 7-point Likert scale, with 7 as the highest value. The three campuses with the highest rating of community were Cook (5.68), Busch (5.68), and Douglass (5.67), then College Avenue (5.57), and then Livingston (5.46). Perhaps because there are so many first-year students living on Livingston, the feelings of community as defined by this survey were slightly lower. Using the survey's definition of community, ratings of community was rated the same way during the survey administered in Fall Semester 2008. By this definition, feelings of community remain high on the Cook and Douglass Campuses, where many people thought there were great feelings of community before the TUE. The questions about community were not asked in the survey prior to 2007, so these data cannot be compared longitudinally.

With students being able to move from campus to campus, one question that has emerged is how much moving is happening, compared to students planning to stay on the same campus. According to the Residential Life survey, the results of the question about where students were planning to live next year were similar for both the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 school year survey administrations. 30-32% of current students said they planned to stay on their present campus, no matter what room they were assigned next year, and 31-32% said they would stay on their current campus only if they were assigned the room they wanted. Only 14-17% of students answering the survey said they were planning to live on a different campus, and 16% were planning to move off campus, (about 4% were graduating and did not need housing the next year). It can be seen from this information that about two-thirds of students were interested in staying in their current location, and only about 15% wanted to move to another



campus, so if the desired room assignments are granted, there will likely be relatively little campus switching. Notably, student interest in changing campus does vary by campus. The percentage of students who say they plan to move to another campus next year is 5.1% of Cook residents, 6.2% of College Avenue residents, 8.2% of Douglass residents, 9.5% of Busch residents, but a striking 48% of current Livingston Campus residents. Only 34% of students currently living on Livingston Campus have an interest in staying there. It appears there is further work to be done to build community and facilities on Livingston to interest students in staying on that campus for multiple years. The university is currently working toward this goal.

Overall, Residential Life has gone through large-scale changes as a result of the TUE, resulting in greater flexibility and housing options for its students. Its assessment of its services through this survey can help it to continue improve.

#### *Recreation Centralization*

The changes to Recreation Services typify the TUE's attempt to eliminate the roadblocks that many students were experiencing in accessing services. Before the TUE, each campus had its own recreation center and activities. Students were allowed to use any recreation center, but activities and classes were only allowed to be advertised to a college's respective group of students. The TUE created a university-wide position of the Executive Director of Recreation and Community Development. The unified Recreation department is comprised of seven recreation centers, spread over the five campuses at RUNB. At the same time, Recreation Services lost five staff employment lines, and it absorbed several varsity sports. One administrator commented on the changes to Recreation Services: "It's been a long time coming. There may not have been economy of scale in terms of saving money, but the end result was the ability to improve the quality of the facilities, the staff and the programs."

In the year following the TUE, use of each of the recreation centers has increased. Use of the Livingston Recreation center has doubled. Whether this has to do with the numbers of first year students living on Livingston Campus in Discovery Houses, the introduction of more recreation classes and programs at that recreation center, or other factors, is difficult to discern. Attendance at the other facilities has also improved although not as dramatically. Perhaps now that all students are welcome at all recreation centers, they use various centers, depending on where their classes are located on a given day. It could also be that because the recreation classes for all recreation centers, students, faculty, and staff are increasing their use across the board. Another possible reason for the increase in use is that everyone can sign up for all recreation and fitness classes online, instead of in person as was done in the past. According to the Residential Life survey, 75% of on-campus students respondents said they use or have used recreation facilities, including recreation activities.

Recreation services available to all university students have been made equal, since the TUE. In the past, Rutgers College had the most funding for recreation because of its size, and it funded a Club Sports program using its student fees, in which all students were allowed to participate. A few years ago, there were around 1,000 students involved in 35 club sports, and now that number, under a severely limited budget, has grown to 2,200 students in 45 club sports. Many other services have been expanded from the Rutgers College recreation program to RUNB. For example, Rutgers College recreation used to train students to repair and maintain equipment, while the other recreation centers had to hire people to service equipment. Now, all seven recreation centers are serviced by six equipment maintenance student employees, which has led to a cost savings, and faster service.

Overall, all policies and procedures have been standardized among the recreation centers, such as those pertaining to employment requirements, registration fees, refunds,

memberships, guest passes, reservations, and cash handling. Recreation Services also had a liability expert conduct a risk management assessment of all of the centers and the programs. Based on the findings, a two year plan was designed to improve each recreation center. Student worker training has also been standardized, which includes testing by the Safety Committee on skills such as First Aid, and CPR. Another example of the increased efficiency and greater access for all students is in the professional personal trainer program:

We also managed to take the professional personal trainers at Rutgers College who are all professionals and use them across the university. That program has literally tripled in 2 years, the personal training program, it's amazing. But again, if you are a big department you can do certain things and if you're a small department you can't. Instead of having one big department and two small ones, we have one big department, with specialists. Before, for instance, the fitness centers and the pools at Rutgers College were run by specialists, and were trained to do that, with degrees in exercise science, degrees in management, and were certified pool operators. At the other colleges, you didn't have that. You had one recreation person trying to run everything- the pools, fitness, intramurals, etc. It's tough to be expert in everything.

Recreation Services is still adjusting to the consolidation. To avoid simply utilizing the Rutgers College recreation model for all of the recreation centers and services, Recreation Services worked to incorporate best practices from each of the centers. For example, the Busch Campus recreation center serves a lot of students who have very busy class schedules, such as students in the Pharmacy and Engineering programs so residents are often unable to be a part of intramural sports teams that have games more than once a week. However, the preference on Cook Campus is for intramural games to be held two days a week. In response to the various preferences, the intramural s are offered to serve a range of student schedules: basketball intramurals run in four- and eight-week intervals, meeting twice or once a week, respectively, with one or two day tournaments as well.

Recreation Services is also trying out and expanding strategies to earn revenue, such as selling winter-session recreation passes for the college-aged students of faculty and staff members, and hosting events such as kids' birthday parties in unused recreation rooms. To help

to monitor and improve its service to students, Recreation Services collects a lot of data from students, helping to inform decisions about programming. Students swipe their ID cards when they enter a recreation center, and staff can determine patterns of use. In the past, not all of the centers kept data on attendance. Also, Recreation Services conducts surveys and focus groups to get student feedback to improve recreation and fitness services.

The consolidated Recreation Services is working on partnerships with other offices at RUNB, including Dining Services, Residence Life, Exercise Science and Sports Studies, Health Education, and Health Services. For example, along with health education, Recreation Services ran an event called Numbers in front of the College Avenue Gym where students could stop by and get their cholesterol, body fat, and glucose scores, and receive recommendations for fitness programs to improve their health. They also ran an event in the Livingston Recreation Center about fitness, where students could climb a rock wall, play laser tag, or try Dance-Dance Revolution; this was done in coordination with Residence Life, who helped to advertise and get students out to the event. In Fall Semester 2007, 1,200 students attended this event, over a two and a half hour period. Another type of partnership that has come from the TUE is that now Recreation Services has its own members of Facilities that work solely for the Recreation centers, so the maintenance staff can be specialized in servicing the centers.

Overall, it seems the new consolidated Recreation Services has taken advantage of its new capacity and shared resources and has equalized services provided to students.

### *Student Life Centralization*

As a result of the TUE, the college Student Life offices were consolidated. In the past, each college managed their respective student centers, which each housed events, student government organizations, clubs, and activities. Now, the centralized office of Student Life houses the Office of Student Involvement, which manages all clubs and organizations,

community services initiatives, student governments, student centers, and campus chaplaincies. Student Life also has a Programs and Leadership unit, which is in charge of orientation, the university programming board, staff-run programs, major events and leadership initiatives, and Fraternity and Sorority Affairs. The consolidated Student Life office has been charged with developing programming that is vibrant and interesting to all students, across RUNB.

*Change process.* The TUE brought the need for adjustments on behalf of staff members across the university. Staff members who were assigned to work for Student Life were only familiar with their former college's system of planning and running of events and student life activities. However, once the new staff came together and talked about their individual experiences everyone came to realize the extent of the disparities among colleges and the need to start fresh. Instead of copying some campus-wide programs and making them university-wide, Student Life has instead examined the systems of student life at Rutgers and other large universities, determined best practices, and is looking for new ways to do things.

*Impacts of the TUE.* Some information is known regarding the approximate numbers of students attending Student Life events in 2007-2008. This section discusses Student Life-sponsored activities, but there are a number of other units in the university that organize student programming, such as the Deans of Students, the Office of Academic Programming, Career Services, and the Office of Undergraduate Education.

There were around 190 Student Life events held during the first school year after the TUE. The most attended event was Rutgers Fest on Busch Campus, with an estimated attendance of 20,000 students. Other highly attended events were a laser light spectacular on Busch Campus (7,000 students), Hot Dog Day at the Rutgers Student Center (4,500 students), a Jimmy Eat World concert in New Brunswick (1,495 students), Ag Field Day on Cook Campus (1,200 students), and lollonobooza on College Avenue Campus (1,200 students). Not counting

the attendance at Rutgers Fest, the average attendance at these 190 events was about 225 students.

Student Life events were spread among locations on the five campuses and their respective student centers during 2007-2008. The numbers of events by campus were: Busch Campus (24), College Avenue Campus (44), Livingston Campus (38), Douglass Campus (25), and Cook Campus, (51), and at least 20 events were held off campus or were trips to off-campus locations. Some of the more common type of events that were held throughout the year were movie showings (28), poster sales early in the school year (13), Ice Cream Sundae socials (9), and off-campus trips (at least 17). Though some Cook Campus students report feeling a loss of community, a very high number of Student Life events take place on this campus.

One other notable impact of the TUE was on Fraternity and Sorority Affairs, which formerly did not have a relationship with the colleges; it is now a part of Student Life. One administrator noted:

That's been one of the most interesting dynamics and one that most of the staff know the least about. In the college system, fraternities and sororities were considered an 'other' and with a lot of negative connotations. University has not historically embraced or celebrated Greek Life... So there was no institutional ownership. To have them become part of [Student Life] makes perfect sense- ... it's really truly changing the culture in which to begin to say to them: you have something to offer but with that comes expectations and accountability. So I'm happy to promote them because I believe Greek Life can be a positive experience for individual students and for the institution. At other institutions they are far more involved and integrated with fabric of the institution as positives.

Another change was that Student Life initiated a student design team to develop brochures and advertisements for all of the events, giving some students professional experience in design.

*Orientation.* There have been recent changes to the summer orientation program, as well. Before the TUE, each college organized its own orientation program. For new students entering for Fall Semester 2007, the SAS Orientation was organized by the separate colleges for all SAS students to attend. Student Life planned the university-wide orientation for the Fall

Semester 2008 students, which took place for 2-3 days at the end of August, just prior to the beginning of the school year. Student Life is currently planning a series of approximately 19 summer orientations that will take place from the middle of June to August for new Fall Semester 2009 students. The majority of these sessions will be open to students from any school, but because some programs such as the DRC, EOF, the Transfer Student Program, and some professional schools run their own orientation programs, these will be linked with one or more of Student Life's 19 orientations. The orientation programs will include academic components which, while not school-specific, will go over topics such as academic expectation, academic integrity, the transition from high school to college, and how to use Sakai. Students will also be made aware of the programming offered through the Office of Undergraduate Education, such as FIGs and Byrne Family First-year Seminars. There has also been some discussion about other changes such as including a required reading or book for all students, so they can have this experience in common.

There were a large number of Student Life events that took place at RUNB the first year after the TUE, despite the huge amount of work spent centralizing and organizing the new office. Student Life anticipates that the quality of these programs will continue to improve because more attention can be paid toward planning the events, and not the centralization process. Student Life is also continuing to improve its collaboration with the Campus Deans, to share ideas about programming and share resources. A Student Life staff member, as one of his duties, has been charged with planning programs that are in the academic interest of the Campus Deans. Student Life is also working on assessing student experiences and feelings about various programs. It also continues to address the fall out of budget cuts; the university-wide Student Life organization is functioning with only as many staff members as the previous Rutgers College student life organizational structure had, while serving far more students.

### *Student Government Centralization*

Before the TUE, RUNB student government organizations were divided and separated, and there was no RUNB-wide student governance or body. During the academic year 2006-2007, the student leadership on each of the campuses came together and planned the creation of the Rutgers University Student Assembly (RUSA). For the first time in the recent history of RUNB there was a single governing association. RUSA is divided into four committees: Academic Affairs, University Affairs, Legislative Affairs, and Public Relations. The campuses, no longer colleges, have campus-based governing organizations. The college-based programming boards have also be unified into the Rutgers University Programming Association (RUPA). One administrator shared that “student governance was reorganized very quickly and effectively. Students did it themselves, no one told them what to do, there was guidance and support, but they made the key decisions.” An administrator described these changes:

Each campus has its own student council, like the Livingston Campus Council (LCC) is part of RUSA. The students actually redesigned that themselves, it was part of TUE, but it was totally done by students. The students came up with the whole reorganization plan. It was very impressive. Each campus has its own campus council. That’s where a lot of the work is being done in terms of student involvement. The students are affiliated with that, and RUSA has money to allocate to different student organizations. Last year LCC put on a bonfire and we probably had 500 people, and a big event marking the end of the semester. As I hear, we’re doing a bonfire in the fall; they are very active. They are also very active with substantive things too. There’s a lot of construction going on on Livingston right now, so the LCC is very concerned about how construction will impact the educational environment of the campus. RUSA is very active on grading issues and in the movement to get syllabi posted on the website where students go to register.

Similarly, another administrator saw the quick reorganization of student government as evidence of increased student engagement from the TUE.

When students got together to form a single unified student government, that, under other circumstances, can take years to do. You almost have to wait for a couple of generations to move through before you make changes like that. But to go from a whole set of very independent and autonomous student governance units that were loosely confederated to something that is what RUSA is today, and they did it within a year as well, is again very unusual. I think one it’s a credit to people involved, but also I think



that saw it as an opportunity to say look 'we're going through this transformation, we want to take ownership of it, we want to be involved, we're going to get something done'.

Another administrator reported that with the TUE there has been a growth in participation in residence hall student government organizations. Perhaps new students feel allegiance to their residence halls, instead of to the large entity of SAS, which is separated from most student life activities. One administrator believes that the new university-wide student government has a lot of power: "The president's office is now more engaged with the student government on those things because they do matter." The administrator also believes RUSA has been somewhat effective because "the funding for student organizations is not all tied up in the politics of the different colleges, is now resolved, and is now more direct."

One administrator described the creation of RUSA and the direction it is moving toward over the next couple of years:

Under the unified student government association called RUSA, every one of the student governments has a representative to RUSA. In addition to that all the cultural groups, Asian American, Latino, and African American groups all have representatives. There are representatives from the inter-fraternity council, from Panhellenic, and from RPHC, which is Rutgers Panhellenic, which is composed primarily of groups who are not part of Panhellenic: they are culturally based frats and sororities. And then there are student members to Board of Governors, student members to the Board of Trustees, and other elected members that are part of the organization. That has become, for lack of a better term, the university student government. We predicted this would be a transitory kind of organizational structure. ... What's beginning to happen is that the strength of the individual campus-based student governments is beginning to erode. And I suspect that part of that is they do not have an agenda of things to accomplish on their campus. At the same time as that has happened, we've also begun to see an emergence in the residence hall associations, particularly the campus-based residence hall associations. On each campus the residence halls have their own association, and then there is a university-wide campus residence hall association, those have grown much stronger. So what we have on every campus now is a campus-based student government, which is supposed to represent students there and people who feel some kinship with that campus. We also have a residence hall association. I doubt whether or not the two of them will survive. ... I suspect that what will happen is the campus-based student governments will eventually erode, as the graduates from those undergraduate schools graduate. ... What I think will come to replace it is a student government based upon student governments that have strong school affiliations. So you'll have a government for the engineering school, as we do now, for pharmacy, I think you'll see

the business group become stronger as the business school becomes stronger, I think that SAS will eventually have a separate student governing association for the school, and SEBS will have separate student governing association. The one that I think that may survive is the DRC one and that's because there is a unifying common experience, in the sense of kinship and attachment that those groups have. That may-, exactly how it will interface with the residence hall student government is unclear to me right now. There is currently underway a group working through RUSA that is looking at their current constitution, and consider changes to the constitution to accommodate some of these changes. I don't know where that will end up but I know they are looking at the same issues that I just conveyed.

According to a Residential Life survey from November, 2008, about 7% of students say they participate in their residential hall government. This number does vary by campus, with Cook with the highest participation at 9%, then College Avenue (8%), Douglass (7%), Busch (5%), and finally Livingston (4%). Overall, it is clear that various aspects of the university, such as RUSA, are continuing to evolve after the initial changes of the TUE in order to adapt to the changing culture of the university.

#### *Impressions of the TUE's Effects on the Centralization of Student Affairs Activities*

In the year following the TUE, the impact on the various student events and activities is a contentious topic among some groups at RUNB. While many in the RUNB community are very encouraged about the equality of services that all students now receive, some mourn the loss of college-based coordination of activities. Before the TUE, the former colleges organized the student activities that are now under the auspices of Student Life, Residential Life, and Recreation Services. The colleges organized individual orientations, student activities, recreation services, residential activities, student governments, and student centers. These areas are now coordinated by the university-wide Student Affairs office. As a result of this local organization, college-based administrators thought they knew more about students in a holistic sense—about their academic, student life, student government, and residential life involvements. Some administrators believe that since SAS academics are now organizationally separate from student

activities that it is easier for faculty and administrators to forget that they should be educating “the whole student.” One administrator had this impression:

There is more a sense of apathy at the moment, and I have concern about that. ... When you have students coming to college, they come to be educated as a whole person. I am responsible for the whole person, and I’m very much concerned about what the process has done, inadvertently-I don’t think there was any intention, it was inadvertent--quite a bit of damage has been done. I want to make sure that we don’t forget that whole people are here. And as a result of the TUE process, we have to make sure we’re truly involved in educating whole people and are providing services to whole people.

To begin to address this concern the Campus Life Council has been formed, with representatives from Undergraduate Education, Student Affairs, the various schools, and other university offices such as Admissions. They get together to discuss “big picture” issues such as training staff about educating the whole student. In their first meeting they discussed how to coordinate commencement and orientation. This committee meets twice a semester.

According to some administrators, the loss of campus-based activities has to do with the inability of the Campus Deans to solely maintain the activities and student life events that have been an important part of each campus and college’s history. Creating university-wide activities was the specific charge made to Student Life, but some focus group students also believe too much attention is being paid to university-wide activities, at the expense of losing the traditions of the individual campuses. One student leader on Douglass Campus shared that,

I know that a lot of the colleges had their own organizations. Especially at our college we had organizations for Southeast Asian women, African-American women, Asian-American women, etc., and it seems like that kind of all died out. We had our own programming board, and those people moved along to the big group that’s supposed to represent the whole university, but I feel like it’s harder for Douglass women to have their voices heard over everybody else who is this majority who doesn’t understand Douglass or what happened at Douglass.

Likewise, Cook College had a tradition of holding 7:00 AM Leadership Breakfasts six times per semester, where students joined committees that were charged to tackle Cook-related issues such as diversity, student/faculty relations, and student safety. According to past

Cook administrators, these breakfasts used to have an attendance of 250 students, and during the 2007-2008 school year, only 30-40 students were participating in these breakfasts. This decrease in participation is attributed to the decrease in staff that plan campus-based events, and the perceived break down of the Cook community of students, who are now allowed to live on any campus, with any non-SEBS students allowed to live on Cook Campus. One administrator explained how this change has impacted the university, and students living on Cook Campus:

What's basically happened was that a sizable chunk of student fees actually went to Cook. So Cook student life professionals actually had a considerable amount of student fees that they had access to that they could use to support activities. Now all fees go to Central [(the university- wide Office of Student Affairs)], not with Cook... What's happened with the new structure of Student Life is there are a very large number of events, and more events than what used to happen [on Cook Campus and around the University]... So there are certainly a lot of opportunities for students to do things, like speakers, movies, chocolate making, and ice cream socials on Sunday nights. There are lots of events to go to, but what's missing is the sense of a core group of community organizers- the student life professionals, who were there and were the same people so students got to know them as individuals. That was focused around the campus center as a hub of social activity, and those individuals are gone, so students feel the lack of a sense of central community. As far as campus-based students are concerned- it's a set of anonymous professionals organizing activities, but not playing an active part of the community as individuals.

It is believed by some that one way to remedy this type of effect is to include a campus-based organizational office on each campus of the university, including assigning campus-based student life staff, responsible for campus-based programming and local student center events. This remedy, however, would require hiring more Student Life employees, which would be a challenge for the university to provide in the current budget situation.

The extent to which some student activities should be campus-based is a question that Student Life and other Student Affairs offices were facing in the first year after the TUE, considering these concerns. Some administrators hold a university-oriented perspective that because students can move from campus to campus, that there is no longer the ability to bring

back the cultures the campuses and former colleges had. One administrator explained this point of view,

Are we really supposed to be focusing on the campus? There are mixed opinions about that. The reality is because students have the opportunity to move from campus to campus- as soon as that happens, the nature of the campus community changes every year, so culture will change every year. I think each campus needs to feel a sense of community, needs to be vibrant, and needs relationships with staff, but I don't think it can be or should be what it was, by the nature of students' movement now. But I do think we're not completely all in agreement about that. Programmatically, we see students moving much more freely from campus to campus than they ever did in the past. ... Different doesn't have to be bad though. I'm more interested in what we have to do to make sure this is a great university. That being said, there should be places where students feel a sense of community, students should feel like they have access to resources, students should feel a sense of belonging, they should feel like they can be known, have relationships with staff and faculty in the ways they did at the small college. But I think we also have to be realistic that it won't be the same. So, it's sort of balancing all the university has to offer and those wonderful opportunities for students, but there should still be quality experiences that are characteristic of attention to smaller more intimate settings and opportunities. I think it is achievable.

One administrator reflected on the overall changes in student activities and the community feeling on each campus:

I think probably depending upon where you were, in terms of campus or college location, there is a new baseline that has been established, for services, for definitions of community. For some folks, as we try to redevelop that sense of community, there has been a loss of that in some locations. I suspect that long term we'll reach the same kind of communities that are as thriving and robust as we've had in the past. I think for the moment, we had to cut everything down to establish one firm baseline for the sense of equity and fairness that this is now one institution, and build that back up. So for some folks establishing that minimum threshold has automatically raised the bar for experience, because their experience was not at that high level. For others who had a lot of services and interpersonal connections on their campus, they might have lost some of that, because that new baseline has been established that is lower than that, with the expectation, though, that we want to get uniformity and equality across the campuses, and then work to build them up. As always happens as you draw a line in the sand, some folks were brought up to that line and some were brought down to bring everybody to a medium.

On the other hand, the opposing point of view is:

Ultimately, there were certain best practices that were really, really good, and to a certain degree, some of these were put aside, and we went with the least common denominator. We took a new program for everyone to take advantage of. Some best practices required different attention and skills and I'm not sure if people overseeing

the larger organization had those, and I think some of those best practices got lost. I was hoping TUE would take best practices from all the different colleges and make them available to entire university. And not- well we need to come up with some least common denominator for everyone. If we can't give good ones to everyone, we're not going to do it. That bothers me- we need to work harder to get the best practices available.

Based on a follow up interview with an administrator from Student Life, it seems that this issue is beginning to work itself out, now that the rocky first year of the reorganization has passed and various Student Affairs organizations are reaching out for suggestions and to collaborate with other departments. Douglass Residential College leaders have seen improvements in their areas of dissatisfaction from the 2007-2008 school year and the 2008-2009 school year. Some continuing juniors and seniors from Douglass and especially Cook Campuses are still interested in having more campus-based leadership and activities that are based on their traditions.

#### *Faculty Impressions of Student Services*

Ninety faculty members were asked, "Since the TUE, to what extent are faculty members in your department aware of where to refer students to meet their various needs (academic, counseling, advising, etc)? Is there confusion about this? How can various offices at the university best communicate information about student services with your department?" The 23 faculty chairs and TUE committee members responded that they and their students are confused about where to turn for various services. Interestingly, most responded regarding confusion about academic and advising services, which possible means that other services, such as counseling, tutoring, and others are not as much on their radar screens.

Faculty chairs and TUE committee members identified these problems, in their own words:

- There has been a lot of confusion about where to refer students to meet their various needs. Advising seems to differ from campus to campus, but pretends to be monolithic.
- Faculty members are often confused but we expect them to ask the Credit Office (faculty director or student advisor) how to proceed in problematic situations or to get

assistance with particular matters. And with TUE, the Credit Office has been more able to assist faculty because we no longer have to ask about the college of the student.

- Here is one communication issue that causes endless confusion: throughout the university, undergraduate students are told to "ask a Dean" when they are being sent to the undergraduate academic advising office. They get confused and contact the Dean of our School who is a different type of Dean entirely! It would be good if we could have use different words for the two types of deans.
- Departmental student advising has been dealt a first blow years ago, with the advent of phone-punching selection of classes. Since then, the Internet has made student decisions more sophisticated, but also more remote from any possible advising (except in some obvious cases related to the student's major). I teach in two different programs, and I would say that today, at least half of the students in my undergraduate classes are there for reasons that have nothing to do with the content of the class, and that a fifth, in some cases a fourth of my students do not actually know what the class is about before it starts. I'm sure my discipline lends itself more easily to such absurdity than, say, a science course. Still, I do believe our classes are not the only ones in this situation. As to non-academic services, I am rather ignorant in this respect. I used to refer students to deans in their respective colleges. I must admit I would not know where to send them today. I'm not sure if it is due to my own carelessness, or if more information needs to be given to faculty in general.
- This is still a blank wall to almost all faculty. The administrators in the office do well, but faculty consciousness in general is minimal. My experience is that except for particular cases (e.g. psychological, judicial) which get referred usually to a vice chair anyway, the vast majority of student questions are those related to Academic Services.
- Financial Aid officers are assigned a portion of the alphabet, but students are not told who their assigned officer is. No one has access to financial aid phone numbers.

Faculty chairs and committee members also wrote about these solutions or ideas:

- We all need to have a master brochure that will help us know what services are available and how to refer students.
- We have a central advising system, with a student services coordinator that sees all students first. The coordinator is up on all the changes, as is the undergraduate director, so there has been little confusion about advising.
- I say, never mind the faculty. Why do so few students themselves seem to know about Academic Services? Almost all of the emails and walk-ins about problems from students who think they need to talk to someone have a simple answer: talk to Academic Services. Walk up to the help window. Email for an appointment. Call someone. If Academic Services were better known, referrals would drop significantly.
- I think awareness may be pretty low. Probably the best tool to communicate is an overview web site that's quick and easy to read and has an overview of all the resources available - with a catchy name. (Rutgers 311?) Perhaps that exists though, I wouldn't even know.
- The new SAS web site has helped us find relevant referrals. I think this is still a work in progress as obsolete web page links are found. I try to add links to our department web page for students to find useful information. Redundancy never hurts.
- Coming to faculty meetings is helpful.

- The faculty members who play a significant role in advising students are knowledgeable about where to refer students. Other faculty members are still struggling. But, I do think the situation is getting better. One of the lingering issues is the role that the Campus Deans (sic) [Deans of Students] play. It seems like this has evolved (e.g. used to help students negotiate excused absences, no longer) and left us still somewhat confused.
- The more the people involved in these programs can meet one another face to face the easier these referrals become. With people changing positions so frequently it is hard to keep track of who to call so I call the people I know to find out who I should call.
- Possibly some confusion especially where services were previously liberal arts college based like the counseling centers. I think that's just now getting worked out. Most faculty if asked by a student will refer them to the Dean's Office which is probably appropriate. I believe there is a greater incidence of students with personal/mental issues than in the past and having the counseling centers reach out to professional schools to present at faculty meetings is a good idea.

It is evident from these comments that there is still confusion that exists among students and faculty about where students should go for services. One comment uses the term "Campus Dean" to describe the role of the Dean of Students. Another faculty member says that the term "dean" is confusing to students, because this role applies to many types of people. Many faculty members believe that the websites needs to be improved to inform students of where to ask questions, or that each faculty member should be given a master brochure with this information. Another faculty member implied that the students he/she teaches do not know what the course was about, and that perhaps students need more advising on being strategic about course choices and their own interests, not just whether or not they are fulfilling requirements. Overall, it appears that faculty members need to be provided with more information about where to send students for services.

#### *Faculty Impressions of Existing Roadblocks for Services for Students*

Faculty chairs and TUE committee members were asked, "Are you aware of any difficulties that students are having in accessing the services they need? What are these "roadblocks"?" Many faculty did not respond to this question, or said they were not aware of roadblocks students were encountering. Additionally, faculty responded,



- As above, almost all queries I receive tend to be about grades, transfers, dropping out, problems with transcripts, credits, late registration, fees, class enrollments, requirements, and so forth. Students simply have never heard of Academic Services. Secondary questions, like disputing grades or problems in a class, should go through departments first--thus the undergraduate vice chairs, as noted above. ... I think a GREAT DEAL was accomplished last year when the VPUE sent out a letter to all faculty indicating that they could handle "sniffles" complaints themselves. Many faculty refuse to be responsible, and should be told that they have the authority to set policy in their classrooms. The other roadblock is that many students still have not learned the one lesson that should be engraved on each of them: "remember, nobody else will take care of it for you." They don't follow through. Making it clear that they must follow up their own cases until resolved and not just drop papers on someone's desk is really critical. So some of the "roadblocks" are still in making expectations clear.
- Undergraduate academic advising needs more staff -- of course an unrealistic suggestion in this era of cutbacks, but for instance, there simply are too many transfer students to be handled adequately by that part of the academic advising unit.
- I see a number of students who are in academic difficulty at the end of the semester. These students need to reach out earlier in the semester. I know they are told this at our school's orientation but it seems for some reasons students think they can handle it and/or will always do better on the next exam. I am at a loss as to how to get those students needing help to reach out for it.
- The Degree Navigator is a continual source of annoyance. It usually tells the students that they are not going to graduate and they immediately come to me. We maintain our own departmental database. Otherwise I have no idea what difficulties that students are having.
- I am not aware of any roadblocks. Having online access to transcripts has been a blessing. Knowing who to call to facilitate solving student problems is what is most important. A guidebook to solving problems might be helpful (names and phone numbers).
- Many more students need psychological help than are getting it -- I don't know why. I feel very strongly that there are too many roadblocks for some students getting exempted from the math requirement. It would NOT do any harm to the overall excellence of the University to be a little bit more relaxed about this!
- I am aware that prospective students continue to be frustrated when trying to speak to a person in admissions. I believe Rutgers College, Livingston College and University College students in particular continue to be confused about what requirements they must meet. What I do not know is whether or not they have reached out to the academic Deans for information and if so, how helpful they were.
- Students need a summer orientation which begins the conversation about WHO WHAT WHERE. Students need student leaders who will act as the conduit to the proper office. Work study students in each office can be very proactive in making the services more visible. Parents need more info about what is available. Keep the information flowing even after Labor Day weekend. Conduct info sessions with students on their level of awareness of programs on campus.

Based on these comments, it seems that faculty members noticed a number of existing roadblocks that students continue to encounter. It appears that some of these problems stem

from the lack of awareness by some faculty chairs of departments of where to refer undergraduates for help. Overall, most of the roadblocks that faculty members are noticing exist in the area of Academic Services, and student awareness of these services.

Taken together, RUNB has done a lot in its transformation to centralize many processes and begin to eliminate roadblocks to students receiving the services they need. It appears that more time and communication is needed to make everyone aware of these new systems. It also seems that the move to creating more online systems of data management has helped to facilitate the process of combining the four colleges into one and giving staff and some faculty access to the large amount of information on students. Also, many administrative offices have been centralized, and now provide service to all RUNB students.

## Chapter Seven: What Has Been Done to Increase the Engagement of Undergraduate Students with Cocurricular Activities and Faculty Members?

RUNB made a decision with the TUE to increase the opportunities available to undergraduate students. One administrator explained the reasoning for this goal,

The thing we've learned—every study done for more than a decade on student success in research universities like ours—the extent to which you can predict student success and graduation is the extent to which they become engaged in their life as a student, both in and out of the classroom. And there are well-known tools and types of activities that you can have embedded in your programs that are good predictors of student success. Things like first-year seminars, internships, students involved in faculty research, and service learning, study abroad—a list of 8-10 things are well-known to be good indicators if students are engaged they'll thrive in the university. [Our job] is to find ways to instill more of that in our classes and with our faculty to provide more opportunities. Because that's the extent to which students who decide to come here will stay here and will be successful and will graduate from here.

As a result, the university established the Office of Undergraduate Education, “which provides academic support, programs, and courses designed to enhance the undergraduate experience and to increase intellectual engagement between undergraduates and faculty at RUNB” (RUNB, 2008). This office is run by the reconceptualized position of the Vice President for Undergraduate Education (VPUE). The responsibilities of this office include “first-year seminars, undergraduate research opportunities, Study Abroad, Educational Opportunity Fund programs, learning centers, disability services, campus academic programs, academic support for student athletes, residential colleges, learning communities, career services, and post-graduate guidance for students applying for fellowships and graduate and professional schools” (RUNB, 2008). These programs will be described to answer the evaluation question of what has been done to increase the engagement of undergraduate students in academic and cocurricular areas, and create welcoming communities. Additionally, each section will include a description of faculty interaction with these areas.

A major change that has helped to facilitate student engagement in RUNB was the development of a position of Assistant Vice President for Academic Engagement and Programming. In this office are people in charge of developing learning communities, facilitating multicultural student engagement, and developing and running programs for new students. Another major change was the creation of the Campus Dean position, designed to foster community on each campus, and to help faculty in engaging more with students. An ongoing goal of shaping student engagement is to increase faculty interaction with students outside the classroom. One administrator said,

My hope for the future, but we don't have an established pathway to this yet, is it's really time to gather together the faculty and the staff who work with new students to really talk about what should every Rutgers student know, what does it mean to be a Rutgers student, how to better orient students to what it means to be a student at an institution like Rutgers. Our orientation efforts are woefully inadequate to this end.

In the mean time, the university has taken on many large initiatives to “educate the whole student” by joining their academic world with their social world. However, some administrators shared that they thought that student engagement has declined with the TUE, considering the perceived breakdown of the Cook community, and all of the changes placed on continuing students. Descriptions of what has been done to establish each student engagement initiative come primarily from the administrator in charge of the respective program.

### *Mechanisms to Increase Student Engagement*

With the goal of increasing student engagement and improving university-wide feelings of community, several changes have been put into place to promote student engagement at the university. This includes creating, expanding, and supporting programs such as Learning Communities, Discovery Houses, First-year Interest Groups, Undergraduate Research Opportunities, Byrne Family First-year Seminars, and the Office of Distinguished Fellowships. To some extent, some of these opportunities were available prior to the TUE, but now the

resources supporting them have been centralized, and all students have access to each opportunity. Others were created alongside the TUE.

#### *Creation of Campus Dean Position*

One change made with the TUE was the creation of the new position of Campus Dean. Campus Deans are faculty members who are charged with putting on cocurricular events on each campus that are open to all students. Each of the traditional campuses has a Campus Dean who works with the Dean of Students on that campus. They typically share an office and staff, and are the locus for developing community on the campuses. There are currently five Campus Deans, one for each campus in RUNB. Campus Deans have been described by some administrators as “the talent agents of faculty” whose major role is to get faculty more involved in the campus and university communities, improving overall engagement. According to the Campus Deans’ website, the following is a description of the role of a Campus Dean:

The role of Campus Deans is to provide opportunities for faculty and student integration and interaction by generating academic programs and events that bring faculty and students together beyond the classroom, and that serve as a foundation for building academic community on the campus. The Campus Dean represents the academic and intellectual work of the campus, introducing students to her/his own scholarship and to the scholarly work of faculty based on the campus; bringing faculty into the learning communities developed (and developing) on the campus; and working with students and faculty to develop year-long themes that focus the campus as an academic entity. The Campus Deans work with the Office of Academic Engagement and Programming to develop events for departments, dormitories, Honors and EOF programs, and other groups for which the campuses provide an academic context. Campus Deans also work very closely with the Deans of Students on each campus to ensure that all students have the most positive, safe, inclusive, and successful academic experience possible (Rutgers Office of Undergraduate Education, 2009a).

Deans of Students on each campus are also charged with creating community on the campus.

They sometimes attend campus council meetings and help to organize events for the campus.

Prior to the creation of the role of Campus Dean, staff often worked directly with faculty members to organize events. One administrator reflected on role of the Campus Dean, and that faculty members are working with fellow faculty members to conceptualize events:

Now a main difference is that now you have Campus Deans who are faculty who are asking other faculty to work on programs together. It's a very different interaction to have faculty to faculty, than staff to faculty. Because they are either coming to [the Office of Academic Engagement] or the Campus Deans are bringing them in to do programming. Because Campus Deans are responsible for programming for their campuses or beyond their campuses, they know the entire faculty. When you are in the staff world, you don't always know the faculty. And faculty members know other faculty member personalities; there is a level of peer to peer interaction.

The Campus Deans have already organized many cocurricular activities for students, during the first year after the TUE. One administrator described an example of the type of accomplishments that have been made by the Campus Deans,

I couldn't be happier about the invention of the Campus Dean. I think it's poorly understood still. But I think that asking a thoughtful faculty member to be the generator of conversations about academic programming with other faculty is an excellent idea. ... I think you haven't seen the full results of it yet, but it's a hard job because there's no history of this, no precedence in Rutgers for this. If you look at Dean Matsuda's WebPages, you can see the extensive work he has done on College Avenue Campus, and he says he's not bound by geography. His theme is global engagement. He has worked with countless student organizations and faculty around topics that lead to global engagement. One example was the *Born into Brothels* [documentary about sex workers in India] night- the director came, etc, but what was so different about this program was that Professor Matsuda contacted and talked to all student groups that were involved in social action, like Rutgers UNICEF, and cultural organizations that do fundraising. They were all invited and had an exposition in the other room of their social action. He introduced each student and all describe their programming and made announcements, so it became a networking opportunity. The room was packed with 500 students. Otherwise there would have been 200 students. It was more active engagement, and we didn't have that before.

The Campus Deans have each had their own initial focus on activities, based on their personal interests. One administrator explained,

I think what has happened is that each of the Campus Deans, partly because of who we are, and partly because of our campuses, have taken on different roles. Dean Matsuda on College Avenue has done an awful lot with student groups, nurturing student groups, particularly with globalization, but with different student groups, to bring a faculty focus to programs that are being run by student groups, initiated by students, nurturing those

groups. Dean Ludescher on Cook has been dealing a lot with the transition between the Cook College environment and the campus environment. The Livingston Campus Dean has been working a lot with the living/learning communities, as the go-to person, like with the RUTV L/LC, but that's over on Busch, so the work is not just contiguous to the Livingston Campus. ... We were constantly redefining, renegotiating, and reinventing the positions.

Another administrator described the focus of the Busch Campus Dean as working toward bringing out Busch Campus's research scientists who do more eye-popping research, to do demonstrations of their research in public forums. The goal of this is to make these presentations interesting enough for students to attend, and to show students that science research is not just working in a lab with test tubes. For example, the Busch Campus Dean does research with visual illusions that are especially attractive to curious students.

Another plan that was made for the Campus Deans was to work together with the Deans of Students to create events. On many campuses, they share office space so they can collaborate. According to one administrator, "no one expected the exciting relationship between the Campus Deans and Deans of Students. They really started acting as a team and they are a true model of where faculty, Student Affairs, and academics have all come together, and we have moved forward." Another administrator reflected on this collaboration,

These [shared offices are a] nexus of on campus of services, faculty-student interaction, student-staff interaction, as well as the place where different student services have come into contact, and we negotiate those thresholds. In most institutions of higher education, there is a friction between what is an academic unit and what is considered a service unit. Our office on each one of the campuses is the nexus where those two things come together and can be more smoothly negotiated.

The role and influence of the Campus Deans seem to be spreading. They are increasing their collaborations with areas such as Student Life, and their role will be expanded to include the training of Resident Assistants. However, some administrators and faculty members report not understanding the roles of DoS, and especially Campus Deans, who tend not to be as visible in administrative offices.

According to their website, the following events were the ongoing projects that have been happening with the combined support of the Campus Deans and Dean of Students on College Avenue Campus, and many other administrators and faculty members. [This list does not include the many activities that had already taken place].

*Ongoing Projects:*

- Social Action Job Expo- Collaboration with Career Services to develop and re-target "non-profit" career fairs to include hybrid presentations of social action, global awareness and service along the lines of addressing the question of "making a difference" and "making a living" at the same time.
- Microcredit Bank and Policy Learning Community- Initiative developed by the Roosevelt Institution with support from members of allied student groups and a professor's course on Global Microfinance. Plans to develop a student-run microcredit institution for supplying loans, expertise, and support to small businesses in the Rutgers community with outreach to immigrant groups and international constituencies.
- Engineers Without Borders- Support for group to pursue applied engineering projects in developing countries-bridge-building in El Salvador, water purification in Thailand, as well as recreational and playground building efforts in Newark. Project premised on completion of feasible designs for material solutions and workable means to publicize work to a larger audience. In conjunction with Busch Campus Dean and faculty from the Bloustein School of Public Policy.
- Peru Children Medical Volunteerism- Group of 25 Rutgers students to Peru to assist in children's health care in clinic. Program under the auspices of Rutgers chapter of FIMRC, international organization dedicated to global children's health needs in the developing world. Program integrated at Rutgers with information sessions and teaching workshops.
- Energy Contest- Promotional and organizational support for Contest for Capping Rutgers Carbon Emissions, sponsored by the Rutgers Energy Institute and Marine and Geological Sciences. Energy Institute will award grants (totaling \$10,000) to undergraduate student groups developing workable plans to reduce Rutgers University's carbon emissions.

*Global Engagements program areas: Fall Semester 2008 events:*

- September 2008: Behind the Rain: Latin America and Environmental Challenges- In association with Latin American Studies, special forum with participation from UNESCO and student organizations with keynote speakers, academic presentations, and student engagements.
- October 2008: Beyond Belief- Collaboration with the Honors Program, International Programs, Global Village, and Douglass Residential Campus. Tie-in with Honors summer reading "Three Cups of Tea" about school-building in Afghanistan, an evening with women's outreach from the United States to Pakistan, widows of events in the post September 11th world.
- October 2008: Meet the Filmmakers/Master Class Series- Program with Writers House featuring Sam Pollard, When the Levees Broke, award-winning filmmaker and



collaborator with Spike Lee, tied to student and faculty programs connected to the New Orleans Katrina events and aftermath.

- November 2008: Land of the Head Hunters/ Edward Curtis- Special historical film screening with live music and dance performance by indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest. In conjunction with academic conference and the support of Museum of Natural History, NYC, and other institutions.

*Global Engagement programs: Ongoing projects:*

- Global Engagements One Stop- Programs and association of Residence Assistants coordinated with GlobalPACT to create proposed global cultural programs for residence hall floor sessions.
- Spring Planting/Earth Day Events- Environmental and social action event in conjunction with student organizations through Cook Campus and New Jersey Water Watch. In conjunction with Recreation, and possible cooperation from other student activists and the Interfraternity Council service week. Involves university-wide plans for campus clean-up and "greening" under possible leadership of Landscape Architecture and Cook Campus botanical specialists.
- Creativity across the Disciplines- Support and promotion for English Department initiatives to anchor events series on creativity questions with special address by Oliver Sacks.
- Conflict Resolution: Yemen- In cooperation with International Programs and Bloustein School conflict resolution programs, connections between students and faculty in Yemen and at Rutgers seeking responses to violence and schools as "safe spaces."
- Challenges of American Diplomacy- Integrated academic conference and undergraduate forum to consider and debate issues around themes raised by a classic work of political thinking: The Tragedy of American Diplomacy. Developed with the History Department (Rutgers, New Brunswick, College Avenue Campus, 2009).

This impressive list exemplifies just some of the outstanding work and collaborations of administrators, faculty, and students, since the TUE.

The Director of the University College Community was also conceptualized as a Campus Dean; however, this has posed some difficulties because many nontraditional students served by UCC do not live on campus. Instead, the director has tried to organize support services for the student population, "but mostly what I did was to make the campus aware of who these students are. In particular that there is this new nontraditional population that's really the lower-income, working-class students, who are not getting financial aid. They will take longer to graduate because they can't take enough classes. That population will probably grow." The role

has been to advocate for better services and attention toward the “new nontraditional students” and the “adult learners” population.

*Rutgers Day.* One of the activities being coordinated by the university and Campus Deans is Rutgers Day. The following is a description of the first annual Rutgers Day, disseminated by President McCormick.

On April 25, 2009, the university will host the first Rutgers Day, our largest and most ambitious effort to reach the people we serve by inviting them to experience their state university firsthand. The annual, full-day, campus-wide event will build on the wonderful traditions of Ag Field Day and the New Jersey Folk Festival. It will include a full array of tours, performances, hands-on activities, demonstrations, exhibits, lectures, and presentations across the Cook, Douglass, Busch, and College Avenue Campuses. (This program will expand to include the Livingston Campus in the future.) Events will be free and open to both the Rutgers community and the public. Our goal is to strengthen the bonds between New Jersey and its state university, build pride in Rutgers, and spread awareness about the range and depth of Rutgers programs. Other universities have hosted similar events with great success, attracting thousands of visitors, including the general public, parents and children, alumni, and prospective students. Rutgers Day is a priority for the year ahead, but to do it we will need your help. I am asking every department, unit, and student organization to host creative and informative programs of discovery and learning.

This is an example of a change from the TUE. Prior to the TUE, each college held its own social events at the end of the Spring Semester, such as Rutgers Fest for Rutgers College students.

Now, Rutgers Day is an attempt to plan more cocurricular activities, for not only current students, but for families, prospective students, and community members.

#### *Creation of the Office of Academic Engagement*

The Office of Academic Engagement was created as a result of the TUE, and is developing the structures that will enable faculty to participate in more engaging, active learning with students. This office coordinates programming for Learning Communities, Discovery Houses, and First-year Interest Groups. One person working within the Office of Academic Engagement works closely with all the Campus Deans on programs that engage undergraduates in providing cocurricular types of programs. If a faculty member is bringing a

guest speaker to campus to give a talk, the Office of Academic Engagement can look for ways to link the speaker to other activities going on, to involve more students.

Since the TUE's creation of the Office of Academic Engagement, it has been able to support some cocurricular activities. Prior to the TUE, these activities would likely not have received consistent funding, or otherwise would have been funded by bits of money from many offices in the university. As an example, an art history professor was giving a talk at the Philadelphia Museum of Art about the Frieda exhibit, so the Office of Academic Engagement arranged for a busload of undergraduates and graduate students to attend the talk. The graduate students showed the undergraduates around the museum to explain the art, and the professor gave a talk on the bus and at the museum. Similarly, the office is also working with a Food Science professor to arrange a trip for undergraduates to nearby businesses such as Kraft and Anheuser-Busch.

According to administrators, faculty members are very pleased with the help being provided by the Office of Undergraduate Engagement. One administrator explained the system:

I can tell you faculty members are very pleased. Faculty members very often ask me where these resources have come from, and they couldn't be happier when they hear there was a realignment of student fees toward academic programming. Many faculty members have long been aware that there were considerable resources available for things like concerts on campus, while they haven't been able to give a small \$200 for speakers to come to their class. [The funding is] not just for Byrne seminar series. We are the department to help arrange that- contracting, travel, sometimes bus arrangements. In the future the endowment from Byrne will pay for the expenses associated with those trips, or other enhancement activities, but in the first year realigned student fees will be used to fund this because the principle hasn't yielded interest yet.

In addition to helping fund these types of trips, the Office of Academic Engagement is also working to help faculty shape their activities to increase their engagement with undergraduates. One example of how this goal has played out is in helping a faculty member who was organizing a conference, from which a book would be written, to involve undergraduates in parts of this

process. An administrator explained that “in the dialogue, we developed an active role for undergraduates in that conference. So the professor was helped with funding for the conference, and she had students attending and writing evaluations of the sessions, evaluating how they could be a part of that textbook.” One administrator reflected on this new process to facilitate faculty engagement, “It seems to me the faculty members are—because the program and idea is coming from them—it is just a very different process. They come to table with the program in mind, and we help them make that program happen. ... It’s very different when they’re coming to you because they are already engaged, as opposed to us trying to get them engaged.” As a result, many faculty members are being helped to rethink their role in undergraduate education.

#### *Student Research Opportunities, Aresty*

Increasing student access to the wealth of research being conducted at Rutgers is a major goal of the university. Students can participate in research experiences through a variety of avenues. They can work out a relationship with a professor or a department to work as paid research assistants or by earning independent study credit. They can learn about research through department based research methods courses. Students can take part in Learning Communities that have a research component. Additionally, students can enroll in Byrne Family First-year Seminars to learn about the research pursuits of an advanced professor. Students can gain access to research opportunities through the Aresty Research Center (ARC). Prior to the TUE, students could take part in a college thesis program. Depending on the college, students could register for 6 or 12 credits for their honors theses. Now, these programs have been dissolved, and students can now write honors theses through their departments only. Now all of the funding from the previous college theses programs can be accessed if a student applies for funding through the ARC.

One of the main avenues for students to access research opportunities in the university is through the Aresty Research Center. This center is privately funded from a 2004 grant from the Aresty family. Since its inception, the center serves students across the university, but it reported to the Dean of Rutgers College. With the TUE, the ARC is under the arm of the Office of Undergraduate Education. In this structure, the director collaborates with other Undergraduate Education staff, such as the director of the Distinguished Fellowships program, and the Director of the Byrne Family First-year Seminars. ARC tries to recruit faculty members to hire Aresty Research Assistants (ARAs), who are rising sophomores. There are currently around 100 ARAs for the year long program, who are paid \$1,000 for the year. Twenty-five ARAs also work full time in the summer, and get free housing and a \$3,000 stipend for their time. One goal is for faculty members to mentor ARAs and to continue a relationship with them for the rest of their undergraduate careers. Faculty can also contact ARC if they are looking for a student research assistant, and students can be suggested, using a database to identify qualified students. Many faculty chairs and TUE committee members described the positive results of Aresty in the online questionnaire for this study. One faculty member said, "For our department, the Aresty program has made a big impact. It has great organization and good procedures for attracting faculty and students and keeping them in touch with each other and with others of similar intent. The immediate rewards that come with the grants are a tangible benefit, obviously."

Another part of the Aresty Research Assistant Program is the peer advisors who work with students. Peer advisors are undergraduates who have done original research before. They meet with assigned groups of ARAs twice a week, and they facilitate conversations about what is going well, and what is not going well. They have students discuss their projects and the methodologies they are using. This helps students to deconstruct the experience apart from meeting with the professor, which professors may not have time to discuss with their ARAs.

To increase students' exposure to the rich research foundation that RUNB has to offer, the Director of the Aresty Research Center is working with faculty members to encourage them to integrate research content and the methodology of research into their course curricula.

So if you're teaching a class on the development of the U.S., you're teaching some basic things about the U.S., and you're giving students a problem to solve that does not yet have an answer. The bad thing is that it's time intensive to do that kind of work. You give students a problem that doesn't have an answer, and suddenly you have to meet with a lot more students; they're working in small groups, and without resources in a department, that doesn't happen as well. We're trying to think of ways to do that.

Another project that ARC sponsors is the Undergraduate Research Symposium. At the end of each school year, ARAs, other students who have received funding from ARC, and students who are doing research independently through departments are given the opportunity to display their work and have it critiqued by graduate students. 247 students participated in the 2007-2008 Undergraduate Research Symposium. Some academic departments also have independent research symposiums. In addition, ARC offers workshops to interested students on conducting research, and programs for first-year students on conducting research in various disciplines, taught by professors and guest lecturers. There are also Big Idea Dinners, where professors discuss their research informally with interested undergraduates. ARC has also started a 1-credit, 10-week course designed for students interested in research, which includes sessions on selecting a topic and advisor, prewriting, funding a project, and making an annotated bibliography, with 20 students enrolling in the course for Fall Semester 2008.

ARC tracks student involvement in research activities. In Fall Semester 2007, 1,094 students were enrolled in independent research experiences, while 68 students were awarded a total of \$39,000 in research funding. For the 2007-2008 school year, 265 students applied to be ARAs, and 91 were accepted into the program. ARAs were mentored by 53 faculty members. During the 2008-2009 school year, 73 faculty members are mentoring 100 RAs (340 ARA applications were received). In a survey of ARAs, students were positive about their research

experiences. 95% of students would recommend the experience to a friend, and 95% would recommend it to a faculty member. 89% had a better sense of what faculty members do when they are “doing research.” 87% answered that they were better able to see the applications of the research. 93% agreed strongly or agreed with that “outside of the Aresty RA Program, I discussed my project with family members, friends, and other students.” Finally, 85% of ARAs wanted to participate in another research experience while at RUNB. ARC estimates that 400 students will formally be involved in its research programs during the 2008-2009 school year.

According to faculty online questionnaires from this evaluation, the Aresty Research Center was well-recognized by faculty members as a great resource to engage students and faculty members, and as a well-run program. Despite the great results that have been produced by the ARC, student participation is limited by the number of faculty members who accept ARAs, and agree to a mentoring relationship. One administrator explained:

There’s no magic bullet. We can’t make faculty members want more students. At some point we’ll reach capacity—I can’t have every faculty member mentoring hundreds of undergraduate researchers. So we need to figure out some other way to deliver both the method and the content [in a way other] than the traditional 1-1 dyadic projects that faculty members do with students that are senior thesis kinds of things.

One idea that is being considered is to use graduate students as undergraduate research mentors, which may be mutually beneficial.

Learning Communities can also provide student research opportunities, in less intensive ways than the Aresty research programs. One example of a current learning community/research model is the Institution for Research on Women (IRW). In IRW, twenty continuing students register for 1.5 credits and meet each week to learn about an area of IRW research, and engage in a group project to develop an understanding of that research.

*Faculty participation.* Faculty members are actively being recruited to work with undergraduates on research, and to improve their mentoring skills. ARC runs a few professional development workshops for its ARA mentors.

We ran some workshops for faculty members last year. Another thing we do is faculty professional development, for lack of a better term for it. The workshops were not all that well attended. I was not surprised because there was no incentive for faculty to go. But I've seen faculty members enjoy connecting with each other over research topics. They'll go to Byrne seminar orientations, to find out more about how to teach these things, and they talk with each other and really like that. I've done more this year with faculty members who are my research assistant mentors (faculty who apply for ARAs). We want to get those faculty members together more often- to talk with each other about the connections of research and pedagogy, informally. Feed them; get them to come once a month or every other month.

According to its annual report from 2007-2008, twelve faculty members attended the Fall Semester 2007 workshop and seven attended the workshop in Spring Semester 2008. At the same time, the ARC acknowledges the difficulty in having a large number of undergraduates working as ARAs for faculty members, especially in the sciences. There is some concern about faculty members in the sciences being unable to work with too many undergraduates because of the time commitment to train students and the financial commitment to purchase equipment and supplies. Laboratory spaces are becoming less available, and some faculty members only want to select the "best" students to do research. Another way the ARC has reached out to faculty members is by offering small grants of around \$500 to bring speakers to talk about research in their classes.

The ARC conducted a survey of faculty advisors of ARAs during 2007-2008. Most faculty members (75-80%) assessed the highest student gains in the areas of time management, presentation of complex ideas, and development of relationships with faculty members. Weaker gains were reported in the development of independence/initiative and in analysis of an argument to justify its validity and reliability, and some faculty members indicated their



students had not had ample opportunity to learn about the components of a research project, according to its annual report.

Reflecting on this experience, one advisor said, “I always enjoy doing research with undergraduates and have a number of articles that are coauthored with former undergraduates. Teaching them is the best way for me to organize my thoughts around a topic, and their questions and findings keep me focused.” Another advisor shared that, “I will always try to find time to work with eager students. They bring in fresh ideas. In part because of my experience in working with these ARC students, I will be offering a freshman seminar course on protein misfolding and neurodegeneration in Spring Semester 2009.” Faculty spoke mostly about working with outstanding students. Yet, according to the ARC annual report:

If the program is beneficial as a model for student learning, we need to find ways to encourage faculty members to work with students who might experience more “value added” to their undergraduate education. Common problems included difficulty finding time to meet with students, mismatched expectations (some faculty did not provide structure at the outset of the year, and thus found that the students took some time to get up to speed), and too little meeting time.

This comment also speaks to the TUE goal to “Offer all undergraduates equal access to Rutgers’ high-quality academic programs and to the distinctive educational experiences that characterize a research university.” It seems some work needs to be done to provide “equal access” to the benefit of working with faculty members on research projects.

Additional future goals of ARC include increasing faculty participation, involving faculty in professional development about how to work with undergraduate research assistants, and possibly creating an ARC Living/Learning community. ARC would also like for students to be able to access a listing or database of all existing or available research assistant positions at the university through the Aresty website. The goal would be for all students to have equal access to applying for research opportunities. Accomplishing this might be difficult because many professors like to “own” the advertisement of their research opportunities for selectivity

purposes. Undergraduates can also gain research opportunities through non-ARC venues, as well. Research programs include the Douglass Project and Project Super in Math and Science, and Research in Science and Engineering. ARC believes that these programs are functioning well on their own through departments, and it advertises information about other Rutgers research opportunities on its website (Rutgers Aresty Research Center for Undergraduates, 2009).

### *Creation of Learning Communities*

With the TUE, the university created a position of the Director of Learning Communities, who has been charged with overseeing new initiatives for learning communities, creating structures and administrative processes, giving funding for new student engagement initiatives, and assisting learning communities that have already been in existence for quite some time. Prior to the TUE, RUNB had two learning communities (LCs), and as of the summer of 2008, this number has grown to over 20, with about 20 students participating in each. According to an administrator, a Learning Community is a self-selected group of faculty and students who come together for a common intellectual purpose—for academic and cocurricular learning. The LCs at RUNB do not offer any credit to first-year students, but continuing students in LCs can register for 1 or 1.5 credits to apply toward graduation. A LC is usually led by a graduate student who is hired and funded by the Department for Academic Engagement and Programming. That graduate student arranges for significant contact with faculty members in that department. An administrator explained an example of this arrangement: “With social justice education, we have the Social Justice House, and we have a faculty member and a graduate student who work with the house. They provide classes, do educational experiences, and they are integrally involved with the activities in that program.” LCs also attempt to help students establish a connection with faculty, academic student organizations, internship opportunities at RUNB, and work on campus. The majority of LCs at RUNB do not have a residential component.

Some Learning Communities at RUNB take on the structure of a Living/Learning Community (L/LC), where LC members live together. L/LCs are distinct from special interest floors where students can select to live, which are run through Residence Life. L/LCs are intentional in connecting student activities in residence halls to cocurricular activities and university courses. Many of these L/LCs are designed for students learning a foreign language. With the TUE, some special interest floors, such as French and German, have been converted to L/LCs, have a graduate student overseeing their activities, and have a required course attached to them. The Office of Academic Engagement and Programming can eventually work with existing special interest floors to attach courses to these experiences and to make them full-fledged L/LCs. Learning Communities at RUNB have a range of requirements for joining them. Many have an application process and sometimes an interview process. Some require students to take part in them for more than a year.

Current learning communities at RUNB are the following:

- Achievement in Math and Science (AIMS) is a learning community for SAS/SEBS first-year students considering studies in science, math or technology.
- Beyond the Cineplex Learning Community will bring together cinema enthusiasts from across RUNB to spend a year viewing and engaging in serious discussion of a broad range of films together, and working as a group to conceptualize and implement a common project centered on film.
- The Institute for Research on Women (IRW) Learning Community Scholars is a LC for juniors and seniors that builds on the IRW's 2008-09 theme-The Culture of Rights/The Rights of Culture.
- Institute for Women's Leadership: Leadership Scholars Certificate Program invites first-year students and sophomores to apply for the Leadership Scholars Certificate Program, a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program in women's leadership
- Science Success Fast Track - Transfer Program is a learning community for incoming transfer students who have declared a science related major.
- Wellness Learning Community- Student selected for the Wellness Learning Community will explore wellness at a personal, institutional and community level
- Writers House- provides a gateway to the experience of creativity and serves as a laboratory for developing expression in all the media of the twenty-first century.
- Livingston Social Justice Living-Learning Community- This community provides an exciting opportunity for 20 first-year students to become the next generation of social justice advocates and activists, and is a 2 year program.

- The RU-TV Living-Learning Community offers special benefits to its student residents who want to learn about broadcast communications and video production.
- French Culture & Language Living-Learning Community- Students in this community range from first-year students through seniors, who are interested in developing their knowledge of French language and culture.
- German Culture & Language Living-Learning Community- Students in this community are immersed in German language and culture, while living with peers, ranging from first-year students through seniors.
- Rosalind Franklin House- a unique living and learning community for first and second year female students who plan to pursue majors in science, technology, engineering or mathematics.
- Helyar House – is cooperative living community, where members have a greater responsibility of self-government than in traditional residence halls, for SEBS and Mason Gross students.
- Seeing Eye Puppy Raisers (Rutgers Office of Undergraduate Education, 2009c).

Other LCs at RUNB are the Discovery Houses L/LCs, L/LCs for Honors Students, the First-year Interest Groups LCs, the Byrne Family First-year Seminar LCs, and the DRC L/LC, which are each described in other sections of this report. The DRC especially has many L/LC options for its residents.

Douglass College has a strong history of providing versions of L/LCs and is continuing that tradition with the Douglass Residential College and DRC students:

After their first year, [DRC students] can choose to join a L/LC, and we have I think eight living-learning houses now clustered in Jameson. You live together with an interest group and you take a course together, and you take a linked course, and activities. And many go on a trip together, so they get a whole learning experience. The Human Rights house is going on a trip to Cambodia this year to study the genocide, and go to the killing fields. The Mideast Co-existence house, which was started by a student two years ago, and got a lot of media attention for this, is where Jewish and Islamic women live together. They took a trip to Turkey, and I think they are doing that again this year. Our newest house is the Women in Business house, which is-, all of these houses are funded by the alumnas, because Rutgers couldn't afford to do this. So it's alumna who love Douglass who fund these houses and trips. Women in Business- someone has funded the opportunity for these young women to develop a business plan- there are two teams who are competing to develop a business plan. And one wins and they will all work to implement the business plan. And they have \$10,000 to work with. So they have the money to try to develop a business plan, and implement it, and they are so happy. They were saying: we love this, it's so good, and we're such a team.

Douglass College was also the first in the country to have a Women in Science residence for students, an idea which has been copied around the country, and is now also being installed on Busch Campus.

One student commented on her experience with a L/LC that is part of the DRC:

I lived in the Global Village in the Human Rights house last year. It was an interesting experience. It's not like another residence hall where you live with women. You have to take a class with them, create a community within these 20 women, part of this Global House. You're supposed to become friends, intellectuals, whatever the issue you'll address that year. We went to Mexico and were dealing with issues of immigration and murders of the women of Juarez. We fight, we don't agree on everything, we get tired of each other, but in the end you appreciate the experience, you have 19 other new friends that you have an experience with. They are good and bad and you'll always remember it, and it changes your life, and for the better.

Many administrators commented on how difficult it was to establish LCs prior to the TUE, because of all of the constraints associated with making plans through several colleges and residential communities. One administrator reflected on how the changes have impacted the process of establishing a LC for RUTV:

Up until the reorganization we had students from Douglass [College] who wanted to live on the [RU-TV] floor who weren't allowed to because they didn't get approval from their deans because they wanted them living on Douglass [Campus]. So we ended up spending really 2-3 years spinning our wheels trying to get a program going that could be successful. Now with the reorganization of the TUE project completed, and the VP for Undergraduate Education appointing an assistant VP pushing for living learning communities, we have really been able to see that program blossom and connect in with the academic environment. ... Now we've gone over in our Weather Watcher program, where we do the weather twice a day... and it's done really well, and we realized that could be a L/LC program. Now, again, we're able to go to one Residence Life/ Housing/ VP structure, and say 'can we expand this.' Sure enough, within 3-4 months, the approvals are there, we've decided on where it's going to go, and we're installing a new L/LC program, which would have been impossible under the old structure. We would have been spinning our wheels for years and never got anywhere.

Another administrator explained, "We had been slow to develop these Learning Communities because our organization did not permit us to do this readily. A department would be very unwilling, mostly unwilling—departments were hesitant to develop a LC for a particular college because they knew they couldn't do it for all the colleges, so they didn't do it at all!"

The Office of Academic Engagement and Programming recognizes many untapped areas for which there are not LCs or L/LCs, so their plan is to continue to help faculty establish and run these LCs and L/LCs, but not to anywhere near the point of 100% of on-campus students being part of L/LCs. However, interested faculty members can go online and submit an application to develop a LC, and the Academic Engagement Office will hold meetings to talk about what the needs are for the students who are being targeted for this community. In fact, all ideas to develop a LC must come through a faculty member. The Office of Academic Engagement also provides support to existing pre-TUE LCs, such as those organized by the College of Engineering.

Scheduling and logistics have been slight problems that LCs have had to address. For example, it was decided that students should receive their housing assignments by the middle of July, however, it is difficult to place students in LCs by that time because many students did not yet have the results of their placement tests, so it was not known if they would place into courses that were required join certain LCs. Also, because of the housing shortage in RUNB, filling all spots in LCs is important so all housing is used efficiently. A concern that one administrator has noted is that these L/LCs, including the DRC, use a lot of residential life resources, which may be seen as unfair to students who are not part of these communities, because it spreads the remaining resources more thin.

#### *Discovery Houses Creation*

The Discovery House (DH) program was designed with the TUE for students in their first year in SAS at RUNB. The university created four DHs, which are L/LCs, for first-year students, based on the four most popular majors/interests at the university: Business, Health & Medicine, Law & Leadership, and Psychology. The university describes DHs in this way:

Discovery Houses are unique Rutgers University, School of Arts & Sciences Living-Learning Communities at the Livingston Campus. Small, select groups of first-year students enjoy the benefits of sharing common residential and academic experiences

while making new friends, exploring common interests and being a part of a close community of peers. Discovery Houses create purposeful links among the academic, residential, and social elements of the undergraduate experience during your first year. Students considering studies in these areas will benefit from living in Quad 2 on the Livingston Campus and taking a cluster of three shared courses with the same cohort of peers (Rutgers Office of Undergraduate Education, 2009c).

In their first year, about 120 students were members of Discovery Houses. Discovery House programs also have Peer Mentors, who are continuing students who live in the DHs and help the new students to navigate the university, and help in planning events. An additional benefit provided to students in DHs is that they get to have cars on campus, which is a unique privilege for first-year students. Finally, students also have access to tutoring relevant to their shared courses in their residential communities. Faculty members are also involved in Discovery Houses. In some cases they teach courses that are directly connected with the experience, and in other cases they advise the students in the group and work collaboratively with the people running the program.

One interesting effect of the first year of the DH program is that they were very popular with students with somewhat low GPAs. Administrators were happy to be helping students who needed more support, but problems with scheduling arose from many students not testing into the courses that they were supposed to take as part of the DH experience. As a result, for the Health and Medicine Discovery House, the population was split into two groups where half of the members took General Biology and the other half enrolled in a lower level course.

Administrators hope that students who were part of the DH program will move on and take part in other Learning Communities, and will share their experiences with other students, to encourage them to take part in other student engagement activities. The Office of Student Engagement administrators assessed student experiences with the DH program using Survey Monkey. The students have been very positive about their experience taking part in Discovery Houses.

According to 96 out of 111 students responding to the survey after Fall Semester 2007:

- 88% indicated that living in the DH had a positive impact on their experience in the residence halls.
- 81% indicated that living near other DH students who were in their classes had a positive impact on their academics.
- 85% indicated the program helped in establishing peer relationships at Rutgers University.
- 64% indicated that the program helped in establish faculty relationships at Rutgers University.
- 88% of current students recommend the program to incoming first-year students. (Rutgers Office of Undergraduate Education, 2009c).

According to student survey quotes posted on the DH website students had the following positive views of their DH experience:

- "Living in discovery housing has helped me to make friends and form study groups."
- "Discovery housing has become my home away from home, and the friends I made here have become like a family."
- "My experience as a discovery house student has led to the creation of lasting friendships and potential networking connections for the future."
- "Discovery housing has allowed me to further discover myself and my passion for business."
- "With Rutgers being so large, the discovery house has made it seem smaller, allowing me to have the best of both worlds." (Rutgers Office of Undergraduate Education, 2009c)

Overall, there were no issues that students responded very negatively to, and the DH program appears to be a positive one for students.

#### *Development of Byrne Family First-year Seminars*

Coinciding with the TUE changes in Fall Semester 2007, at the behest of President McCormick, the university began sponsoring a series of 10-week seminars taught by distinguished Rutgers professors, called Byrne Family First-year Seminars (Byrne Seminars). These one credit pass/fail seminars are organized by the Director of the Byrne Family First-year Seminars, through the Office of Undergraduate Education. These seminars are funded, in part, by an endowment from the John J. Byrne family, and the funding pays for small research stipends for participating faculty. The courses are limited to 20 first-year students. Around 1,500



students took Byrne Family First-year Seminars in their first year of existence. Many interesting Byrne Seminars have been offered to students, including, *How Will 9 Billion People Be Fed?*; *The Language of Advertising*; *Microbes and Humans, or: Germs You Can't Live With and Others You Can't Live Without*; *Should I Sell My Shore House?*; *New York Undercover: The City as Mystery*; and *A Woman for President*. According to the university, “These seminars introduce first-year students to the heart of Rutgers as a research university” (RUNB, 2008).

One aim of these seminars is to connect incoming undergraduates face-to-face with full-time professors in an intimate learning environment. The university believes that “learning together through engaged dialogue and inquiry, students and faculty investigate new intellectual territory, with plenty of space for curiosity, imagination, and discovery. Small classes offer opportunities to find friends and to enlarge the mind” (RUNB, 2008). Between Fall Semester 2007 and Spring Semester 2009, 205 professors or administrators have taught or co-taught at least one of these first-year seminars. These were taught by a variety of different instructors: Full Professors (91), Associate Professors (56), Assistant Professors (10), Deans (11), RUNB Assistant Vice Presidents or Vice Presidents (8), Professor II or Distinguished Professor (7), Associate Research Professors or Research Associates (5), Part-time Lecturers or Instructors (5), university program directors (2), the University President, and the remainder were Librarians and Extension Specialists. Instructors from many RUNB schools taught these courses as well: SAS (129 instructors), SEBS (22), Engineering (10), SCILS (6), Mason Gross (6), Bloustein School (4), Graduate School of Education (4), Management (4), Pharmacy (3), and Social Work (1); 17 instructors were not associated with individual schools or were from unknown schools. 230 different courses have been planned or taught in the first four semesters of the Byrne Family First-year Seminars; 25 instructors have taught two different courses or courses by

different names. Eleven of these courses were co-taught by two professors, while one course was led by three instructors and one was taught by four instructors.

Each semester students are surveyed about their experiences in these seminars. One student shared:

I think first-year seminars are a great idea; everything that Rutgers can do to make the transition easier should be done. ... I already had an interest in this area, and the course definitely fed on that interest. When I first found out my seminar instructor would be a dean I was a little intimidated but the professor was so terrific because he was very open minded to our opinions. He obviously knows about his field but let us work things out as well. I also liked how he applied a lot of what we talked about to his own life; it made him seem approachable and it made it easier to speak in class. Also, it's nice to be in a small classroom setting. In a 350+ lecture hall you get lost in a crowd of faces but in this setting you get a chance to stand out, talk to people, and contribute. I would definitely recommend it to first-years.

The surveys also found: 73% of students agreed they were engaged in learning; 88% agreed that their professor was effective; 48% agreed their course encouraged interaction with classmates outside of class; 75% agreed they learned about research; 60% agreed they learned about resources at Rutgers; 85% agreed that the course changed opinions about faculty/student interaction. Students gave higher ratings to these statements: professor provided a positive learning experience; professor encouraged class discussion; professor explained his research; I would recommend FYS to other students; professors stretched our minds. However, students gave lower ratings to: I studied with other students outside of class; the course made me consider another major; I worked with other students on class assignments; and I socialized with another student.

According to one administrator, "I think the Byrne seminars get students thinking, who come in here right away, about what is a research university, about what relationship they can expect with faculty members here." However, one administrator working to attract students to these courses realized the initial need to sometimes reframe the marketing of the seminars,

...The university kept saying these are taught by our most distinguished faculty members, the most top researchers, look Wise Young at the Tech Center for Spinal cord research, the president is teaching one. This scares a first-year: 'I don't want someone too distinguished, I'm not ready for that.' While the upperclassmen thought it was cool. ...Remember these student are still in HS when they register for this, I said how cool is that, you actually get to use a laser and you don't have to be a physics major, you actually get to play with lasers in a credit/no credit kind of environment. So we have to focus on the work itself, the world of ideas implicit in the seminar, and not such much on the distinguished career of the faculty member because new students are intimidated by that.

Despite any initial marketing challenges encountered by administrators promoting these courses, the seminars taught by Wise Young and President McCormick have been extremely popular with students. Also, the director of the Byrne Family First-year Seminars has worked closely with many instructors to develop more interesting and relevant course descriptions and course names, to draw in more students. For example, one course was changed from *How to Read a Verse Libel: 17th C Politics and the King's Five Senses*, to: *Sex! Scandal! And Politics! (17th Century Style): or, How to Read Like an Historian*.

*Faculty perspective.* Over sixty percent of the faculty who taught during the first year wanted to teach again during 2008-2009. Faculty members teaching these courses are offered workshops on teaching strategies, and to discuss their experiences. They are told during an initial workshop that the Byrne Family First-year Seminars are "part of a cultural change at Rutgers--an attitudinal shift to turn undergraduate life toward a more academic culture, a reflective culture, a place for exploring new things. [The goal is to make Rutgers a] place where students join faculty in creating a climate of intellectual adventure."

Faculty members were surveyed about their experiences teaching Byrne Family First-year Seminars. They had a range of experiences and reflections on these experiences:

- It's great to get students while they are new and excited about learning. We need to work on keeping the excitement up.
- It is very hard to get the kind of strong participation that one wants, as a scholar for whom the material is precious.

- Positive- I was reminded of what fun it is to teach. Negative- I was shocked to discover that the vast majority of these bright students can't write a coherent sentence, paragraph, or paper.
- Students are intolerant of uncertainty; they want answers to difficult problems like civil wars.

In the survey of faculty from Fall Semester 2007, 88% said they would teach the Byrne Seminars again; 91% agreed they would recommend it to others; 77% found training workshops helpful; 90% satisfied with research funds; and 70% were satisfied with quality of students. One senior administrator who taught a Byrne Seminar shared his experience:

There have been some negatives from faculty, but for the most part it's been a remarkable experience. Faculty have enjoyed the workshops and frankly meeting each other in this environment. And frankly, faculty, including myself- I teach every term still, are not used to teaching first-year students. It's more work than you imagine. I think I am a good teacher, and I always teach undergraduates. I was shocked to figure out my methods weren't quite right for a 1 credit pass/fail course that was meant to be fun. One guy finally said in my class you should lighten up, and that was very liberating for the class and for me. I realized I didn't have to stuff so much stuff into every week; they are once a week for ten weeks and are not designed to compete with courses, but to help students discover Rutgers as a research place.

Overall, the Byrne Family First-year Seminars seem to have been an enjoyable and eye-opening experience for students, and a positive challenge for faculty. One administrator shared,

It's really happening, in my view. A number of faculty members who were not previously engaged with undergraduates are now teaching them; some faculty members who always taught undergrads are beginning a larger conversation about teaching approaches and sharing ideas. Faculty members are getting to know freshmen in a more intimate setting and developing relationships with them. Faculty members are taking time and energy to think about how to make their research accessible to first-year students. Faculty members are coming out of their departments and offices and meeting other faculty from various parts of the university, in workshops, luncheons, and social events associated with the First-Year Seminars. Again, these are opportunities for conversations about undergraduate teaching and learning. Many, many students are loving the seminars, meeting and getting to know at least one professor, and are finding out about research at RU and the opportunities available to them. This is all to the good.

Administrators in the Office of Undergraduate Education are hoping that faculty members who have taught Byrne Seminars and have already shown some interest in engagement will be a

seed group to lead continuing discussions on undergraduate education and will be willing to engage with students in cocurricular activities outside the Byrne Seminars.

### *First-year Interest Groups Expansion*

According to the university website about Learning Communities, First-year Interest Groups (FIGS) are non-residential Learning Communities that first-year students can join.

According to its website,

FIGS are a one-credit course graded pass/no credit. It is offered to first-year students for 10 weeks in the fall to provide opportunities to explore an interest area, topic, or field of study. Under the guidance of a trained peer instructor, students in each FIGS explore options within a major or topic and meet faculty, staff, or alumni working or performing research in that area. Additionally, students in each FIGS practice problem solving skills, gain insight into the pursuit of academic/career interests, and learn how to tap into the resources of the University. Each FIGS section is limited to 25 students in order to facilitate an intimate educational experience, lively participation in class, trips/tours around campus, and group projects. (Office of Undergraduate Education, 2009)

In Fall Semester 2008, FIGS were offered to students from SAS and SEBS, through 57 sections on 23 different topics. Popular sections of FIGS include: Health & Medicine (11 sections in 2008), Business (8 in 2008), Psychology (6 in 2008) and Law & Leadership (4 in 2008). Other sections of FIGS included: Women's and Gender Studies (1 section), Veterinary Medicine (2 sections through SEBS), English/Literature (2), and Communication (3). Before the TUE, only Rutgers College had the FIGS program, but now all students can take part in these groups. In 2006 when FIGS was still a Rutgers College program, there were 35 sections offered, serving 627 students. Some non-SAS schools are expanding their FIG offerings, such as SEBS offering four sections for the first time in Fall Semester 2008. In Fall Semester 2008, around 900 students took part in FIGS.

The FIG instructors are required to take a 3-credit course called peer instructor education, and they are required to draw on faculty resources to plan their FIG section. The theme of the peer instructor course is 'learning to teach, teaching to learn.' Students complete

final projects that help prepare them to teach their FIGS. Students are selected as FIG instructors if they are high-quality students and have good classroom presence, because the main purpose of a FIG is to teach first-year students about how to be good students and to explore the discipline. One administrator described and reflected on the FIGS program:

[FIGS is a] transition program- it teaches everything from study skills to introduction to libraries, career services, student panels, I think they are required to do one on-site excursion. Health and medicine does a trip to a lab or UMDNJ- to help students think about if they want to explore that area. They don't necessarily have to major in psychology to explore it. If it's something they're interested in, to explore different careers, it's a wonderful transition program, that's why it is in the fall. There is a lot of data on FIGS program; it was developed in 2000 [by Rutgers College] so there is a lot of data on impact—both on experience of first-year students and peer instructors. [Peer instructors are] successful students and they want to help students succeed when they get to Rutgers and transition to Rutgers and understand its resources. Rutgers is a big place so FIGS a good program to help students adjust and figure things out. For example- they talk to students about the registration process. They work closely with the Academic Services department. It helps them adjust to Rutgers. It's really a great program.

FIGS sometimes go on a field trip to explore the discipline. “For example, in the exploring health profession FIG, the students have all been to the medical school, they walked over there from their classroom to see the morgue, they got to see the cadavers. A couple of students declined, and said that helped them learn they didn't want to be around sick people.” FIGS actively engage students in learning and exploration through activities such as this.

Peer instructors who teach the FIGS section are asked to reflect on their experience teaching the course. One peer instructor reflected:

The most memorable part of teaching FIGS was that I was able to pass on information I learned in the last four years at Rutgers to freshmen in a fun 10-week course, giving them an edge. My students seemed to appreciate all the information because it was coming directly from someone who was in their shoes just a few years ago. The experience challenged me and gave me a chance to reflect on my undergraduate career.

Another peer instructor said:

Not many undergraduates have the chance to really help younger students through teaching, and I think that is the most rewarding part of this program. I never took a FIGS course when I was a freshman, but I always thought that it would have been helpful.

After teaching this course I can really see the value and importance of this program, especially at a big school like Rutgers.

Students in the FIGS are also asked to reflect on their experiences in taking the courses.

One student shared that “I think the FIGS experience was very helpful and a crucial part of the transition into college for me. Not only did it help me realize the possibilities that my degree could give me, it also showed me how I could accomplish those careers.” Another student went on to say “My FIGS class was my favorite class to attend all week. Having a current student teaching the class gave me hope that I'll be alright and made college feel a lot less intimidating as it felt the first day.” Finally, another student shared that “Overall, FIGS has been a very fun and beneficial experience. I not only learned about psychology but I also learned about how to be successful as a freshman by using Career Services, Degree Navigator and many other academic services. In addition, my FIGS peer instructor made the class fun and interesting.” According to surveys, students were very positive about this experience, especially in FIGS facilitating their transition to RUNB from high school, and in figuring out where to go for services in the university. Most students were also positive about recommending FIGS to incoming students.

#### *Office of Distinguished Fellowships Creation*

One of the university's lauded accomplishments related to the TUE is the creation of an Office of Distinguished Fellowships, with a full-time director in charge of recruiting, advising, and supporting students who apply for prestigious fellowships. In its first year of existence, this has resulted in a large increase in applications to prestigious awards, increasing from 20 in 2006–2007 to 54 in 2007–2008, as well as an increase in finalists and winners. Last year, four Gates scholarships were awarded to Rutgers students (the most by any public institution and more than any school but Harvard), and Rutgers had three finalists for the Rhodes scholarship.

Fellowships applications supported by this office include those from the government, private donors, foundations, civic organizations, and corporations. One effect, besides for the prestige of winning such awards, are the changing attitudes of Rutgers students. According to a few administrators, not only do students know what some of these awards are, but students and faculty are realizing that Rutgers students can win these awards. One administrator commented:

[The Office of Distinguished Fellowships] had some very good successes last year, but more importantly, I hear students in leadership roles talking about these opportunities, talking about things they might want to apply for, and are actively engaged in thinking about doing that. Whether or not they are actually successful in doing it, the fact that they are working to achieve those things has been very positive for the institution, so I think that has been very successful.

Another impact of the Office of Distinguished Fellows is the increased interaction of faculty with students that has resulted. One administrator explained,

We set up a Fulbright advising committee, and through [the Office of Undergraduate Education] I reached out to the entire faculty. And I didn't know what to expect because at Penn I really had to struggle to get this done. And I never had numbers like this- I had an advisory board of 32 faculty members. All of whom had never served in this capacity or anything like it at their time at Rutgers. I set up a one-to-one relationship between faculty member and Fulbright candidate. Each one of the Fulbright advisors worked with one candidate. We basically set up something brand new that had never been there before. ... So the student would meet a new faculty, meet several times, talk about their projects and get advice, and finally the faculty would write up the evaluation that the Fulbright required. My point is that not only are more students getting involved in the process but more faculty members are too.

Another indication of increased faculty participation was the impressive response of faculty members to the Rutgers' President's letter asking them to nominate students for Fellowship guidance. An administrator shared, "I was very impressed with the faculty response. I think I must have 200 names. The reason I am impressed with that is A the size of the response, B- it's easier to sell people on the idea of applying for fellowships if a professor is pushing them, because they care about their professor." The new Office of Distinguished Fellowships has facilitated the engagement of many faculty members who had never worked with students in the role of fellowship advisors.



In describing the work and initial accomplishments of the Office of Distinguished Fellowships, one administrator said,

The process, looking back and looking forward, is actually an excellent educational experience, win or lose. The wins and losses are inextricably bound to it [but] it isn't just the product of this process that is so important. Insofar as more and more undergraduates get involved in [applying for fellowships], you're really in some substantive way transforming undergraduate education, in a way you can point to and be proud of. ... That in itself is transforming undergraduate education- not accepting this assumption that this is beyond Rutgers students, or that we should work in some secondary tier. It's changing culture. You do it by getting more people involved.

Another accomplishment of the office is that Rutgers students can now apply for more scholarships than in the past. This year, for instance, Rutgers was added to the list of universities whose students were eligible to apply for the Luce Scholarship. It has also been successful in the past year in gaining faculty support in helping to identify talented students, in establishing mentoring relationships, and in promoting the idea that Rutgers students could win prestigious fellowships. One administrator pointed out that the initial success of this office has also helped to balance out the increased attention to Rutgers athletics.

One goal of the Office of Distinguished Fellowships is for more students to apply for Fulbright awards, and to increase the participation of out-of-state students. Encouraging out-of-state students to apply increases the number of Rutgers students' applications to the Rhodes and Marshall scholarships because applications are considered on a regional basis. This office also wants to continue collaborating with Aresty and the Honors program to identify talented students, but also to begin to look for talented students elsewhere in the university population, such as in student government or athletics.

### *The Creation of Douglass Residential College*

The transition of Douglass College to the Douglass Residential College (DRC) was originally intended to address concerns regarding the preservation of the historic Douglass

College for women. It is likely that the DRC was conceived of as a mechanism for increasing or preserving student engagement, but it appears it has served that goal of the TUE.

#### *Initial Changes and Impact of the DRC*

During the TUE planning process and after the plans for the TUE were brought about, students at Douglass College were very vocal advocates of maintaining the status of life at this historic Douglass College for women. The creation of the DRC for women was not initially included in the TUE plans, but this was later developed in response to the wishes of Douglass students and alumni, especially of older alumni who were unaware that Douglass College no longer had its own faculty. A *Daily Targum* student opinion article told the community:

In his recommendations, McCormick listened to the concerns to the current student community, especially those of the women of Douglass College. Douglass will not be stripped of its history and mission. Instead, it will stand as the Mabel Smith Douglass Residential College on Douglass Campus. As a residential college, it will not able to grant diplomas, but will foster a community of strong and motivated women through single-sex residences and cocurricular programs. Douglass Residential College will provide an avenue for women from any campus or background to shape their own identity in a welcoming atmosphere. The benefits of a residential college will not only be given to the women of the University, but McCormick also created the option of instituting other mission-oriented colleges, as the need arises (The Daily Targum, 2006, March 6).

The Douglass Residential College can be thought of as a Living/Learning Community for women who are interested in leadership and the success of women. Nearly 2,000 women are a part of the DRC, and take part in a curriculum that includes a required mission course called *Knowledge and Power: Issues in Women's Leadership*. They also have priority access to the many DRC Living/Learning communities, such as the Global Village L/LC for women “who want to live in a community with others who, regardless of major or career focus, share similar interests in self-development in areas such as foreign language proficiency, gaining inter-cultural appreciation, achieving global awareness, applying burgeoning leadership skills and/or making a difference locally and globally” (Rutgers Douglass Residential College, 2009).

One notable change that has come with the creation of the DRC, mentioned by many administrators, was that prior to the TUE, many women enrolled in Douglass College when they did not get accepted into Rutgers College. Many of these students were uninterested in the college's mission as a college for women. One administrator shared that, "a lot of women were forced to be part of that campus even though it wasn't their choice because they didn't get into RC. I think what they have now is a group of women that is really embracing what Douglass has to offer, so it's better for them." In the past, despite the lack of initial interest in Douglass College, many students were "converted" after a few months and became some of Douglass College's staunchest supporters. Now, students must choose to join the DRC. One administrator discussed anecdotal evidence of the positive aspects of this change,

One of the things that has happened at Douglass, if you ask people who are teaching the required course on leadership for first-year students, is the faculty in those courses tell me that they find that this is the first teaching experience they've had in many years with new students at Douglass where the students not only want to be there, but they know what Douglass is. And they are young women who were already thinking about leadership when they were in HS. We had around 400 this year, and it used to be that we had 670 or something, but this time, these students are choosing Douglass, they want to be at Douglass, and they want to be at a women's [residential] college.

At the same time, one student explained her view of the TUE's effect on Douglass women,

I think this is both a positive and a negative. So many girls I lived with freshman year were waiting until they could transfer out of Douglass so they could live on a different campus, because they could only live on their own campus. And they couldn't stand living with all girls; they couldn't wait to enroll in Rutgers College to live on College Avenue Campus. In one way it's good because they can still be Douglass students have those ties and programming and opportunities. But since it's not mandatory to live here, we're not filling all the beds we have to. It's not just that people don't want to live with all girls; it's that it's really hard to commute, so a lot of people don't want to do that, never mind they're living with all girls. It's a double-edged sword.

Another student went on to explain,

I agree; it has to do with the good and the bad. We get to have the engineer women, but they have to take their classes on Busch. It's a hassle. It complicates our situation, it complicates the community. Because the point of community is living with each other, talking to each other, hating each other, loving each other. That's part of the community, the intensity and growing, reminiscing. That disappears when people live

apart. I'm an engineer and have to live on Busch. Busch is great, but it doesn't have the DRC community.

Some initial concerns regarding the switch from Douglass College to the DRC included the breakdown of community of DRC students. One administrator who works with DRC students said that, with the TUE: "[DRC student] participation levels have been the same as they always have been, maybe even more so for their traditional events. We've worked hard at Douglass to maintain them at the same level they've been," in part because there are DRC staff members helping to organize these traditional events.

One interesting finding related to the TUE and the self-selection of DRC students is the improvement in the academic profile of DRC women between entering college and the end of their first year. According to data collected by the DRC over the past two years, the first-year DRC students had slightly lower average SAT scores than RUNB students as a whole. However, by the end of the school year in Spring Semester 2008, DRC students had on average higher GPAs than non-DRC RUNB students, meaning that the DRC and its support had a profound effect on these women. This improvement is also notable because a higher percentage of DRC first-year women are from historically underrepresented groups than the rest of the university population (e.g. 20.3% of DRC women were in the EOF program in Spring Semester 2008, versus 7.4% of non-DRC RUNB students; 42.2 % of DRC women are Black or Hispanic, versus 16.7% of non-DRC RUNB students). Regarding this academic improvement, an administrator said, "To me it means that one of the things that DRC is right now is a laboratory for undergraduate success. We are small enough, and we are funded outside in part, though Rutgers certainly funds us also, and that allows us to do programs, to see, how do you make students successful, how do you make them engaged."

It seems as though the Douglass Residential Community is an attractive community for all women, including students who come from historically underperforming groups, to become a part of and succeed in. One administrator explained a reason for this:

One reason I think we get a lot of EOF and minority students is that there is a lot of women's empowerment in poorer communities. They come in and say, my mother was a strong woman, she kept the family together; I want to be a strong woman. The first orientation we had, I had a group of students and I said: let's talk about leadership, has anyone have any leadership responsibilities? Every hand went up. Everyone in that class said: 'I was class president'; 'I was head of the basketball team'; 'I headed a poverty program.' Wow, those are the women who are choosing to come here, because they have already been told about women's leadership.

One instructor of one of the women's leadership courses described the demographics and characteristics of the students in his class:

A class of 20 students has 4-5 Black students from 3-4 groups in the African Diaspora, four Latino students, one who is a recent immigrant, one from a different country, one from this country exclusively, 4-5 white students, one from Maine, two from Eastern PA, one from an affluent suburb of NJ, and two Asian students, one who is of Islamic faith, another who is Chinese, so that's very different than the average classroom. So from DRC and other colleagues who teach that course, there has been an intentional choice to truly create a diverse and inclusive environment for all students; I think it's very dynamic. But I get my hunches that Douglass was already doing this before the restructuring, but the restructuring has allowed someone like me to be able to see that. ... They have definitely made intentional choices [to join the DRC], by virtue of the types of conversations we have. The content of the course certainly elicits that in the dialogues we have but also, single sex education, having taught in both single sex classrooms and also coed, across the board, female students typically have been more participatory in the class and the strength of the voices are much stronger at the course as DRC. Even with my male presence in the class, the women are really participating in a dialogue. Most of them have very strong opinions and are very assertive about those opinions. I think some of that has to do with the curriculum, but also the learning context.

Perhaps one reason for the DRC's success in supporting women, especially women who are traditionally at risk of not graduating, is their special advising program for their students. An administrator described this program:

To me, one of the big problems with TUE is the advising. Advising has always been a problem, so it's not unique to TUE. But they used to have advisors who were in the colleges who were pretty stable. They got to know these advisors. Now, [Douglass Campus has] SAS advisors, who they might come back to see. But they might go to the

SAS advisors on any other campus. And they often don't understand how important it is to have a longer term relationship with an advisor. When they get in their major you hope they start to get this, but for the first two years they are often just floating around, often not seeing an advisor. We do make every effort to ensure that everyone sees a Douglass advisor, so we have special [Pathways] advisors. They are supposed to contact the students, but I'm sure some of the students still don't come. One of the things our advisors do is make them see a pathway through their whole career at Rutgers. But particularly the first two years, while they are taking their general education requirements: how do you take these in a way that connects to what you are interested in, because there are courses in science, math, humanities that might connect. If you are science person, there is a humanities course about science that might connect, etc. [SAS advisors don't necessarily do] this. So we are trying to get them to make those decisions in a smart way, as much as they can. We're trying to get them to connect cocurricular activities more. In our mission course, one of our requirements is they have to go to two outside events offered on Douglass [Campus] that have to do with women. There are hundreds, so this is easy, and they have to write a page about the event. This is to get them to see there are things outside of the classroom that are not just parties, not just the social life, but they are cocurricular. They are lectures, performances, talks, films, all of which have real educational value for you. There are clubs, community service, study abroad, and all of that needs to be thought of as what you do as a student here. Fulfilling this list of requirements- that's only part of what being at a university is about. It takes a while for that to get hammered into students' heads. Our advisors work really hard to get students to see: how do you connect it all?

The DRC is also piloting e-portfolios for students to use to keep track of and reflect on their academic and cocurricular experiences.

Another program that the DRC has continued is its support for adult women students.

An administrator explained this support and the Mary I. Bunting program:

You can be a commuter in DRC, which is a little complicated, but you can; we've always had that. We have special commuter programs and special programs for the group we call our Bunting students. They are older women, nontraditional. That's a 50-year old program that's been wildly successful in getting women, often with children—their children are grown—to come back and get their degrees and have a group. And most of them are commuters. That still exists. We have a special lounge in the student center where they can go and programs just for them. It's tough working with commuters. It requires us to know who they are and get in touch with them and make sure they come to things. Because they usually are very happy when they do, but it's hard because they are rushing home. I think this year we have about 50 Bunting students, in the senior class I think. 48 out of 406 in the new DRC class this year are Bunting students, so that's 12%.

Because of the creation of the DRC from Douglass College, an activity that was not replicated for any of the other consolidated colleges, except University College's change into

UCC, some members of the DRC feel the need to defend its existence. Some administrators were critical of the money and resources that have been invested in the DRC as being unfair to non-DRC students. The DRC would argue that during its first year, the performance of its first-year students, who entered with lower SAT scores relative to SAS as a whole, improved to the extent that DRC students ended the year with a higher average GPA than RUNB students as a whole. Additionally, one administrator explained other reasons for preserving the DRC:

Douglass is a laboratory—give us credit for being able to do this stuff. There are some people that think Douglass is a waste of money, on such a small group of students. Right now we have about 1,900 students. That will shrink to about 1,500 next year, because the graduating class is our largest because it is left over from the old college system. So people say you spend a lot of money on these students, and the state does pay many of the salaries here, but the majority of the programs are run with alumnae money. ... And also I think it's a good investment into innovative programs that are being copied. The E-portfolio is a good example. The Bunting Cobb house is being copied on Busch now. ... I do think with the TUE last year and some of the lingering bad feelings about it, there were people who really didn't want to talk about Douglass. It seems there has been some sense people want to pretend we don't exist here. I think this is changing and people understand we are not a vestige of an old women's college. We are a kind of cutting edge laboratory of small community work in a large university.

Additionally, the some administrators believe that this new arrangement where any woman can join or benefit from the DRC is very supportive of women. The university is proud of its women's programs, including the Department of Women's and Gender Studies, the Institute for Research on Women, the Institute for Women's Leadership, the Mary I. Bunting Program, the Douglass Project for Rutgers Women in Math, Science, and Engineering, the Center for American Women and Politics, the Center for Women and Work, and others. Last year, the university also ran a film series called *Resisting Imagines*, about images of women in the media. The university is also investing a lot of resources in supporting the DRC and using it as a selling point for prospective students. According to the director of Enrollment Management, in an interview with *Focus Magazine*,

We just started a national campaign for the first time to increase enrollment in Douglass Residential College and to see what level of interest there is outside the state. We have

been amazed at the reaction. We purchased names of women who took the SAT who said they were interested in the women's educational experience. So we are calling all of them, and the reactions have been very, very strong (Alvarez, 2007, December 12).

It seems as though the RUNB commitment toward programming for women remains strong.

### *Challenges related to the DRC transition*

Some administrators and students believe that Douglass College students did not have a very smooth transition after the TUE. Some students and alumni have felt as though the DRC was created as a fig leaf, and that they preferred the previous Douglass College system.

"[Students are] still completely supportive of Douglass, but they feel like the college system should not have been done away with. They feel like there was a real loss when Douglass lost its coherence as a college and campus together. And right now those things are slightly askew."

One administrator discussed the challenges that the DRC has gone through with the TUE:

DRC is still in transition from Douglass College. Last year my impression was that it was a rocky transition year. I think that's not unique to DRC, it was a rocky year in lots of places, because so many reporting relationships changed, they didn't know who call, there were people in new jobs that didn't know how things had been done. And my sense was that all over the university, but particularly at Douglass, a lot of our traditional programs didn't happen because we couldn't figure out how to do them. The funding had changed, the people had changed, and the students noticed that and complained a lot about it. Another thing that happened here at Douglass was that two of the dorms went co-ed. ...and students did report they saw a lot more men on campus because they were living here. There were more men in the dining halls, as well as in the student center. Evidently their feeling was that last year the student center did not offer enough programs of interest to women. ... [Because the Dean of the DRC no longer had control over the Douglass Student Center], there were a lot of people running things that didn't know about women's college and programs. A lot of students interpreted this as hostility, but it probably was a lack of interest, or people who never thought about doing programs for women, and didn't realize there was a tradition of that here. I always like to give things the most benign interpretation possible, but some of the students were quite upset about it. They felt like the identity of Douglass had been undermined, because a lot of the ways things operated had changed; there weren't the same old faces at the student center. It was harder to get things done.



According to the administrator, after some student complaints were raised, some of the original Douglass Student Center staff members were moved back to Douglass Campus, and university-wide Student Affairs centers are being more responsive to the desires of Douglass residents.

One example of a response to a problem created by the TUE was that in the first year after the TUE, many non-DRC Resident Advisors were placed in DRC dorms, meaning that they were not necessarily interested in the idea of a college for women. Some DRC students want their RAs and other women who are living on Douglass Campus to be DRC members. One student explained,

I think Residence Life needs to change. There needs to be a DRC residence life. I remember last year- to have an RA that was not Douglass and not know about the traditions and my community, it was very difficult to connect with her. I thought she was an awesome person and great. But to get that connection- it's just different from my freshman and sophomore years. We bonded over Yule Log happening on Sunday, and Sacred Path, the Halloween party at the Dean's house. For some people it might seem stupid, but for us it's part of our traditions and community. Residence Life used to be fostered, and it's not happening to the same degree.

An administrator explained that since these initial issues were raised, this policy has been changed:

We have a lot of success working with Residence Life people...trying to get RAs into the dorms who are Douglass students, and who understand that the women who come into the all women's dorms have a very special connection there. You don't want to put an RA into an all-woman's dorm who doesn't understand why women want to be there. There are some women who really don't. You want the RA who goes, "oh this is such a great thing and I understand why this was a place where women felt empowered, or have more fun being around all women. There are all sorts of reasons high and low that you might want to be in a women's dorm." And Residence Life is working hard to make sure the RAs are sympathetic and supporters of that idea and don't just look down on those women.

Another student went on to explain the importance of bringing all Douglass Campus women into the DRC,

I agree. Now any female [RUNB] student can live in Douglass Dorms, and not have to be a DRC member. So I have 3-4 girls living in the Human Rights House with us who are not DRC. One time it awkwardly came up in conversation, and they didn't even know what DRC was. They just selected this housing. They had no idea that everyone was DRC

members. No clue. And I mentioned it to someone from Housing who came to a meeting, and I said: 'what are they doing about recruitment once students are in, and no one is coming to these girls saying you are benefiting from Douglass, why don't you become a member.' We also have girls living in our community who are our peers and they don't understand. You try to sit down as Douglass students and try to have a conversation, and you have this girl who has never taken a Knowledge and Power class like all of the rest of us have, who haven't read the same articles we've been reading for years and years. It makes it difficult because they have a different mindset. It makes it hard to come together as a community as well.

Residence Life and DRC staff are also working to make sure that freshman men living on Douglass feel comfortable and welcomed.

### *Future DRC Goals*

Staff at the DRC is hoping to continue to improve the recruitment of women into the DRC and to convince DRC students to reside on Douglass Campus for longer periods of time. An administrator explained,

Right now, they only have to live here for one year. We just didn't know if they would choose to live here. We've had such good recruitment, I think in the next couple of years we might ask them to live here for two years, which is pretty standard for residential campuses across the US--a two year commitment to living on the campus. About 60% of students last year did stay on campus, but to me that's not a good enough percentage. And many who live off campus come back for our activities all the time. They just said: I want to live in Rockoff [new dorm], or on College Ave, that was the main one. And a few of the Women in Science [L/LC members] want to live on Busch because it's so much easier for them. So the issues about living on campus are kind of sticky because we think they get a lot from staying here at least two years.

Related to the goal of retaining DRC members in the DRC dorms is the recruiting of existing RUNB students, and new RUNB transfer students into the DRC:

One of challenges is to recruit students who don't choose us the first year, and who might, when they get to college start to understand more about gender. They can join. Transfer students can join too. We don't like them to join too late because they can't get the benefit, so we are really trying to recruit sophomore women to come join Douglass. We say: look, now you're at college, you had your co-ed experience, you understand that gender is a complicated problem, and now you want to come and be in this really supportive women's community, where you're going to get a lot of great opportunities. So we don't get too many yet, but we are working on that.

DRC student leaders also brought up the difficulty they perceive in recruiting students and helping them to join the DRC:

Once you start talking to these girls who are living in the house who aren't DRC, and I'm telling them about the benefits, and they say well that sounds great, maybe I will become a member, how do I do it? I'm like- I don't know. No one knows; no one has a clue of how once you are part of [RUNB] how to become a DRC member. I can't even promote it because I don't know who to turn to. They say go see someone in College Hall, they can tell you, they aren't there, they're on College Avenue; it's red tape all over again.

Another issue the DRC is running into is that some critics believe that entrance into the DRC should be merit based, like the Honors Program. One administrator described this situation and the need for more clarity in applying to the DRC community,

Right now there are no requirements to get in other than you are a woman. A lot of people say that's not fair, this or that. People would be more comfortable if it was merit based, because the Honors program is merit based and people aren't questioning why we have that. But we are not; if you are a woman and want to live here, we are happy for you to live here. And there are people who think that is prejudicial against men. There is no way to answer that other than to say men still really do well in the world. So you apply to Rutgers now, and the admissions site- it really doesn't give much, it's very hard to find DRC on the admission site, and that's something we're working on. But once you've applied, it's really your housing application where you check off Douglass. I think that's not quite the right way to do it because it's more than a housing decision, it's a decision about a whole community. And because of that, we are starting to be successful in recruiting from all over country. We have 16-17% out-of-state students, at Rutgers the percentage of out-of-state students is 9%. That's because there are young women out there who have heard of women's colleges and are interested in women's leadership, opportunities, community, but virtually all other ones are private and extremely expensive. So we are a great deal, even for an out-of-state student. Barnard, Smith, Wellesley are very expensive. And so I think that we have a niche to fill. We are completely unique in that way that we offer women's programs within a large public university.

The DRC's support of historically underrepresented college students is another justification of the preservation of the community.

Overall, one student leader explained her positive experience as a DRC member, and her desire to maintain the DRC and the Douglass College traditions:

I think that an all-woman's residence hall and all women's programming and leadership opportunities are needed. If it weren't for that, I don't think I would be the leader I am

right now, I don't think I would speak the way I speak, stand up when I stand up, and it's definitely helped me. I think because of that, I will have a great future, and I'll be able to help a lot of people because of that. And I just hope that Rutgers really supports DRC and really tries to help it, and helps it in a way that we'll never have empty beds. No matter which residence hall on Douglass Campus, they will all be DRC residence halls, and there will be women there, and programming, and organizations will continue to prosper, our traditions no matter how cheesy they are will continue for years. When I come back, I want it to be the same, and I want the community to feel the way I felt freshman year when I came in.

She also pointed out that support of DRC by the university will eventually pay off in alumnae support, because the DRC is such a positive and life changing experience that alumnae currently support and want to continue to support for years to come. The students also express the desire for a great (permanent) DRC Dean. "We need a nationwide search because we need the best woman for the job. We need the university to be behind us on that."

#### *Impact of Changes on Continuing Students*

Many administrators, when asked about new student impressions of the TUE, respond saying something such as: "The new students are completely oblivious, which I so didn't expect. I don't know why I missed that. It's as if nothing ever existed before them. But I guess that's a good thing." However, another group of students that has been affected by the TUE changes are continuing students, who entered the university under the federated college system, prior to the TUE. Much of what they were used to prior to the transformation was changed around during the summer of 2007, causing some confusion and hurt feelings upon their return to the university, in addition to the positive results that have been mentioned. Of these students, the most vocally upset were the students from Douglass College and Cook College, and to some extent students from Livingston College and University College were also distressed. The experience of students from University College was described in the Chapter Five section about nontraditional students, and the experience of Douglass College students was just described. At the same time, while many students were not happy about some of the changes, many were

pleased with other aspects of the transformation. Students now had access to any activity at the university, they could live with friends on any campus, and they followed a consistent set of policies for all students. It is not known if the TUE influenced any student decisions to transfer out of the university or had any other negative retention impacts, but such ramifications have not been indicated in any conversation.

One issue that was brought up by a few administrators was that the continuing students were left out of the benefits of the TUE in some ways. One administrator described,

Honestly, the handful of Rutgers College students who are still here [in EOF], feel somewhat lost. Because of the attention being placed on the new structure, they feel they are a lost child. They'll be gone in 1-2 years, but things are being focused on the entering class in terms of servicing them. I think the two remaining classes here, one or two have said they have forgotten about us. There are two more classes here with the colleges. There was debate this year as to whether there should still be graduation with the individual colleges. Students felt very strongly about that because they came in with those colleges, they want to graduate with that college. They made their point to the powers that be. So I think there are two different populations. The [new] students who are here now don't know anything otherwise.

Many administrators shared that students with whom they had relationships with under the former structure are still calling them for help because they do not know where to go with questions, and fellow colleagues are still contacting them with similar questions. This confusion has died down to some extent, but there are still reports of it happening.

Additionally, continuing students might have felt left out because they could not gain access to the Byrne Family First-year Seminars, Discovery Houses, and First-year Interest Groups that were open only to first-year students. One student explained, during Fall Semester 2008, the feeling of being left out:

I think for the imbalance, I think the incoming freshman and sophomore classes have gotten a lot more engagement through the seminars that have been offered. They've gotten what we should have gotten, I feel there has been some inequality between what juniors and seniors had, versus the freshmen and sophomores. Some say they are trying to chase all of us out of here who came in with the old system, even those of us who switched into SAS have not gotten equality of services across the board. There are

certain faculty members who have taken the time to get re-involved with it, who worked with the Deans offices on each of the campuses.

The continuing students also experienced more confusion than the new students because they were used to the previous system of where to get advising and who to go to for questions. Many established ways of doing things were changed with the TUE. Administrator and staff offices were moved, some policies about academic standing and dismissals were changed, and students no longer had the automatic right to live on the campus formerly aligned with their college. Some administrators described fielding many phone calls for employees who had changed roles and spending a lot of time helping confused students. University College students, who tend to not be as engaged with the university, and who did not receive as much information about the TUE changes as other students, were especially confused. Another group of continuing students that had a difficult time with the changes were the Rutgers Tour Guides. They are an enthusiastic group of students who are proud of Rutgers; they had a difficult time because they did not know what to say while giving tours to parents and prospective students in the year prior to the TUE, because many of the TUE changes were still being decided. As is discussed earlier in this chapter, EOF students and Carr Scholars seemed to have a notably difficult time with the transition as well, because of their personal relationships with advisors that were changed in the transformation.

Continuing students are also said to be concerned about what will happen with their graduation ceremonies. Many students want to graduate with the college they entered the university under. One administrator shared what she has been hearing from students:

The other source of stress and confusion for the students from my world is graduation. It's a highly emotional issue. Way more so than anyone gives it credit for, so it is dismissed at the higher level: I don't have to think about this until this gets closer. But the students are truly obsessed with this. They are upset not knowing who they will graduate with, what will be on their diploma. They are very concerned about that, a little less so than last year but still this year. It is in the grand scheme of things trivial, but not to them, not right now, and that's what's missed.

For graduates of the Class of 2009, the university has announced it will still be holding separate graduation ceremonies for students. This year, no SAS graduation will be held for about 500 students graduating from the school, who mostly entered as transfer students because students transferring into the university starting in 2007-2008 were admitted into SAS. Instead these students will attend various college graduation ceremonies. Starting in 2009-2010, senior administrators want to have one SAS graduation ceremony for SAS students and the remaining individual liberal arts college students to attend.

As part of the TUE, continuing students have had the choice to continue to follow the curriculum of the college they entered under or to “switch” to SAS and follow its requirements. For the most part, students have chosen to continue to follow their original curriculum. An administrator explained the switching situation, and how it is affecting continuing students:

The vast majority of students are staying and doing whatever [requirements] they came in under, because they had already started to follow them. Plus there were some differences that made it unlikely they'd switch. Most of them stayed. We called it switching, not to be confused with real transferring. We gave them all the option and in order to do it we made them come in and sit down and talk to an advisor. And they can still do it; there is no deadline. The reason we made them come in and talk to us was we wanted to avoid someone with a Livingston inferiority complex coming in and changing their graduation requirements and costing themselves an extra year or semester just to do that, because that's crazy. If they insist, we weren't stopping them, and we haven't had anybody do that. Once they realized it would take extra time, they changed their mind. The reason they didn't switch was that the new SAS requirements require a minor, and Douglass, Livingston and University Colleges didn't require a minor, so in many cases the juniors and seniors were too far along to consider it. Likewise, SAS requires a math course that the other three schools didn't require, so if you weren't going to do math, you didn't want to have to now. On the other hand, for Rutgers College students there were fewer restrictions. Rutgers College students always had a minor and a math course, but some of the courses they had to take in Rutgers College had to be from the same department, and in SAS these could be from different departments, so number of the Rutgers College people switched in order to do it that way. Folks who already had minors in math were the biggest group of switchers. I could run some numbers on it, but I don't think, of the 15,000 (in 3 affected graduating classes; freshman were SAS), I'd be surprised if it was 1,000 who switched. But we wanted to make sure they had the option. Whereas people coming into SAS do not have that option, they are SAS.

Therefore, in some cases, students have had a slightly easier time graduating by following the new SAS requirements. However, the students in the “second class” colleges did not have a viable option to switch to SAS. One University College student explained his choice to transfer to SAS. He was concerned that employers would just see UC as the night college, and not value his degree as much as a Rutgers SAS degree. He is a pre-med major and needed a minor and a math course anyway, so it did not make much of an effortful difference to him.

Overall, many administrators have shared that the university will run more smoothly once students who entered under the college system have graduated, because the new students should not have the same confusion or disappointment with the changed system.

#### *Cook College Students*

Cook College students are also often mentioned to be among the most affected continuing students in RUNB. During the TUE design process, Cook constituents were told that the university wanted to replicate the sense of community experienced by students, staff, and faculty at Cook College. However, changes made with the TUE have meant that the student affairs and student life roles of Cook College have been shifted to the university, and the new School of Environmental and Biological Sciences serves a purely academic function. Cook Campus, which many believed used to feel like a tight-knit community, is much more integrated with the rest of the university, as SEBS students can live on whatever campus they choose, and students from any school can live on Cook Campus. The debate regarding the building of community at RUNB and its impact on SEBS students will be discussed in Chapter Eight, but this section will describe the effects of the new configuration on continuing Cook College students.

Some continuing Cook College students believe that the participation of Cook students has dropped off significantly with the TUE. One student leader explained,



I think there has been a drop off in involvement because of TUE. Part of that is because there has been such a focus on people getting involved on the university level, and I mean you know lots of people who live over here won't want to go to Busch for some club. And people on Busch aren't going to want to come here. And there's been so much more of a focus on that. And having the activity fair on College Avenue Campus, but each campus used to have that, and it's like they've brought that back in the G. H. Cook Community Day, but diluted from what it was. ... I mean like, a lot of this stuff ...we used to have over here isn't there anymore. A lot of events, traditions--really nobody has become responsible for them, so they've just kind of disappeared. I think that's kind of alienated people. And also people don't know where to go to get involved as much anymore because there isn't the same sense of campus. I mean also, the housing thing changing, add that on top, and instead of having all of the ecology and environmental science and plant science majors living over here, you've got them living [all over], and they're not going to want to come over here for SEA meetings, Roots and Shoots, environmental coalition, or stuff like that. And at the same time, if you're living on Cook and you're an English Literature major you're not going to want to go over to College Avenue Campus to join the C. S. Lewis society, or whatever groups like that where it's like a lot of things have essentially have gotten lost in the shuffle I feel. People were once a lot more active.

Some continuing Cook leaders were also upset because the name of Cook College changed to The School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS). After the TUE, the university took down the Cook College sign, and put up one that said: 'Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences.' Students vandalized this sign until the university replaced it with one saying 'G. H. Cook Campus.' One student shared his opinion of the college name change,

It really put people off- Cook [College] was the only school that had to change its name during the process, it really rubbed people the wrong way. My siblings were all here 15 years prior, and they all saw it, they were part of Rutgers College, Livingston College, and Mason Gross, and they all saw Cook, and it was a name recognition issue. And being able to bring that back, and people being upset, why isn't it G. H. Cook SEBS, it would have been such a simple thing.

Some students believed that Rutgers wanted to eventually sell the naming rights to SEBS and took Cook out of the name for that reason.

One administrator discussed the disengagement observed on the part of continuing Cook students, as a result of the TUE:

And the fact that it's different than what it was has resulted in a sense of alienation in some students who would prefer that it stay the way it was. That aspect has been a very painful one for us, because we had a very strong set of programs to support Fortress

Cook and our own community of students. Now we are part of Rutgers, and the students are saying wait, what happened? Who are all these people, who do I go to? What I see is a sense of disengagement on the part of students. Half of our seats on the Cook/Douglass council are unfilled--half of them! And it's very difficult to get students, regardless of if they are seniors, juniors, to get them engaged, to come out for leadership breakfasts, to begin to talk to us about what their ideas are, what activities they want to give involved in. There is more a sense of apathy at the moment, and I have concern about that.

On the other hand, a few administrators report that newer SEBS students do not seem to notice the loss that the continuing Cook College students do.

### *Livingston College Students*

Like other RUNB liberal arts colleges, Livingston College became a part of SAS with the Tue. Livingston College, which was originally designed to serve a diverse mix of students after the Civil Rights movement, and was built on the former Camp Kilmer Army base, has traditionally been viewed as one of the "second class" RUNB colleges. Many Rutgers constituents disagree with this perception, however. Livingston Campus had in the past been one of the least popular campuses to live on among upperclassmen, and many new first-year students are being placed there through the lottery system. About 120 first-year students are also living in Discovery Houses on Livingston Campus.

Livingston College students were also vocal opponents of the TUE, but it appears they have not been affected to the extent of Cook, University College, and Douglass College students. One administrator talked about attending a Livingston Alumni Association meeting to discuss the changes from the TUE:

I think there's a certain nostalgia. We all want to go to the college that we went to, and unfortunately for a lot of people that doesn't exist anymore, it's not going to be the way it was 20 years ago. But there was a feeling that they've lost something very experimental. When Livingston was started there were no grades. So it was a very innovative educational experience, but no one would put up with that anymore. People who were responsive to that have looked back and are sad that they don't have that anymore. People who were really involved in the early days of the college had a very interesting experience, but a very muddy one. The first Livingston College newspaper

was called the MudSlide- there was no landscaping on the college originally. Now it's a mud pit again because of the construction.

However, not much more is known about the impressions of Livingston students because not many Livingston students were spoken to during this study. However, in a survey done in 2008 by Residential Life, 48% of students living on Livingston Campus said they did not want to live there again next year because they would prefer to move to another campus, compared to percentages around 8% for the rest of the campuses. It can be inferred from this that many students are not very interested in continuing to live on Livingston Campus, probably for a variety of reasons. For example, Livingston Campus does not have suites or apartments for upperclassmen students to live in, nor does it have direct access to shopping, restaurants, and other amenities that advanced students are interested in. Another reason for this could be because there is not a strong feeling of community inspiring students to stay there from year to year.

As a result of the TUE, more attention is being paid to Livingston Campus, and it is undergoing many physical changes. One major change is the renovation and expansion of its student center, which was previously too small to accommodate many events. The campus is also being made more attractive, and further plans are in existence to expand the use and range of Livingston Campus. Other services are being updated, such as the Livingston Recreation Center, which benefits from university-wide recreation funding. One administrator described some of the changes on Livingston Campus:

On Livingston Campus, we've done a lot in upgrading the residence halls: they've been painted, there's new furniture, a little coffee place. So besides that there is not air conditioning, it's a very positive environment. The problem is that then they move off campus because we don't have suites or apartments. And upperclassmen don't want to live in the plain old residence halls. So half of our students are first-years, and they don't come back not because they don't like the experience but because we don't have the housing stock. We've been promised new residence halls, but that will take a while before that happens.

One continuing student described the physical changes happening on Livingston Campus:

I think my main problem with being in Livingston College is that the aesthetics of Livingston Campus was just horrible to me as compared to other colleges. I felt like it was the forgotten college. In our organizational leadership minor [as part of Livingston College], we took classes, and one of our main goals was for Rutgers to pay more attention to Livingston Campus, and that they redo the look of Livingston Campus, so I am happy that they are. I am happy that because of this transformation that Livingston Campus will be up to par aesthetically with other campuses. So people won't just want to go live on College Avenue or Douglass Campuses because on Livingston Campus nothing is really there. The standards were very low compared to what you see on the different campuses, so I'm really happy that they have focused on bringing that unity. There is no more of a division of which campus is better, which has this or that. This is one university, and each campus is a beautiful reflection of Rutgers.

The university is also looking a lot at transforming the function of Livingston Campus.

According to the annual 2008-2009 address by President McCormick:

Last year I sketched for you the outlines of a long-term initiative to develop the Livingston Campus as a center for business and professional studies. Creating a campus of professional schools and disciplines-including business, education, social work, and management and labor relations-has enormous potential for transforming these fields, meeting the needs of our students, and generating economic and social progress. It will also give Livingston a distinct identity, much as Busch is known for science and engineering, Douglass for women's programs, and Cook for environment and ecology-and an identity that relates to its history of leadership and social justice (McCormick, 2008).

The university recently received a ten million dollar donation to build the Rutgers Business School on Livingston Campus, as a beginning step to achieving this vision for Livingston Campus. The Rutgers Business School will accept first-year undergraduates, at a number of about 400 per year. Perhaps this step will also enhance the attractiveness of Livingston Campus and increase the demand to live there.

### *Overall Impressions of Student Engagement*

Despite the engagement problems associated with some continuing and non-traditional students, overall impressions of student engagement levels are positive. One senior administrator described his impressions of student engagement that have come from the TUE:

I myself feel that the number of students we're turning out at programs indicate there is a really big audience on campus for the kind of programming, you know- the writers at Rutgers-, it doesn't have to be Juno Diaz, he has built in appeal, he is an alumnus, or Oliver Sacks who was here last night, but I do think it has to be that we've done remarkably well to cover as much programming as we are, and you're seeing the real audiences forming. You don't have to see 300-500, I'm happy to see 20 students. I just want to make sure the program is affecting students and their sense of themselves at a research place. ... I've certainly seen some of the students taking the courses coming to the programs. I've seen- every time we set up a new Living/Learning Community, it fills up or comes close to it. So I always see an interest. Rutgers- it wasn't as if we hadn't done it, Demerest Hall always had poetry groups, and this or that, but we have Discovery Houses on Livingston, and we're doing a lot to have people living together with similar intellectual curiosities. There have certainly been no dearth of people to put in those groups, and we would otherwise have take them away because you need students to fill the beds. So I think there's that.

Another administrator knew of specific students on Cook Campus who have become less engaged since the TUE, but at the same time, he noted this positive change:

So the positive side- students are out searching for mechanisms of engagement which now typically are more university-wide in nature rather than locally administered. This is a positive/negative deal. On some levels like club sports, years ago 900-1100 students in 35 clubs were involved, now that number under a severely limited budget has grown to 2200 in 45 clubs in last 3 years. There are multiple reasons for that, but I believe TUE was a positive reason for that, because students are now apprised of and think about and look at club sports as a university-wide opportunity. Before Recreation let students from any college sign up for it, but it was funded by student funds from Rutgers College students. And so that's a perfect example of what TUE was trying to end. I believe Club Sports is a very successful example of that, and there's many. I think from what I've seen student government going that route, and will result in a positive university-wide student government, with local representation, but you'll have student government leaders thinking globally about university.

During a conversation with two students in the SAS Honors Program, one had this perspective on attending cocurricular activities:

I go to talks. I went to a bunch last year, or a couple of years ago, one on poets from New Orleans that was really good. The most recent one was on the historical representation of 18th century art, which was pretty boring. (How do you learn about the talks?) Through the department. Professor will mention a talk is going on.

The students both agreed that, "I feel like I am so pressured with time that I don't have the luxury to go to talks, and I'm so pressured with school I can't take the time to do that." This is a

small indication that some students do not yet associate cocurricular activities with their educational and academic experience at RUNB.

Many faculty members also feel hopeful about increasing student engagement, because of the TUE. One faculty member said,

The rationalization of undergraduate requirements across the colleges is a big win, and the new initiatives designed to get students involved more directly with faculty at an early stage are exciting. It should create a more engaged culture among students, more opportunities, and make it easier to focus on content rather than procedures. This involves a change of student culture as well as the institution, so I expect it to take a while.

### *National Survey of Student Engagement Findings*

One way to understand the initial effects of the many student engagement initiatives of the TUE is by comparing student engagement before the TUE to that after the TUE. In 2005 and again in 2008, Rutgers University took part in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). This survey is described in the method section in Chapter 3, and the results are presented here. The NSSE only included a few questions with specific relevance to TUE evaluation questions in this study, so an overview of these findings is briefly provided:

- In the 2008 NSSE survey, RUNB is similar to all other universities taking the NSSE, including peer AAU colleges, in the number of students who say they have participated “in work on a research project with a faculty member outside of a course or program requirements”; 4% of RUNB freshman and 26% of seniors have done this. In 2005, only 19% of seniors said they had participated in research with faculty outside the classroom, so this is an area of improvement.
- In regard to student participation in “a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together,” 8% of RUNB freshman and 19% of RUNB seniors say they have done this in 2008. This is slightly more than the 17% of RUNB seniors who had done this in 2005; 8% of freshman participated in learning communities in 2005, so this has stayed the same. However, Rutgers trails behind other universities in student participation in learning communities.
- Regarding “relationships with administrative personnel and offices”, on a scale from 1 (unhelpful, inconsiderate, rigid) to 7 (helpful, considerate, flexible), freshman gave an average rating of 4.47 and seniors gave a 4.14. The freshman score did not differ significantly from peer institutions, but the score given by seniors was significantly less than that given in peer and other institutions. However, in 2005, seniors gave a score of

3.97, so there has been improvement in seniors' views of administrative office help. The scores given by freshmen have stayed the same in 2005 as 2008.

- Pertaining to "relationships with faculty members", on a scale from 1 (unavailable, unhelpful, unsympathetic) to 7 (available, helpful, sympathetic), RUNB freshmen gave an average rating of 4.73, and seniors gave a 4.95. While the rating of freshmen have stayed the same between 2005 and 2008, the rating of seniors was 4.78 in 2005, so seniors are giving greater ratings to their relationships with faculty than they did three years ago. When compared to students in all schools participating in the NSSE, RUNB seniors and freshmen gave lower scores to statements regarding their quality of relationships with faculty.
- RUNB freshmen and seniors have also improved their ratings of "how well does your institution emphasize providing the support you need to help you succeed academically" and "how well does your institution emphasize attending campus events and activities (special speakers, cultural performances, athletic events, etc.) from 2005 to 2008, though peer institutions appear to have experienced positive change in these ratings at the same rate. RUNB freshmen and seniors have also improved their ratings of "how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received?" On a scale from 1 as poor to 4 as excellent, freshmen and seniors in 2005 gave the average ratings of 2.78 and 2.53, respectively, and these increased to 2.86 and 2.60 in 2008, respectively.
- Freshmen and seniors' ratings of statements related to supportive campus environment and faculty student interaction were improved over Rutgers students taking the NSSE in 2005. (Rutgers, 2008b).

Taken together, for the purposes of this study, the NSSE shows that students are giving RUNB higher ratings than in 2005 in a number of areas touched by the TUE, including academic advising, institutional support, relationships with faculty, and relationships with administrative personnel. Senior students are also reporting taking part in (slightly) more research opportunities and learning community opportunities. RUNB still lags behind its peer institutions in all of these areas, but it is making improvements. It should be noted that because the format of this survey is purely Likert answers, no qualitative or explanatory data are collected. The NSSE provides information about how RUNB is doing compared to its peer campuses, but not specifically about what it can do to improve its student engagement with particular programs, so it is not particularly useful for answering the questions of this evaluation.

### *Faculty Impressions of Departmental Facilitation of Student Engagement*

Faculty chairs and TUE committee members were asked, “How would you characterize your department’s involvement with undergraduates outside of the classroom? In what ways do you and faculty in your department engage with undergraduates outside the classroom? How has this changed since TUE?” Most of the respondents mentioned that there was little or no change in the way faculty members interact with students outside the classroom as a result of the TUE. Some department representatives shared a long list of the events they continue to do with students, which have been unchanged by the TUE. A couple faculty members believed their department does very little to engage undergraduates. Many faculty members mentioned department colleagues teaching Byrne Family First-year Seminars, or serving as Aresty research mentors, as evidence of outside engagement that has been spurred by the TUE. Some varying answers to these questions included:

- The Byrne seminars have made a big difference. We have many faculty members teaching them, which provides a huge interface that was not there before.
- Our department has also started an undergraduate Learning Community, the Writers House, which offers a lot of special interaction in small courses devoted to Creative Writing -- and digitally based creative writing in the Collaboratory. Our honors program has also been growing. And I personally hold many more office hours since TUE.
- The engagement with undergraduates outside of the classroom has not changed. Students who take the initiative to get involved with faculty and research are well served - but they have always done well. Most students do not make the effort to contact faculty outside of classes. There is no "outreach" by faculty to these students.
- We tend to bring advanced undergraduates into the lab for research experiences fairly often. The hard part is educating students about what those experiences entail and why they are worthwhile - when students are weighing them against the alternative of interning at a company like Bloomberg, Google or Goldman Sachs where they could wind up getting a job right away. I'm not sure TUE has done much to change this, either way.
- Undergraduates have served and continue to serve on research teams. There has been an increase in engagement. The Aresty Program has worked fairly well, and the relationships engendered by Aresty mentorships seem to have continued in following years.
- The Department has traditionally taken undergraduate instruction and interaction with students seriously. The decline in the number of faculty members and the increase in



enrollments have strained relations with students, but it is very difficult to distinguish the extent to which these factors result from TUE of other factors in our environment.

- I don't believe TUE has changed the way my school and our faculty deal with undergraduates outside the classroom, except for cases of students with significant issues - it's great to have the Deans of Students available for those situations. (We've had about a dozen incidents in the past two years that required their involvement.)
- Our department has always prided itself in involvement with undergraduates in and beyond the classroom. We have a long history of involvement in student houses, involving students in our research, independent studies, mentoring students through honors theses, and to graduate school. Very little has changed in that respect since the TUE. If anything, TUE has discouraged faculty from being so involved. Previously, our faculty did these things because they saw it as part of their vocation as professors. Increasingly, as Rutgers tries to commodify and formalize everything, professors are less inclined to undertake things like independent studies unrewarded because the university suddenly sees fit to offer compensation for participation in first-year-seminars, for example. Professors feel more recognition is given to such a scheme and the result is a reluctance to participate in independent studies because it implies time-commitment with little recognition and no compensation, while the seminars imply less time-commitment and 3,000 dollar research funds, plus appearing in a brochure alongside McCormick.

These faculty members brought up a number of challenges in providing more engaging events with students, such as the increase in student population, students' interest in gaining experience in internships outside of Rutgers versus with faculty members in laboratories, and the idea that students who want to get engaged, will, but that more outreach is needed to students who do not have this initiative.

### *Increasing Faculty Engagement*

#### *Evidence of Increased Faculty Engagement*

From some administrators' points of view, support for faculty has become streamlined with the TUE. Faculty members have been instructed that they can turn to offices in the Division of Undergraduate Education for various types of support, and that they can use the Vice President of Undergraduate Education as a point person through which they can access services to improve their engagement with undergraduates. Faculty members are also informed that they can go to the Office of Academic Engagement and ask for help in planning trips and

activities with students, ideas to coordinate activities, and financial support. They can request the assistance of Campus Deans for these types of planning, coordination, and financial needs.

One Campus Dean shared that, with the TUE,

There are faculty members who are putting on films, and bringing in lecturers who they might not ordinarily bring in. Some faculty members who are very creative and like to do things are knocking on doors all the time asking for support, which is terrific. There are probably faculty members who don't know we've reorganized the university. Faculty run the continuum to very involved to 'I park my car, teach my class, and leave again,' unfortunately.

Despite this increased structural support that has been established for faculty, it is the point of view of some administrators that some faculty members will continue to remain unengaged with undergraduates until the culture of the university changes, and it becomes more mainstream for faculty members to work with undergraduates. At the same time, others believe the cultural tide has begun to change in favor of faculty members becoming more receptive to try new things and work more with undergraduates. One administrator shared,

I think there's been, overall from all members of the university community, a greater level of excitement about the possibilities that the TUE brought. So if nothing else, it's overcome what I think is the initial pessimism about change, whether that is from faculty or students. So I think there was minimally a greater receptivity among faculty to new ideas and opportunities and new ways to get involved and open up to what it is they want to do. In the conversations that I had with folks, I've noticed a dramatic increase in the receptivity of faculty to collaboration and trying to work in new and different ways that are outside of their classroom experience.

When it comes to helping students with purely academic endeavors, administrators report positive outcomes in gaining the help of faculty members. For example, it has been reported that faculty members are helpful in the organization of tutoring sessions, and in finding presenters to instruct a study session, organized by the Learning Centers. Many faculty members are also very involved in the creation of the new SAS Core Curriculum. There have also been reports of faculty members participating in the EOF Summer Institutes, mentoring students through the Office of Distinguished Fellowships, in doing recruitment related activities

for Admissions, and teaching Byrne Family First-year Seminars. In fact, most administrators interviewed mentioned faculty participation in Byrne Family First-year Seminars as evidence of increased faculty engagement. There are other anecdotal reports of increased faculty engagement. One senior administrator noted: “We had in [picnic] tent out here during a horrible rain storm in September for a barbeque party for Byrne Seminar students and their faculty. I couldn’t believe that on a Friday from 4:00-6:00 PM we turned out some 40 faculty, I never expected that, including the President and Vice President. I got so muddy. But it was really quite wonderful.”

There are also many indications that faculty members are quite involved with the SAS Honors Program. Only some of the college honors programs used faculty honors mentors, but the SAS Honors program uses faculty mentors for all students, necessitating the participation of more mentors. Each Honors Program mentor is currently assigned 2-4 new students, and they are expected to be not only mentors, but in “sharing knowledge about their discipline with students, helping them to explore connections across fields, inviting them to university and departmental events, and informing them about internship and other opportunities,” according to a Honors Program newsletter. At the same time, the Honors Program is also seeking out more incentives to offer faculty members in return for this mentoring. The Honors Program also sponsors exciting cocurricular events alongside Honors Seminars, including field trips to art exhibits and opera performances in New York City. One administrator believes, “they are extremely engaged. They are really excited about teaching honors interdisciplinary seminars [and honors colloquia.]... Faculty is excited about honors; they see it as a spearheading unit where they can test things for regular classes.”

Another example of increased faculty engagement with students is faculty member’s increased concern with the psychological well-being of students. Since the Virginia Tech tragedy,

faculty members have had a heightened awareness of students who they believe to be disturbed, and they have increasingly gone to Deans of Students to share this information. Additionally, because of the change in the “sniffle letter” policy, where faculty members will need to interact more with students to excuse their absences from classes, some administrators hypothesize that this will help faculty members to connect on a more personal level with their students. Others believe that faculty members will have an easier time connecting with students because they are now part of one SAS instead of four individual colleges, which has worked to eliminate the meritocracy that existed at the university. One instructor said, “I [used to] teach 52 kids from 9 colleges, I give same grade, it’s ridiculous that they got admitted with 1-2 standard deviations difference in the past, so that’s immediately the best and most positive [effect of the TUE].”

Some administrators believe that demonstration of increased faculty engagement is evident in that many faculty members participated in the TUE change process. Several faculty members were affiliated with the various TUE committees. One senior administrator explained,

There are a lot of faculty who have dedicated a great deal of time and effort to make this work and work well. We had a lot of people, a lot of faculty members, for example, who really came forward to help in developing a temporary or interim Core Curriculum; that’s the type of thing that faculty typically spend years doing. They did it within a year. Again, it is an interim Core Curriculum, and it wasn’t a huge or transformative change, as we are thinking about now, but the level of engagement was very high, and the level of acceptance for the need for this, and being able to put something in place that was comprehensible, reasonable, that addressed student needs within a year is in higher education pretty unusual.

From this point of view, the faculty came a long way during the TUE process to make the necessary changes to the curriculum, which is normally a process that takes a very long time in higher education.

### *Challenges to Increased Faculty Engagement*

However, many faculty and administrators believe that as long as the university continues to emphasize and reward research accomplishments over teaching and mentoring accomplishments, this system of disengagement with undergraduates will not change much. One administrator described the need for a “sea change at the departmental level about the value of undergraduate education, including consideration of one’s undergraduate teaching as a significant part of the tenure process.” Some administrators had somewhat cynical points of view when asked about faculty engagement, for example: “I haven’t noticed differences in the engagement of the faculty either. I know people on the faculty engagement committee- and it barely even met. And not much got done.” Students are not always satisfied with their faculty interactions, either. One nontraditional student described how his professor was not empathetic to his work/family situation, saying “I talked to one of my professors and he said ‘I commute too’, so I didn’t really appreciate that. He was just like ‘I live two hours away and if I can get here on time you can’, so it’s not an understanding environment.”

Despite the increased support, some administrators believe that many faculty members lack the outright incentives to work with undergraduates. There are some smaller scale programs to help some faculty and students interact that include incentives for faculty, such as the Aresty Research Assistant program, where students are paid \$3,000 per year to work as a research assistant for a faculty member; however these incentives are not widespread enough. For example, the McNair Program is looking for faculty members to mentor McNair students on research projects, but this program cannot pay students during the school year in the same way that Aresty can, so it does not have the inherent incentives (free student labor) to offer faculty members, and therefore it’s likely to be more difficult to solicit faculty participation. One administrator described the complexity of this issue:

I really do think that we need to figure out how faculty engagement is going to happen. And that needs to be supported more directly with faculty incentives from the top. So it needs to go into TMP, merit raise. It needs to be clearly spelled out for faculty members—how we will reward you and for what engagement. And we need to be sensitive to the fact that professional associations reward faculty for something different. If you are an associate professor here you might want to be a professor somewhere else, or a P2 somewhere else, you need to be transferrable, so if you're rewarded for teaching kinds of stuff here, and you want to go do research. So I think getting faculty to become more engaged is very complicated, and I don't think that's been very well thought out yet.

A few administrators who had worked for Cook College for a period of time noted that SEBS is a place where faculty members have become less engaged with their students since the TUE. One administrator described his impression of the faculty engagement at Cook prior to the TUE, "maybe it is just Cook, but we always multitasked and had an opportunity to be academically connected to the unit. And academic faculty advised student life clubs, not just student life administrators. Faculty advised student life clubs. Not that it was their expertise, but to keep everyone in the community on the same page." One administrator attributed the positive faculty student engagement at SEBS to their Cooperative Education program, suggesting that this should be made a university-wide program. An administrator from SEBS qualified this impression of high faculty engagement in Cook College:

Our faculty, I can't boast and say all 300 of our faculty members are fully engaged and open their laboratories to research opportunities. Our faculty, a good proportion of them, I can't put a number on that, but the sense of our culture here has been one of faculty who is actively engaged with students. Certainly, faculty members are very accessible in the classroom. We are a professional school, remember that. We don't do much teaching of first-year students in our majors, because their first-year courses, Expos, Biology, Chemistry, are SAS courses. We don't teach first-year students, it's very limited. Students get into our courses when they declare their major, and we are seeing students in the 2nd- 4th years. By that point, they've decided they'll be a major in nutritional sciences, and faculty members are engaged with them, to the extent that students want to be engaged.

Other administrators believe that there has been a decrease in faculty engagement at RUNB since the faculties from the liberal arts colleges became the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in 1981. Some attribute this perceived decreased engagement to the breakdown of the college

communities. Perhaps some new faculty members have not felt strong loyalty because they were never part of a college community, affecting the personal motivation to engage with students. One faculty member shared a related view, “Faculty certainly feel more engaged (though that is slow) with the new system overall, though specific faculty, who had strong personal ties with the College Deans may have lost out on their patrons.”

One administrator believed one of the challenges to getting faculty members involved with projects being set up by deans and administrators is the lack of a solid faculty reporting structure, by which individual faculty members can be contacted and held accountable:

I think the faculty members who engage with students still engage with students. The same people who are the good citizens are going to be there and help us. Now, right before TUE went in and we knew it was coming, we set up this bigger role for faculty in our advising days and it’s been highly successful. The biggest issue in some ways with faculty is that they don’t have a reporting structure like I have a reporting structure. If you want someone from my office to come to a program and represent my office, and you ask me if I can do it and I can’t do it, then I would get someone else. That doesn’t work in departments. Undergraduate chairs will often do things, but I spend a whole lot of time making use of relationships, and calling or emailing faculty for representation at my events. It’s never that I call one department and they get me people. I email this person then that person, etc.

A few other administrators also brought up this problem of the effort involved in contacting faculty members and getting responses in a timely manner.

#### *Faculty Views on Improving Faculty Engagement*

Faculty chairs and TUE committee members were asked, “In what ways has faculty work with undergraduates been facilitated by the university? What tactics do you think are effective in improving faculty involvement with undergraduates, outside the classroom?” Many of the faculty members answered these questions by saying the Aresty research program, the SAS Honors program, and the Byrne Family First-year Seminars are great, as they have facilitated involvement with undergraduates. Suggestions to facilitate increased faculty engagement with undergraduates include incentives such as merit pay, fostering a culture where faculty members

want to help more in spite of incentives, and in eliminating some of the bureaucratic activities that take faculty time. Faculty members also said that:

- The university doesn't really facilitate [involvement with undergraduates]. It needs to raise the morale of majority of faculty, not just "select few". This means, in a strange way, democratizing the university, so that all professors feel they and students have a stake in the process. It used to be more like this. The TUE has made it less so. The administration is taking even more decision-making away from departments, which, in reality, are the best units in the university to protect the needs of undergraduate students and academic standards.
- The old "fellows" program is now dismantled, so what little connection faculty had with students outside the classroom has diminished.
- The Rutgers funded field trips (arranged through Marie Logue's office) have been a big positive. Rutgers' encouragement of research opportunities for undergraduates also a positive. I'm unsure about what tactics would be more effective.
- The Byrne Seminars are excellent, as they have a spillover effect outside the classroom. The Aresty program is also very strong in this domain. The Campus Deans have also pushed a model for programming and support in which there is funding only if faculty and students work together. The fact is faculty will work with students if it is a criterion. They just by and large don't know how and working out common engagements is slow and piecemeal. Nonetheless it can work. More straightforward Student Affairs forums and recreational activities are still sketchy in participation, though the new Dollar Menu program has promise. If we can get more faculty involved in just doing what interests them on short, easy sessions, it could create a new culture. Promote all of the above.
- Programs like Aresty are great! However, faculty members are being asked to do extra work for free, and most do not do it. If there were some way of funding or compensating faculty for out of classroom work, more would do it.
- Disciplinary clubs, team projects, and other self-started academic initiatives have some of the best interactions because students bring more to the table.
- In my view, the needed approach is a concerted effort (e.g. an effort sponsored by the University) to create an environment that is more cultural/intellectual in its nature than it is today. If you want faculty in the Sciences, the Humanities, or the Social Sciences, to be more involved with undergraduates outside the classroom you need an environment where these faculty can feel (and are perceived as) relevant. Unfortunately, while I laud several specific enterprises (Byrne Seminars, the new SAS Honors Program, the Core Curriculum), I'm afraid all these are dwarfed by the terrible damage done to the overall environment at Rutgers by the emphasis on sports as spectacle.
- I believe the fundamental problem is that the system of rewards is still heavily skewed toward research accomplishments. Young faculty members learn very quickly that good scholarship is rewarded more richly than good service or good teaching, and they carry that mindset with them after tenure. The situation at Rutgers is exacerbated by the fact that the physical plant has been so starved. How can you expect faculty to take teaching seriously when they see big salaries going to stars while they teach in rooms with dilapidated seats, poorly functioning equipment, inadequate TA support, and so on? The university puts out a lot of rhetoric about the emphasis on undergrad education, but it often seems to be lip service.



- I believe that the SAS Honors program is an example of sound student faculty relations. I would like to see more research opportunities for students to support the research of faculty in all areas, not just natural sciences. I would like to see funds for faculty to bring students to conferences. I would like the faculty to encourage short term and long term study abroad. I would like to see faculty accompany student groups abroad. We need more classroom space. Faculty will meet and interact with students when class size is smaller and when faculty evaluation for tenure and promotion are based IN PART on their interaction with students.
- It would be great if it took less time to get all the other bureaucratic things done (like TABERS, etc) -- all of which seems to have been put more and more on the back of faculty with less and less staff support -- if faculty had to spend less time navigating the thicket, they would have more time to engage with undergrads.
- Support for faculty who participate in the honors program as mentors or as participants in the summer reading program or the honors colloquium program would help. Our dept. pretty much uses all of its merit pay to reward people based on publications; a more direct program using some merit money, perhaps through Old Queens, would encourage more faculty to devote their efforts to undergrads. (Or requiring departments to allocate some fraction of its merit money on some basis other than publications might work.)

Overall, faculty have many ideas regarding increasing their involvement with undergraduates, often involving involvement incentives, and merit pay rewards.

#### *Future Commitment to Faculty Engagement*

Some faculty members believe that many fellow faculty members still lack engagement with undergraduates, despite the TUE. One faculty member shared,

[The TUE is] a positive direction with a praiseworthy objective. I think it does make a difference in the quality of our students' experience at Rutgers. The central problem is that the extra work necessitated by increasing faculty engagement with students is not shared equally among faculty. Faculty who are already the most engaged and involved are generally the ones who have stepped up.

Overall, and despite this sentiment, the university remains committed to spurring increased faculty involvement with undergraduates. One senior administrator said,

I think what we need to do is call on faculty. They generally say yes when we ask them to help. I had one faculty member say she would not teach a Byrne Seminar because it was an add-on to courses she was already teaching. I have to say she has taught a Byrne Seminar, she didn't do it in her regular teaching schedule, she teaches large classes. But on her leave, the only thing she did besides for research was to teach a Byrne Seminar. That's a good example of the fact that faculty members are interested. Faculty members

are undergraduate teachers by definition, more or less, but I think with the coming of the TUE, was the coming of the willingness to ask faculty to do things.

Additionally, the central administration is going so far as to say it's working to include some sort of measure of teaching into tenure decision making. One senior administrator explained,

A research university has to have research-active faculty, that's the bottom line. But I also want this reward structure to acknowledge that they are research-active in an undergraduate classroom. Research-active is also about the way faculty involve undergraduates in their research. Now not all students can- it's hard in the humanities, you sit down to write an article, that's not a group project. But in science it can be easy- with lab work and other things. But when I read a tenure promotion packet, these issues come up a lot. You want to see- are faculty sponsoring research projects for undergraduates, are they directing honors theses, the same way we ask questions about if they are directing dissertations? So these are important questions. Has the reward structure change? No. Do I think I will? I think it cannot change until a university has enough self confidence about its processes not to worry. But you have to have someone in the country take the lead. I'd like to see it be us. Harvard, Yale, all of the great research universities, face this question. They've answered it repeatedly by saying: it's publish or perish. One of the things that has happened here during the TUE process is that the VPUE became a member of the personnel review committee, which is the tenure promotion committee for everyone in the university. The president was determined to give the VPUE an equal voice to the VP of Research. That had never been true before. The VP for Research had always been on that. The undergraduate vice president had never been on it. It's a big step.

Overall, the university has taken many steps to bring faculty together with undergraduate students, but both the Rutgers and the national system of rewarding faculty for teaching and working with undergraduates need to be improved to further facilitate this engagement.

The university has taken many steps to improve the engagement of students with cocurricular activities and with faculty members. The Office of Academic Engagement was created and runs Learning Communities, Discovery Houses, First-year Interest Groups, and multicultural education programs for students to engage in learning outside the classroom. The Byrne Family First-year Seminars were initiated to engage young students with expert faculty.

The university has also developed the position of Campus Deans to plan cocurricular events for the various campuses. Aresty continues facilitating research collaborations among faculty and students. The Office of Distinguish Fellows matches students with faculty mentors to develop applications for distinguished fellowships and programs. The Douglass Residential College is essentially a large learning community where students can learn about leadership and live and learn with like-minded women. While there are reports that some continuing students became less engaged as the result of the TUE, there were also reports that many of these students were envious of the access that new students have to many engagement opportunities. Many faculty members have been recently involved in these engagement initiatives, and also in other important activities that directly affect students, such as transforming the university, and planning the new Core Curriculum. Many structures have been put into place to foster engagement and to change the culture of the university to encourage more student and faculty involvement.

Chapter Eight: Based on Any Difficulties or Unexpected Consequences with the TUE, What Further Changes are Being Made and Can be Made to Improve Undergraduate Education at RUNB?

This final results chapter will be used to describe the findings around the fourth evaluation question of what the unexpected consequences of the TUE were and what further changes are being made and can be made to improve undergraduate education at RUNB.

*Unexpected or Unintended Consequences and Effects of the TUE*

All administrators were asked what they thought the unexpected or unintended consequences of the TUE were. Because most topics have already been discussed in the previous chapters of this report, administrators' perceived unexpected consequences from the TUE will be listed here.

*Positive but Unintended Consequences*

Some of the more positive but unintended consequences related to attracting and retaining students, including underrepresented and nontraditional students were:

- The ease with which the New Jersey public accepted the transformation of undergraduate education, because of the new similarities in structure to most other colleges.
- The strong desire by many incoming women to be part of the Douglass Residential College.
- Rutgers' ability to improve its academic profile while increasing its diversity of students.

Positive but unintended consequences related to reducing roadblocks and centralizing were:

- The "[new organization of colleges] makes advising for professional schools associated with SAS much easier," according to one faculty member
- Teammate-like relationships have emerged between the Deans of Students and the Campus Deans.

- Some administrators expressed surprise that the incoming SAS students were not more confused than they were, perhaps because the new system makes inherent sense.
- Examining best practices among schools and trying to apply those to all students.

Positive but unintended consequences related improving student engagement with cocurricular activities and faculty members were:

- The positive connection that the Office of Academic Engagement is having with faculty members and some faculty's very enthusiastic response to this.
- Rutgers students have won few very prestigious fellowships, because of help from the new Distinguished Fellowship Office. Another unexpected consequence was the change in attitude to believe that Rutgers students could compete for distinguished fellowships.

Some of the other more positive but unintended consequences of the TUE were:

- People, who were "stale in their job" after having done the job for many years, were reinvigorated in starting a new job, moving offices, or changing their roles. It has spurred a lot of creativity for many staff.
- A few people mentioned realizing this their new role: "One of the things I've seen is that we really need to educate people that we're dealing with the entirety of the student, not just like our little part of the student."

#### *Unexpected Challenging or Ongoing Consequences*

Some of the more unexpected consequences that were challenges or that still need to be addressed regarding attracting and retaining high quality students, including underrepresented and nontraditional students were:

- A few people brought up that with the TUE, RUNB is still not adequately serving nontraditional students.
- According to one administrator, students are leaving Rutgers majors offered at Brookdale Community College because SAS requires a minor and they cannot get that there, and they are transferring to Rutgers-Camden to get a liberal arts major, which does not require a minor.
- The large increase in students enrolling at Rutgers after the TUE, and the lack of housing for many continuing students.
- The dissatisfaction of some nontraditional students in University College Community regarding the decreased services for nontraditional students.

Some unexpected consequences and challenges related to reducing roadblocks and the TUE change and centralization were:

- Staff having to function for an extended period of time while not being able to answer practical questions, such as those about SAS academic policies, because these had not been decided.
- The ongoing difficulties some are having in figuring out relationships, reporting lines, and job responsibilities.
- The difficulties with working with larger groups of students, especially for staff who used to work in the smaller colleges.
- Many administrators who worked in the smaller colleges had more interaction with students as part of their many duties, but now many have more narrow and administrative positions where they do not interact with students as much.
- Some administrators came to realize that many college policies had never been in writing, and were just known by a few staff members, so these had to be standardized and publicized, for the new college of SAS, and also for SEBS.
- General difficulty in organizing graduation ceremonies for non-existent colleges. Unexpected student allegiance to their colleges, and desire to go to a graduation ceremony in their names.
- A perceived rivalry by some between Undergraduate Education and Student Affairs, and the perception by 7 or 8 administrators that they are silos who do not communicate.

Unexpected consequences of increasing student engagement with cocurricular activities

and faculty were:

- One administrator did not expect that many students who signed up for Discovery Houses would be academically weaker on average. It was a challenge to place many of the students into two levels of linked courses, instead of one.
- The impression of the disruption of the Cook community and the weakening of the Cook Student Leadership program.
- The decreased emphasis on a number of beloved college traditions, such as those on Cook Campus.

Many of these unexpected consequences are related to administrator ideas for future directions that programs in the university should take, which are described at the end of this chapter, under Future Directions.

### *Existing Roadblocks, Confusions, and Debates*

Many of these roadblocks and confusions are described in other areas of this report, but will be briefly summarized in this section.

### *Debate around Creating Welcoming Communities*

With the TUE, there have been some large university-wide initiatives to engage students outside the classroom in cocurricular activities. This includes efforts to give each campus its own academic identity, the creation of the Campus Dean position, planning of large-scale events such as the Human Rights lecture series this year, and the organization of large events such as Rutgers Day. However, a debate remains within the university of to how best create welcoming communities for students. Currently, there is a debate regarding promoting campus community versus promoting university-wide community. Some administrators believe more focus needs to go back toward campus community, while others are trying to get away from this “old” system and focus primarily on university-wide events. Therefore, the charge of the Campus Dean has been confusing for some. One administrator explained,

The part we’re supposed to be doing is building community per campus, but there’s now a debate between Campus Deans, Student Affairs, [and Undergraduate Education]: are we supposed to be encouraging or discouraging campus communities? We created a retreat around what’s balancing building those kind of communities and asking those questions. We were getting indications that it was bad that it’s an old way to focus on campus communities. That’s something we have to resolve. A student experience is seamless and they aren’t aware of how complicated the infrastructure is. You can create campus community and Big R. We aren’t there yet, but those are questions we have to answer.

Another perspective of the role of Campus Deans follows this logic:

The notion of the smaller unit within the university was a positive one and it should be maintained, and the geographical isolation of the different campuses provided an opportunity for community, and a Campus Dean would be involved in developing community on each of the campuses. So the idea was that each of the traditional campuses would have a Campus Dean, and that Campus Dean would work with the Dean of Students for each of the campuses and share an office, and share staff, and would be the locus for developing community as well on campuses.

There are some administrators who strongly believe that feelings of community were broken down during the TUE process. When asked about negative results from the TUE, one administrator explained,

Some of the bad results include the unfortunate dismantling of the colleges, which I still felt were a viable way to identify the communities. The colleges could have changed in their focus and scope, but remain as viable identifies, such as the Douglass Residential College, I think that's the right way to head, and maybe we will. Unfortunately the students at Cook College feel very disoriented because they had an extremely good experience out there, they had a really strong community, they did a lot of things right. The early reports on TUE all had Cook out as a model of where we wanted to go. So one of the bad things is that Cook has served as a model of what has NOT gone right with TUE. One of the things that TUE was supposed to do was actually create more community and better community, and at Cook that didn't happen. Now they have a campus where people live and they have a school, but no one at the school reports to or is responsible to anyone who runs the campus, and no one who runs the campus reports to anyone who goes to the school. My opinion is that in no way is SEBS an improved experience for students as opposed to what they were receiving as Cook College students. We need to address this.

Another administrator described a similar sentiment,

I'd say the fundamental negative outcome of this was that, for example Douglass and especially Cook College, which were very dynamic social communities being maintained by a quite dedicated group of staff who were staff in student affairs, and that actively worked to develop a sense of campus community that was very strong, has been largely destroyed. There were 12 student affairs professionals at Cook College, and they're all gone now, and not associated with Cook Campus. All residence life and campus centers, student life, recreation- the people who were involved at Cook are now part of university-wide system, which is structured solely at level of the university at New Brunswick. There is no sense they have any obligation to build campus community, they just build activities for students. The end result is that what used to be a fairly tight knit social community here at Cook has been allowed to just fall apart. And the idea that... you have two part-time people [the Cook Campus Dean and the Cook/Douglass Dean of Students] trying to replace 12 full-time people, in terms of developing a sense of campus community, and that was an absolutely impossible task. ... And within the current structure, I see absolutely no way that could happen in the future, without some fundamental change in the structure of Student Affairs.

Another administrator had this overall feeling about the creation of community, through the lens of experience working for Cook College:

I like that we have campuses, and you can live in different settings- but my biggest concern is the development of community. Developing community at Rutgers with 40,000 people in the New Brunswick area, and trying to do everything as one unit, is going to be really difficult. I am a fan of smaller community development, and realizing that all smaller communities will participate in the larger university.... I don't think Rutgers College ever had the community thing, because of its size, I think it was different. It's not just size- it is people and it is attitudes, and you can develop smaller communities that can interact with other communities, and you can still be part of the same organization.



He also explained one reason why many people believe the Cook College community was so great, and why they were disappointed at its changes:

[There was a time in the past when there were] more students who wanted housing than had space. So we sat down with the students in the school and said: what do you want to do? Do you want to have a lottery? Do you want to just house everybody? We'll put six in an apartment instead of four. And everybody will get a space, so we're not inconveniencing anybody, but everybody in a little way. What our students said this is what we wanted to do; this is our community, we want to let people stay here, so that's what we did. Well now- the other colleges didn't do that, they didn't think that was good, they'd rather say there's not enough housing, go look off campus. Cook said no, well Cook no longer had the ability to make that decision in its community. Because housing is university-wide now so you don't have that ability. So, we're not asking the members of the community how they want to take care of problems that may arise- so I do see less of an opportunity for various individuals within the community to participate in the decision making process. That's an administrative change. Not something that the new administration can't do, but it's not something that they have done in the past and feel comfortable with. There is an understanding that this is a better process, and in some of the other cases you asked the community about what was the best process.

Issues around community have also come up on Douglass Campus. There has been disappointment because the Douglass Campus Center, which used to be used to put on events related to women's initiatives, is now being used for university-wide events, which may or may not have to do with women's initiatives. Regarding Livingston Campus, one faculty member believes that feelings of community will not be fostered there because "most SAS first-years were dumped together on Livingston, instead of creating multi-year environments in dormitories."

One administrator suggests that local administrators and staff are a key to improving feelings of campus community:

[Community building] was the major responsibility of the student staff and the administrative staff. Part of their role was to let students who lived in their facilities to know what kinds of options were available and to encourage them to participate in an active way in the planning and organizing of things going on in the community. I think when your allegiance is to a central office, and not to a community area, where you don't have community meetings, that's more difficult.

While some administrators are focusing their attention on the community that has broken down, particularly on Cook and Douglass Campuses, others have noticed an improvement in the overall student allegiance to the university as a whole. One administrator observed a high level of energy of new students at the first university-wide Convocation, and the increase in the numbers of students wearing Rutgers sweatshirts:

On the positive side, again I would go back to Convocation. I think it was more energy there than I would have anticipated for this first time. We have to work a little to keep that level of engagement going. It's easy to take it for granted and not work at it. I have a silly thing at universities I've been at before this thing which I call the sweatshirt index. This is the proportion of students who walk around wearing a sweatshirt that says Rutgers University. When I came here it was actually pretty low. But you'd find green sweatshirts for kids at Cook, and Douglass sweatshirts, but there were not so many of the Rutgers University ones. I see that index having gone up a lot. I don't want to attribute that entirely to TUE, it could just as much be a consequence of football, or something else, but the fact is there is the sense of engagement with the university. If you walked up to a student 3-4 years ago, a random student, and you ask, are you a student here? Where are you a student? They would identify with the college. When you say something like Livingston College, or Douglass College, it is not entirely evident to the outside world that that is part of Rutgers University. Now, the proportion of students that say I'm at Rutgers University is substantially higher.

A student who entered the university after the TUE brought up the complex issue that is the feeling of community at the university:

I entered this school after the transition, so my first impression was of Rutgers being one unified school, which I thought was good, because I was applying to Rutgers University, and I wanted to go to Rutgers University, so it seemed simple. Plus, being undecided in a major at first, I didn't want to feel like I was losing out or having to make that decision [on what school/campus to apply to] before going in. On another positive side, I like the variability when it's time to choose classes that I can have classes on any campus. But, I can't say that it's all leading to positive, because like some of the concerns already brought up. As far as there is a loss sense of community- I don't feel that, but I do definitely feel lost in the midst of a crowd. I don't really feel a part of any one community. I know it's confusing, and I don't feel like the transition is really complete.

Perhaps the passage of time and the formation of new friendships and colleagues will ameliorate these feelings of the loss of community. One administrator simply said, "It's just

taking some time for people to let go of their former college and develop some sort of attachment to SAS.”

*Debate about the Building of Silos*

One area of dissatisfaction by administrators is around the idea of “silos.” Seven administrators independently shared their impression of the reemergence of silos, and explained that each liberal arts college used to be its own silo, not communicating or collaborating much with other liberal arts colleges. Now that those individual silos have been broken down and built into SAS, administrators are getting the impression that silos are being created elsewhere in the university. For example, some administrators believe that the new silos of Undergraduate Education, Student Affairs, and the School of Arts and Sciences have emerged because these entities are not communicating enough with one another:

It’s not a real sense of collegiality that we’re working together for the same student goal. It is silos that got built. Someone described it to me as this: it’s a natural evolution—and I haven’t been through an organizational restructuring, so I don’t have anything of reference—that you have to bring your stuff vertically side-by-side, and *then* you put in the windows. And, okay, we do have our vertical structures. We need to build windows and it’s bad. There is antagonism between some of the units and that’s too bad because I think there didn’t used to be. And one of the good things—it’s frustrating that it’s going on—but what keeps me going is that these are the same people we used to work with before. So we know it’s not the individual people, we know we can all work together, I think we have respect for each other, which is good, but I think we just don’t know how to get there and leap that gap. I’m not sure there is any leadership in doing that, because the leadership is vertical. And maybe it will naturally evolve, I don’t know. But, the real sense of loss that I feel is that.

Others also perceive the development of silos within Students Affairs, such as Residential Life, Recreation Services, and Student Life silos, because single people no longer have multiple areas of authority. One administrator explained,

That to me is the biggest disappointment in the university. I don’t see people, students, faculty, and staff, interacting like they used to in the colleges. I think we’re setting up the residence life, the campus center, the recreation silo, where you are just worried about recreation, or residence life. Whereas when you had the colleges, residence life, recreation, all reported to a Dean of Students, and there was a community of people

working in that community. Now the community is Rutgers, and it's hard for these silos to interact and create community on the campuses, especially with faculty. I don't see faculty, staff, and students interacting like we used to.

At the same time, some administrators are very happy about the dissolution of the original silos of Rutgers College, Livingston College, Douglass College, University College, and Cook College, particularly in the effect of doing away with the stereotypes about each of the colleges:

I'm sure someone has used the expression with you of existing in silos. And we needed to stop doing that. It is a boat, not many boats. And that was hard, because a lot of us had feelings about our own silo ... and the silo had a really clear identity. We needed to have that identification be with the university. I can remember a time when I was working at another university and I wanted to work at Rutgers University because it was closer to home, and somehow I got the idea that I wanted to work at Rutgers College and not somewhere else. I have no idea where I got that idea. It seemed as if it was better, I don't know why I thought that, it's ridiculous, and I now know that. I had, and I'm not an angry person at all, but a sense that we're better. And we weren't, in any important way. We were just all of us, those attached to the colleges, stuck in our silo. And it was a challenge to be invited and forced to stop doing that.

One senior administrator, when asked about the reemergence of various silos, acknowledged this problem and said that while it is natural for various departments to "protect their turf", that more efforts will be made to build lateral windows in the silos where people have to communicate with one another.

#### *Confusion around the Results of the TUE versus Results of the Budget Cuts*

One administrator pointed out the confusion many people have had regarding attributing some changes made at the university to the TUE instead of to the budget cuts. "We've had serious budgetary concerns. Some of these changes had to be made in order to accommodate some financial constraints. They would have been made anyway, even if we had the college system. But because they are part of this transitional period, some students attribute it to the reorganization. So that's been a problem." Some constituents seem unaware of what services were changed as a result of the TUE, versus the large budget cuts the university

encountered. One frustrated faculty member demonstrated this confusion in his or her observations that,

Cashier's Offices have been reduced. Counseling Centers are being collapsed. Yet we are to believe that the TUE improved services for students and parents. ... Supposedly it clarified and simplified the organization of the university. We could not have saved money by giving everyone a new title, new phone number and email. We printed new stationery, got new visual images, yet students are lost and frustrated. Parents cannot call the Admissions Office and be connected to anyone other than a student worker.

On the other hand, some student leaders understood this complexity. One Cook

Campus student leader explained,

Dean Goodman was here last week talking about it, and a lot of things that aren't necessarily part of the TUE really have just happened at the same time. So of course people are going to associate the fact that they've closed like Cooper with the TUE stuff, whether or not that is directly related. Other things that were over here, closing the Cashier's Office, the Post Office, it's stuff that we've seen in the same time frame, and whether or not it is directly connected, and some of it isn't, and some of it definitely is, but at the same time naturally you're going to associate it with a move by the university administration, again, this view, instead of something done you know because of budget cuts.

Perhaps the RUNB community would benefit from a document that specifies what changes were made as a result of the TUE, and what are the effects of a lower budget. This transparency might help people to understand that the budget is responsible for many of the problems that people perceive are a result of the TUE.

#### *Debate over the Creation of the New Core Curriculum*

Another change made by the TUE was the push for a more rigorous SAS Core Curriculum. According to a *Focus Magazine* article,

The Task Force on Undergraduate Education concluded that the various core curricula at Rutgers' liberal arts colleges too often emphasized "distribution for distribution's sake" and did not articulate a distinctive vision of undergraduate education at Rutgers. The task force report encouraged more faculty engagement in the determination of the curriculum; Lawrence [SAS Associate Dean] said that attendance at arts and sciences faculty meetings has increased since curriculum discussions commenced last spring, when the interim curriculum was first approved (Alvarez, 2006, October 11).

Faculty and Administrators were not directly asked about the creation of the new Core Curriculum in this study. Some faculty members brought this debate up as an ongoing issue that has yet to be settled. One faculty member described one of the issues that is being debated:

Also, I am very supportive of the efforts to create a Core Curriculum. I'm not sure the effort will be successful, because of various local, turf generated resistances. On the one hand, there are disciplines in the sciences, as well as pseudo-professional units such as Communications, that see undergraduate education essentially as a pre-professional stage. On the other hand, there are those who promote ethnic- or gender-based curricula. However we look at it, neither professionalism nor diversity—I mean diversity as something to be represented in a curriculum, not in the body of students (or faculty)—are really compatible with a "Core" Curriculum. The fact that we do not want to face this makes the prospects of the Core rather dim. But I'm happy that the notion of a Core has at least become a major concern at Rutgers.

Another member of the faculty shared this point of view regarding the Core's content, "I'm afraid that some of the Core "categories" are too recondite for students (and faculty!) to be readily integrated. I'm especially leery of "21st century challenges." Maybe there should be a special office for Core advising. I don't know. Faculty members are very confused about how they might participate in the Core." One faculty member brought up a related issue to the creation of the Core Curriculum, "The greatest lack in the university is still a university-wide curriculum committee to oversee overlapping courses. Every school works on its own, and coordination of courses is needed."

Other faculty members are concerned about the process by which the Core is being developed. One shared this observation:

The Core Curriculum debates have been slow and dispiritingly factional--the SAS has changed less in its culture than the rest of the university in this regard. I am not sure how the curriculum is going to come together, but I do think that the push toward "goal oriented" programs instead of distributions will force more collaborations. This is still a maybe.

One non-SAS faculty member had this to say regarding the process of developing the Core,

I did see some rather nasty behavior on the part of SAS department chairs in meetings to discuss the Core, though. That was shocking to me, and I was sorry to see the sarcastically negative comments come out of the mouths of some department chairs. I

can just imagine what they are like in front of a classroom and how they treat students, if they demean faculty in departments not their own.

One cynical point of view regarding the Core is from one faculty member was that, “most of my faculty were unaware of the core requirements of each college. Now that we are members of SAS they are still oblivious to the core requirements.” The creation of the Core Curriculum appears to be a concern of many faculty members. According to one administrator, the permanent core will not be in place until at least Fall Semester 2011. To facilitate the Core development, the university held a conference for faculty in Fall Semester 2008, where they could hear presentations from faculty and deans at other universities who were involved in changing the curriculum, so they could gain advice on how to go about this process, and hear some recommendations of what was done at other universities. In Spring Semester 2009, three forums are being held for faculty members to express their points of view regarding what the Core Curriculum should look like. None of the faculty members brought up these events in the information they shared in the online questions for this study.

*Issue Surrounding Overlap of some SEBS and SAS majors.*

An existing area of confusion has to do with which school applicants should apply to if they want to pursue a Life Sciences major because both SAS and SEBS offer this type of major.

One administrator joked about this:

And we have the Life Sciences program here that is still separate from the one at SEBS. And I turned to the person next to me and said, ‘that will be handled in the next reorganization in 20 years.’ I think as much as you try to avoid WW2 after WW1, that you lay the seeds for the next problem.

The university website attempts to clarify the program differences. (Rutgers, SAS Office of Academic Services, 2009b).

An administrator explains what has been done so far to ameliorate the confusion of prospective students deciding whether they should apply to SAS or SEBS:

What we've tried to do on the application form is indicate what those differences are, and on the website, so we can direct students who think that what they really want to do when they begin their career is ultimately to be a dietitian, then clearly you come to [SEBS] because we have that major and because the core courses are here. But if your goal is to go to medical school and you want a degree in biology, you can do this successfully in either school—there is no difference. Students who matriculate in SEBS, Biology is their degree, versus those who matriculate in SAS and Biology is their major, we have equal rates of success in students doing well on the MCATs and placing students in medical schools. That gets confusing to students and their parents when they are looking at the application forms. Why do I want to do this? I get those questions all the time, when we have the open houses at [SEBS]. I'm sure that the people doing open houses in SAS get the same questions, mostly from parents, less from students. They want to know: what's your placement and success rate? Should my son or daughter pursue a Biology degree in your school: will that improve his or her chances?

This administrator also explained the current Life Sciences system and the ongoing discussion to address the SEBS and SAS overlap:

SEBS has 16 undergraduate majors that are properly ours, offered by our faculty that are unique to us. We have nine other majors that our students are allowed to opt in if they take that as a major- they have to take a SEBS minor to make sure they are getting a concentration of courses based in our school. Those nine majors are operated and managed by SAS or SCILS, those are the two schools we participate with. There was a bit of confusion early on, once we began to implement TUE, well SAS will have its own set of rules for curriculum and transfer of students from school to school, and the GPA you have to have, requirements for graduation. SEBS, historically as Cook College, had its own set of requirements. And how are we actually going to make this work for majors that are truly jointly owned and operated. Biology is the best example of all because there actually is no actual Biology department in SAS. There are a number of departments, but Biology is offered as a major only, there is no Biology department. So Biology as a degree program has about 60% of students as SAS and 40% are SEBS students. [SEBS] contributes a large number of students to that major. And we contribute a large number of faculty who teach in those core courses in that major. So there is a need to think about joint management and ownership of the Biology degree in particular. Unlike the other degrees that our students have access to that aren't owned and operated by us, those are operated by other schools, but our students have permission to major in them. Biology is one where it is owned and operated currently in SAS, but we really contribute a huge amount toward that degree, in terms of teaching and students in it. So we have to work cooperatively. In fact, Executive Dean Goodman and Doug Greenberg in SAS have met each other, since Dean Greenberg is newly returned to Rutgers as a Dean. He was unaware of the issues surrounding Biology. Those two deans need to work together to have a discussion about where we go to make Biology something greater than something that is owned by one school, and we just happen to participate in it. It's an ongoing discussion; we have to work on that right now.

A solution to this confusion is currently being discussed by Deans from the two colleges.



### *Perception of Remaining Rutgers College Elitism*

It seems that some administrators are still sensitive about how several Rutgers College policies and programs were adopted by SAS during the transition. There appears to be several reasons for this. To start, because Rutgers College was so much larger than the other colleges, some of its policies and programs were already designed to serve large numbers of students. Similarly, because Rutgers College was so large, many of the administrative positions tended to be more specialized, with one person in charge of one or two functions and therefore these administrators were more experienced in delivering centralized, specific services than those in smaller colleges. Also because of the size of Rutgers College, it had more capacity and in some cases more funding than other schools to develop programs and technologies that the other colleges could not, such as a training system for student workers in Recreation Services to fix the fitness equipment. Another effect from the size of Rutgers College was that it had more administrators and employees working under it; the reassignment of administrators to other positions would statistically result in more Rutgers College employees being assigned to top-level administrative positions. Some former Rutgers College administrators continue to perceive that other college administrators are somewhat unhappy that so many Rutgers College policies and programs were expanded in the SAS model, and feel uncomfortable with the remaining perception that some Rutgers College elitism remains.

### *Need for more Academic and Administrative Program Assessment*

Rutgers has a long way to go in terms of assessing its programs; only some of the offices were able to talk about assessment data that supported or shaped activities and decision making. Four programs are currently undergoing a pilot assessment program, which is intended for expansion to other offices in the future, through the Center for Teaching Advancement and Assessment Research (CTAAR): the SAS EOF program, Upward Bound, Study Abroad, and Career

Services. The goals for these pilot assessments involve “trying to establish dashboard indicators of how you evaluate quality, success, inputs and outputs, using the latest tools of assessment.

They’re about what your goals are and how to evaluate whether you meet those goals.”

According to an EOF administrator, using assessment has been enlightening, so far,

When we did the first summer program, we said wow this was great, we didn’t get any complaints. Well, we didn’t collect data. ... This second program was well thought out and there were things put in place to measure student satisfaction, compliance, were students attending their workshops and classes; there was a lot of student monitoring. Now we’re getting this feedback: this person isn’t doing this, these people aren’t doing this, did you hear that this guy? Wow compared to last year, but it had to do with the fact we didn’t have the monitoring in place to collect information on the progress or lack thereof of the first summer program.

Also, an administrator has been charged with designing an assessment plan for Student Affairs, which did not exist prior to the TUE and the Middle States accreditation visit. According to this office, “we’ve set up our assessment programs so each department is beginning to develop its own assessment tools. Some of which have been in place for 15 years or some that is being crafted as we speak. We have collected data, we have begun to develop an assessment approach, and each department is at its own level.” Academic departments are also being encouraged by the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs in Teaching and Assessment Research to improve assessment. The first step is to create assessment plans that are aligned to the learning objectives of the departments and courses.

The importance of the topic of assessment is summed up by one senior administrator:

We haven’t done any analysis on us. It has nothing to do with TUE, but [since I started in this position] one of the things I’ve learned is that as a school, we were transactional. Our job in the academic office was pretty much you deal with the brush fire of the moment, get the student in and out, we were never analytical. I’m a very analytical person, I am a scientist. What I need to do to make wise decision-investing for the future, is to understand something about trends. Can you analyze data if you have this monstrous spreadsheet about behaviors of our students, I would like to be able to have someone analyze that and say here is where we are, here is our benchmark at the moment, whatever the trajectory is at the moment of a variable. If our goal is to get here or there, depending on if you want an increase or decrease, I need historical data. We have never kept data of that type. So my challenge at the moment was to put a

team together to come in and be analytical. I have a staffer who is full time to help me with that. She is working with Institutional Research to pull out the data that I need to know about: where our students come from, what fraction transfer in from county colleges, what's their success rate, which ones come from other schools in NJ, which ones come in as first-year students out of HS, where do they come from, what are the demographics of them, and how do they track, how many students in the first year get into jeopardy and have to sit out and go on probation, of the ones that go out what's the regain rate, do they go out for good or go to another university, what's our recapture rate? I have absolutely no information like that. I went to my academic office here, my associate deans: you've been doing this for 30 years; you must be sitting on top of a mountain of data. Not at all; none. What do we do here: how do you make decisions? This is I see one of the most important functions—to have committed to doing that. I have used some of our limited dollars, though we are in fiscal crisis. We will make dollars available for a competitive intramural program for our faculty to submit grant proposals to me to, to identify and track our population. To identify students in jeopardy, to do early intervention, what kinds of early intervention should we be doing in the school? Should we be changing our approaches to teaching certain introductory courses, could we do a comparative analysis where we change the paradigm for instruction? Let's do some experiments, let's find out how to invest our money to do the quality of education and student success here. ... I'll fault my predecessors in this office for not having the wisdom to do that. I'm not doing it just because it just because Margaret Spellings wants universities to be accountable—that's a totally unimportant reason to me. I'm doing it because as a dean I can't make decisions based on a knee jerk reflex. It has to be based on something logical and come from our student success here. That's what we're in the business of doing. I want to make sure we invest wisely to ensure the students who come here have the best educational opportunity they can at the university.

This administrator was one of few who mentioned the importance of data-based decision making, so it seems this attitude still needs to be more ingrained in the university culture—both in academic and student services areas. One administrator comment discussed the need for a clear assessment process to monitor the progress of the TUE. Another administrator has recognized that with the TUE and the Middle States accreditation process,

One of the big pushes is assessment, and that's great. Except there needs to be genuine commitment from the top to deal with that. If we were generally committed to that, we wouldn't have an institutional research that sits over here, and have an assessment person who sits over there and works in the departments, there would be one assessment and research area. ... I don't really have the time to waste on things that don't work. You'd build up resentment with students with policies that you can't stand behind and actually say look there is a reason we do this and here is the proof. I'd rather move on and try something else if this isn't working, but this works.

From this point of view, ongoing assessment in all areas of the university is important in determining how to better some students. However, the capacity and culture of assessment need to be built up:

The TUE roll-out- I've told this to my staff when I'm talking to them about assessment. I'm trying to make them think in 60-month pictures. Which for a lot they don't do, they think in 9 month pictures, a school year is nine months. Something like TUE as a five year roll-out, which means assessment is a ten year undertaking, which means we won't know, and we won't be able to adjust and react on a 9-month basis. It'll only be after we get some assessment that we can plan pro-actively. I think this is important for people to understand. It's like throwing a light switch. It's like ice hockey- you change on the fly, but the game will last ten years.

### *Future Directions*

#### *Administrator Descriptions of Future Ideas or Planned Changes*

At the end of the interviews, administrators were asked for ideas for future directions for their office or the university, and about what projects they are currently working on. Since some of the interviews took place as early as June, 2008, it is possible that some of these goals have come to fruition since then. At least one administrator described that the following changes were imminent:

- In the future, the Byrne Family donation will pay for faculty engagement projects, such as trips and speakers, once the principle yields enough interest; realigned student fees will not be used for this purpose after that point
- The creation of a triage system for calls to the counseling centers, to get students the services they need
- Continuing to organize and centralize the distribution of various scholarships
- DRC's use of the ePortfolio for students to record their progress, and for advisors to monitor; this is starting to be used by Career Services
- Surveying faculty, students, and staff about the overall campus attitudes and climate related to disability services
- Establishing and recruiting mentors for the Volunteer Veteran Mentoring Program, for students entering in Fall 2009 under the new GI Bill
- Organizing the first university-wide Rutgers Fest for the end of Spring 2009

Administrators had the following ideas and goals for the future, to attract and retain high quality students, including nontraditional and underrepresented students:

- Increasing programs to help with student retention
- Cultivating more alumni to donate money for scholarships, especially for students in need
- Clarifying whether both the UCC and the Dean for Nontraditional Students should provide academic advising to nontraditional students
- More services for UCC students, such as more parking flexibility, more administrative evening hours, class sections for only UCC students, leniency with the SAS minor requirement, grants and scholarships, and common space to meet and share experiences with other students, perhaps even online
- Creating more online or hybrid courses for the benefit of nontraditional students, as well as accepting online courses as transfer courses, which is not currently done
- Creating a school of Continuing and Professional Studies for nontraditional students, which would offer online, hybrid, off-campus, and intensive courses
- Better aligning the resources of programs serving underrepresented students, perhaps by creating a Vice President of Multicultural Engagement position
- Improving the representation of underrepresented students as recipients of distinguished fellowships, admits into graduate schools, and other awards; all students should excel at the same rate
- Improving the diversity of students in the honors programs
- Further centralization of school Honors programs and funding for senior theses

Administrators had the following ideas and goals for the future, to reduce roadblocks

and inequities, and improve centralization of services:

- Reorganizing Student Affairs to include a campus-based focus
- A few administrators mentioned the idea of letting student life deans and staff, career counselors, EOF counselors, etc, do academic advising, as well as having faculty advise Student Life clubs, so everyone could be advising more of the “whole student”
- Increasing focus on assessment in Student Affairs
- Continuing to evaluate where the university wants to go, in terms of TUE and campus community
- Making more assessment-based decisions regarding the direction of policies and programs
- Opening an SAS advising office on Cook Campus
- Organizing a university-wide family picnic, spread out over a few weeks, on each campus, and creating a parent day football game, where some tickets are set aside for parents
- Including SAS academic deans more in the development and decision making about the Core Curriculum
- Holding a university-wide graduation ceremony in the football stadium
- Improving the quality of classroom facilities
- Housing Life Sciences under SEBS or SAS, not both
- Improving assessments of programs and academics
- Making the DRC more prominent on university websites, so prospective and current students can learn more about joining it
- DRC having its own residence life staff once again, as well as a permanent dean

- Putting more student services online, such as the Cashier's Office and Meal Plans
- Moving Disability Services under the arm of the Senior Dean of Students
- Hiring an additional coordinator to work for Disability Services, and additional staff for the Learning Centers; Establishing more testing centers for Disability Services
- Improving the centralization of the various tutoring services, including having a departmental liaison in each department to help coordinate tutoring
- Creating an online writing tutoring program

Administrators had the following ideas and goals for the future, to improve engagement of students with cocurricular activities and faculty members:

- Setting up more awards for teaching, which was mentioned by a few administrators, and many faculty members
- Recruiting more faculty to work with and mentor EOF, SSS, and McNair Program students
- Targeting more Learning Communities toward Continuing students
- Finding more ways to engage commuter and nontraditional students, such as through more Learning Communities
- Including a section during orientation about what it means to be a Rutgers student and to include information that every Rutgers student should know
- Opening Byrne Seminars to sophomores or juniors
- Working with faculty members to get them to integrate research content and methodology into curriculum, to improve student access to research
- Creating a centralized list where students can look up what research opportunities are available for undergraduates
- Improving the civic engagement of students
- Identifying more students who should apply for distinguished fellowships, not only students with very high GPAs

#### *Faculty Ideas for Future Changes to Improve Engagement*

Faculty chairs and TUE committee members were asked, "What further changes would you like to see in undergraduate education in order to improve the connection between faculty and undergraduates?" Some said they did not have many ideas, but others shared some ideas, many of which had to do with rewarding increased faculty engagement, reorganization, credit in the tenure process, and monetary incentives.

The ideas that were related to teaching, the curriculum, and engagement with students, in the words of faculty chairs and TUE committee members were:

- Unless there are rewards for improving the connection between faculty and undergraduates it is not going to happen. Tenure and promotion are based almost entirely on grants and publications. Teaching only has to be acceptable. The tendency has been to ask faculty to volunteer more time to teaching without any reduction in expectation for research. There is just no resiliency in the system. I also have to make the point that the physical plant for teaching is rapid deteriorating. "Smart" classrooms are years out of date and few classes have internet connectivity. Most classrooms have chairs bolted to the floor so that the only teaching method possible is lecturing to passive students.
- We need more faculty in this department and we need to ask them to teach more undergraduates and they won't do this unless the reward structure changes. We also need funding to create teaching fellows - people with PhDs who are committed to teaching, don't want tenure, and will work under 3 or 5 year contracts. If we pay enough we can get some great people but keep in mind this further isolates the research faculty from the students; on the other hand they are separated now because if they are successful in publishing they teach grad courses, get courses off etc., and then ask to teach fewer undergrads. Also having more TAs would make some people willing to teach bigger classes but even so we have faculty who have not taught our large introductory classes and thus this teaching falls to the few who do it and the part-timers.
- Completely out on a limb: if every faculty member could devote part of a class, even a course meeting, to just fostering connections in a personal way, the outcomes would be exponentially valuable. But faculty syllabi and content teaching are so tight that hardly anyone ever wants to give up even fifteen minutes, sometimes not even five for a class announcement. This would have to be an institutional prerogative--to insist that faculty build in connections through their classes. Looking to do all this "around" or "outside" the classes is always going to be inherently limited. Changing the very nature of the way we teach IN the classroom (at least a little) would be necessary for serious transformation.
- I hope the Core will help. I'm afraid that some of the Core "categories" are too recondite for students (and faculty!) to be readily integrated. I'm especially leery of "21st century challenges."
- Maybe there should be a special office for Core advising. I don't know. Faculty members are very confused about how they might participate in the Core.
- Create smaller units within SAS. Make students feel as though this is home and their presence at Rutgers makes a difference. Honor students and treat them with respect
- Reward faculty for spending time with students. Insist that faculty take the bus. The bus should be a community place where faculty and students CHAT.
- Insist that students log off of their computers, cell phones and electronic devices in class and during exams. Make students accountable for themselves, their opinions and their behavior in class. Call students by name. Require visits to office hours. Insist that faculty account for their office hours. Make student-faculty relations a priority and IT WILL HAPPEN.

Faculty shared these ideas that were related to student services, class size, and infrastructure:

- I think increased transparency of administrative operations and decisions would produce better relations faculty and undergraduates.

- 1.) Hire more faculty so that we can bring down class size; 2.) Improve graduate funding so that we can section large classes; 3.) Improve the quality of our classrooms; 4.) Dramatically expand the number of available classrooms.
- Sigh. Smaller classes. Improved bus service so students get to class on time. A somewhat shorter term so that we are not running into the holidays. Professional rewards for faculty who are involved in the undergraduate program. (OK, all this is unrealistic.)
- Classroom infrastructure remains a major educational impediment. Somewhat off topic, but it helps build faculty/student rapport. Large lectures impede connections; I don't see any improvement likely. Online registration has reduced student and faculty contact to some degree. My major requests are usually prerequisite overrides and special permission numbers. Also, evaluation of transfer credit. The greatest improvement helping connections has been email.
- I think smaller sections in upper level courses would be helpful but I'm not sure if there is enough classroom space (at least on Busch) to accomplish this. I believe there is a significant need to have 1-2 more large classrooms on Busch as well as more smaller classrooms.
- I'd like to see more programming for students in the library -- open mike nights, poetry readings, informal music events, etc.
- Since technology is such a strong force in all aspects of life and can greatly facilitate the quality of instruction, I would like to see the university support the systemic training of faculty in advanced technological applications and course management systems such as "SAKAI" which can also increase communication and connections between students and faculty.
- Stop making SAS administrators spend their lives in their cars rotating from office to office. Make sure every entering student is in at least two classes where the faculty - student ratio is no greater than 1-25.

Most of these suggestions are in line with faculty suggestions presented in Frost & Teodorescu (2001). Additional suggestions from that study of faculty ideas to improve teaching include supporting intellectual community, promoting interdisciplinary teaching, recognizing teaching as a multifaceted activity, and clarifying the institutional mission and educational goals.

Overall, the university is still working on many TUE-related changes; RUNB will continue to change and adapt. As President McCormick stated, "The transformation of undergraduate education will not be complete until it benefits all our students" (McCormick, 2008).

Taken together, the future direction of the university is being influenced by many factors. According to a senior administrator,

I can say that this has been an extraordinarily challenging period of time. During the middle of this whole process, we reorganized one of the largest research institutions in the United States, built an entirely new Student Affairs division, built an entirely new



undergraduate education program, completed the self study of the university in the middle of this, took budget cuts almost every year since I have been here in terms of cutting back our resources, expanded the number of students while cutting resources at the same time at the institution, and have basically started from almost ground zero in reconstructing policies and programs and the things that provide the infrastructure at the institution. I think the real challenge that the university is going to face is how we are going to be able to progress with the infrastructure we need, the stability we need, the programs we need, the facilities we need, in order to further what we've already started given the current resources we have available to us. At some point the resources that we have are not going to support the demands of the students that are coming here, and we need to figure out a way to resolve it. I certainly don't have any solutions to this. It's unlikely in the short term that the state will be stepping up and giving us additional funds. I think the opportunities to continue to increase tuition are diminishing, at least increase it at the rate we have been increasing it. Therefore, we need to find additional sources of revenue, or we need to curtail programs we currently have. I think the biggest challenge the university faces is how we're going to be able to remain viable for so many students with an infrastructure that's not as strong as it needs to be for an institution this size.

Overall, it is not unexpected that there are still some challenges, confusions, roadblocks, and debates left over from the TUE changes, because the changes took place over a relatively fast period of time, especially for such a large and culture-entrenched organization. However, between the initial interviews with administrators and follow-up contacts with them up to eight months later, many of these issues are already being addressed and resolved; the university organization is a work that is progressing.

## Chapter Nine: Discussion

In light of the increased focus on accountability in higher education, Rutgers- New Brunswick was interested in collecting preliminary documentation of the short term effects of the Transformation of Undergraduate Education. The data are considered preliminary because of the recent and widespread nature of the changes. Research literature used to inform the evaluation included information on the changing nature of and challenges confronting higher education and research universities, institutional and cultural change processes at universities, evaluating changes in higher education, fostering student engagement through creating welcoming communities for students, increasing research involvement opportunities, improving the support of underrepresented and nontraditional students, and enhancing faculty engagement in undergraduate education and undergraduate research experiences. Evaluation theory and considerations of cultural competence and relevance in evaluation (e.g. Kirkhart, 2005), evaluation standards, (e.g. Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1994), evaluation literature on utilization-focused (Patton, 1997) and process evaluation designs were used to plan the study.

While the intention of this study was to interview a few administrators in order to inform a wide evaluation of the short term impacts of the TUE, the administrators and university leadership expressed interest in the documentation of the TUE change process and in what had been accomplished so far. Each administrator provided details on the short term effects, both positive and negative, and on the unexpected or unintended consequences of the TUE, based in large part on personal impressions. Existing data from the university and public sources were collected to provide a more objective reality to these administrator impressions, as well as some input from student and faculty leaders. Taken together, this report provides information about

what has been done to implement the TUE changes, and what individual impressions of these changes are to date. The following evaluation questions were created and answered:

1. What was done to change the structure of the university, and what are people's impressions of these changes, considering the context and culture of RUNB?
2. What has been done to attract and retain high quality students, including supporting students in underrepresented groups and nontraditional students?
3. What has been done to reduce roadblocks and inequities and improve the delivery and consistency of services for students?
4. What has been done to increase the engagement of undergraduate students with cocurricular activities and with faculty members?
5. Based on any difficulties or unexpected consequences with the TUE, what further changes are being made and can be made to improve undergraduate education at RUNB?

The findings will be briefly discussed here. Detailed information about the larger purposes of the evaluation, the theoretical, measurement, and analytical considerations, and the influence of these considerations on the limitations of the findings is discussed in Chapter 2: Evaluation Philosophy.

### *Evaluation Question Summary*

#### *Implementing the TUE Changes*

Administrator reflections on the process of the TUE changes overlapped with many resistances to institutional change described by Trader-Leigh (2002). Individuals expressed concern about their self-interests, job security, the dismantling of traditions and culture, the loss of control due to the redistribution of responsibilities, and other concerns. According to the research documenting change facilitation strategies by Kezar & Eckel (2002b), based on the impressions of administrators, the university did a better job utilizing some strategies of facilitating change than others. Of course, administrator impressions of actions may in fact differ from the actual actions taken by the administration.

To start, Kezar & Eckel and others describe the importance of understanding an institution's culture in order to minimize disruption in instituting changes that conflict with existing norms, feelings, traditions, and values. The university encountered resistance when, during its reorganization process, some believed that it had imposed a new set of School of Arts and Sciences norms and values on the students and staff of the former colleges. These individuals believed that the colleges lost much of their existing traditions and culture. For example, many individuals who had comprised Cook College felt a loss of their old culture, a sentiment that persists among some today. Others argued, however, that there is little evidence of the "remembered" vibrant culture.

Kezar and Eckel also discuss fostering stakeholder participation to facilitate the changes. The Rutgers administration encouraged participation of many constituents throughout the university, through the TUE task force committees, and also during open forums where people could come to discuss the prospective changes. The administration wrote letters to the university community and described the prospective changes in the President's annual address to the university, with an intention of promoting transparency. Some believed that this helped to promote buy-in from about the changes to be made. However, there was some criticism about the lack of the voices of Student Affairs staff and Academic Deans in the change design process, which may have led to some initial dissatisfaction with the changes among these groups.

Another strategy to facilitate change is to clearly communicate the goals of a change, which was done by the administration through the promotion of the six goals of the TUE. These goals could be found publicly in a number of places. For the most part, administrators in the study understood and agreed with the goals of the TUE and the justification of the changes, strategies which Kezar & Eckel also identify as important ways to facilitate change. Another

strategy that the university executed well was its creation of structures to support the change and new efforts.

Despite the use of many positive change strategies, some lower level administrators believed the leadership lacked some transparency in *implementing* the changes. Other administrators believed that the scale and timeline of the TUE changes were unrealistically large and fast, and that the plans for implementing these changes were unclear for a long time. This led to some discontent within the university. However, this discontent is not surprising: Van Loon (2001) discusses the importance of planning the flow of changes, and controlling the pace so that there is a momentum for the changes, but so that the changes happen slowly enough that there is still stability in the organization. For example, instability resulted when many people were worried for a long period about whether they would lose their jobs or whether they would be reassigned. A few administrators criticized the lack of data-based follow up to the changes: they believed that they have not heard much about what the assessed impact of the TUE was. Despite these objections, the kind of inclusive process of campus forums, faculty and other committee meetings that characterized the introduction of recommendations by the undergraduate taskforce would probably not have been feasible for the implementation phase.

Regardless of some troubles, the university has made significant progress toward institutional change, as measured by Kezar and Eckel's (2002b) four main criteria for this. These are the extent to which a university "met measureable goals; illustrated change in values, underlying assumptions, behaviors, processes, products, and structure; provided evidence of a change in institutional culture; and demonstrated mechanisms of sustainability, such as new positions or divisions, or the embeddedness of the changes (p. 301)." This entire report documents the tremendous amount of effort that has gone into meeting the six goals of the TUE.

Rutgers has also not been impervious to the difficulties associated with large scale institutional change that was discussed in introduction. Conversations with administrators and students illustrate that Rutgers meets the Awbrey (2005) description of a complex institution that has to undergo not just an organizational restructuring but an underlying cultural change to get to the point that the university wants to be. As is evident by many of the impressions of Rutgers constituents, more work is needed to align the underlying organizational elements of “power and influence patterns, personal views and interpretations of the organization, interpersonal relationships, norms, trust, risk-taking, values, emotions, and needs” (pp. 4-5) in order for the transformation to be more complete. There has been some change in values and underlying assumptions, as is evidenced by the elimination of the meritocracy of the previous college system, and in the increased support for the engagement of students and faculty. One visible anecdote about way that the institutional culture has changed, according to a senior administrator, is in the increased numbers of students wearing Rutgers University clothing, rather than sweatshirts from the individual colleges, or non-university clothing.

There are many demonstrations of the mechanisms of the sustainability of the TUE changes such as Chapter Six’s documentation of the centralization of services and the creation of new positions and divisions, and in Chapter Seven’s description of the new mechanisms to increase student engagement. A specific example of this is the creation of the Office of Undergraduate Education, which worked to facilitate the engagement-related goals of the TUE. At the same time, some administrators are still critical of the lack of some structures, such as an empowered structure to support nontraditional students.

*Attracting and Retaining High Quality Students, Including Underrepresented and Nontraditional Students*

Rutgers, like many other universities, is interested in attracting the best and the brightest students to the university, who will contribute to a stimulating intellectual environment. It is also proud to be among the most diverse schools in the country, and wants to continue its history of serving nontraditional students. With the TUE came the cessation of internal competition by the liberal arts colleges for students and the focus on presenting a unified front to recruit prospective students. This is captured in the TUE goal to “Recruit and admit to Rutgers-New Brunswick/ Piscataway high-quality students who contribute to the rich diversity of the campuses and who seek the challenges and opportunities of a major research university” (Rutgers, 2005, p. 9). Some university members feared that the standardization of application and admissions requirements would affect the quality and retention of new students, but this does not appear to have happened, based on admissions data and retention data related to first-year students. A combination of factors has led to an improved academic profile of incoming students, with the TUE, and increased diversity. Rutgers as a whole uses automatic scholarships for very high performing students, the Honors Program, and the EOF program to attract students to the university.

The university also offers a number of programs to support underrepresented students, such as the EOF program, the TRIO programs of Student Support Services and McNair Scholars Program, and many forms of tutoring. Limited remediation programs are also offered for very low performing students, as another support, as well as a fund for emergency educational assistance in the form of small grants for textbooks and tuition bills. It also turns out that the Douglass Residential College is becoming a support for underrepresented students, as it serves a large percentage of students in the EOF program, and Black and Latino women.

Underrepresented students also benefit from the many multicultural education programs organized by various offices in the university. Some administrators and faculty believed that more should be done to further support at-risk students, such as through the expansion of existing successful remediation programs. Many new college students can benefit from coaching in academic and study skills (Porter & Swing, 2006).

It is commonly felt that the university can continue to do more to support nontraditional students, who are currently served by the University College Community. Because of the realities of the twenty-first century and the worsening economy, many RUNB students are looking less like the traditional young, non-working, residential, full-time student; many RUNB students are commuting, working part or full-time jobs, and are taking time off before or during college for a variety of reasons. Improving support of these “nontraditional” students is becoming increasingly important to their retention. One issue that has arisen is that some nontraditional students at RUNB believe they will have a more difficult time graduating because of the new SAS requirement of earning a minor degree, and because of their increased difficulty in registering for classes they need that fit with their work and family schedules. Also, considering students and families’ worsening financial situations, some administrators think it is increasingly important to monitor and support nontraditional, at-risk, and low-performing students to make sure they do not get into the position of paying tuition money while being unable to graduate due to a statistically unfixable GPA (that cannot meet the minimum 2.0 GPA requirement to graduate).

#### *Eliminating Roadblocks for Students*

Part of one of the goals of the TUE was to “Provide undergraduates on all New Brunswick/ Piscataway campuses ready access... to facilities, services, and programs that meet their diverse needs” as well as to “Improve the attractiveness, clarity, organization, and



accessibility of undergraduate education at Rutgers- New Brunswick/ Piscataway” (Rutgers, 2005, p. 9). These goals essentially sought to reduce student confusion and to centralize and make accessible university offices—doing away with the infamous “RU Screw.” Because of the previous federated college system, students who attended different colleges within the university only had access to services provided by their specific college. There was concern about class- and race-based discrimination, because some people believed that higher quality resources and services were available to the higher SES students who attended Rutgers College. With the transformation, the university has unified applications, admissions, residential life, student life, academic services, and other services into one system available to all students. Administrators believe this has resulted in a more equitable distribution of services and resources to students and has eliminated much of the confusion students experienced in accessing services.

The changes also ameliorated preexisting obstacles that stemmed from the isolated nature of each college’s services. For example, the university’s separate counseling programs were consolidated and appointment scheduling is now done in such a way that students are given more immediate appointments on any campus. On a similar note, because the new Deans of Students Office now oversees many student support areas such as counseling, judicial affairs, and student absences, it has been able to develop a Mental Health Task Force that meets to monitor and support “at risk” students about whom faculty members have concerns. This type of monitoring and coordination of services has been enabled and simplified by the increase in use of databases and online systems to track student data.

A lot of work was done to centralize services in academic arenas, such as Academic Advising, Disability Services, Learning Centers, Judicial Affairs, Study Abroad and Career Services. Similar centralization of Student Affairs offices took place, merging the offices of Recreation,

Health Services and Counseling, Student Life, Residence Life, and Student Government. Faculty chairs did not have much to say about these areas, perhaps because they do not know much about them, except that they believe students are still experiencing some confusion with Academic Advising, an office they work with often. Possible remaining or new roadblocks or areas of confusion are the overlap of some SEBS and SAS Life Sciences majors, confusion over the lack of complete centralization of tutoring services, and some student difficulty with the rigorous SAS graduation requirements.

*Increasing Student Engagement with Cocurricular Activities and Faculty Members*

RUNB has increased and streamlined its attention to student and faculty engagement. Kuh (2003) suggests appraising student engagement by looking at how much energy and time students spend engaging in educational activities inside and outside of the classroom, and by examining what colleges are doing to help students take part in these activities. RUNB expressed specific interest in the development of learning communities, as is noted in its TUE goal to “provide undergraduates on all of the New Brunswick campuses ready access to learning communities of students with similar interests” (Rutgers, 2005, p. 9). Several “welcoming community” efforts have come from the transformation to increase engagement of students, such as the creation of the Byrne Family First-year Seminars taught mostly by senior-level professors, the establishment of Discovery Houses—living and learning communities for first-year students—and many other learning communities, the expansion of First-year Interest Groups taught by senior undergraduates, and the creation of more research opportunities for undergraduates. Students’ satisfaction levels with these experiences vary but are generally positive, and these experiences will likely lead to other positive outcomes such as high academic performance and satisfaction with the college experience (Zhao & Kuh, 2004). According to the

NSSE administered in 2005 and 2008, student engagement in many areas has improved over the past three years.

Offering students access to opportunities that can only be provided high quality research universities was another goal of the TUE. There are many strategies to facilitate undergraduate research experiences such as making these experiences open to any student, keeping a directory of research opportunities, providing advising to students to place them in research related positions, supporting faculty who advise undergraduate researchers, giving students the opportunity to present their research work, and encouraging a senior thesis research project, and providing funding for student-faculty collaborations (Bauer & Bennett, 2003). Rutgers, in part through the Aresty Research Center, is working toward these objectives. The Aresty Research Center is currently exploring the idea of a public directory of research positions so more students can be aware of all research opportunities that are available, and it is also working with faculty to make research opportunities widely accessible for any student, not just to Honors Program students or students the faculty member knows. Taken together, students at RUNB are a diverse group, with a variety of levels and areas of engagement, interests and opinions, and backgrounds. Because of this heterogeneity, it is difficult to collectively describe the cocurricular engagement of students and what further actions are needed, before largely surveying the students.

Another goal of the TUE was to “Reconnect the Rutgers- New Brunswick/ Piscataway faculty to the work of undergraduate education and provide opportunities for faculty to focus energy and time on undergraduates” (Rutgers, 2005, p. 9). Improved faculty engagement with undergraduates has also been facilitated by the development of an Office of Academic Engagement and Programming, which was designed to help faculty members create learning communities, teach first-year seminars, and reconsider how to develop programming such as

conferences that rely on the input and participation of undergraduates. Because of the reallocation of student fees toward academic activities, faculty have been provided more money and resources by this office to invite guest speakers to classes, take students on learning experiences, and plan more cocurricular activities. Additionally, the university developed the positions of Campus Deans, who are individual faculty members charged with creating community on their campus, and increasing the involvement and support of faculty members in cocurricular activities. The Aresty Research Center for undergraduates also facilitates faculty involving students in their research endeavors, and they provide professional development sessions for these faculty members to train them in mentoring undergraduates.

The faculty at RUNB is a very heterogeneous group of people with varying areas of interest, levels of engagement, and beliefs about student engagement. Faculty members are generally positive about many of these new and existing areas of fostering student and faculty engagement, but many believe there are more overarching issues that influence their ability to increase their interaction with undergraduate students, namely that this work is not incentivized. This is not unique to Rutgers; many researchers discuss tactics to shift the focus on research back somewhat to teaching excellence, such as rewarding the quality not the quantity of publications, encouraging research on teaching excellence in their respective field, and by recognizing quality teachers, with tenure (Aronson & Webster, 2007; Brand, 1992; Henderson & Kane, 1991; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005), or giving merit pay for quality teaching (Zahorski & Cognard, 1999).

#### *Unintended/Unexpected Consequences and Future Directions*

There were unintended short term outcomes of the transformation as well. For example, because all services to students became centralized, some believed this also weakened support of campus-based community-building. This sometimes resulted in the discontinuation

of traditional student affairs programs that were associated with particular campuses within the university, which was concerning to campus students, faculty, parents, and alumni. Also, because these changes were made over such a short period of time, and without some of the foresight into needed upfront planning, some staff members and administrators did not know where their jobs would be moved, whether their position would be eliminated, or what their new roles would be until later into the transformation process. The result was some confusion among staff, administrators, and students, especially with respect to issues concerning scope of authority and hierarchy.

Another effect of the transformation was that students who had been served by a liberal arts college for nontraditional students no longer had the same intimate, college-based support as before. Because this college used to have its share of student fees and tuition money, it was able to give incentives to faculty to provide night and weekend classes for these students; it no longer has this power because all student fees are now centrally controlled and distributed. There is a strong need for more consideration into how to better address the needs of the various groups of nontraditional students at RUNB.

Administrators believe a positive unintended effect of the transformation is that it has challenged staff and administrators to innovate—creativity during the development of new systems and programs was a necessary personal quality. New partnerships and colleagues have been created, while old relationships have been maintained despite much office and position reassignment, resulting in positive effects on the collaboration of staff and administrators. In the same vein, students now have a chance to create new university-wide traditions and to meet and live with students from all over the university, and to take advantage of the opportunities offered on all campuses.

*Future changes.* Because this evaluation is taking place only about a year into this transformation, administrators and others offered a number of ideas for future changes. One major change suggested could be the development of a College of Continuing Education, which would offer many night, weekend, off-campus, and online courses, in order to better serve the growing population of working-class and lower-income students who work frequently and still want to pursue a Bachelor's Degree. Currently, SAS does not consistently accept online courses from other institutions for transfer credits. It is believed that the university as a whole needs to reassess its ability to serve nontraditional and busy students, and improve its sensitivity to off-campus and part-time students.

Many other desired changes were discussed. Some administrators were interested in furthering the engagement of faculty members with student organizations and cocurricular activities, and thought that small incentives for faculty involvement would be very helpful in doing this. Others want to expand the first-year seminar program to be available to upperclassmen. Another idea for change is for the creation of one overarching office of assessment, where academic and cocurricular assessment of programs is managed. Some campus-based administrators were interested in the reestablishment of some degree of campus-based student affairs coordination, in order to preserve the culture and traditions of the individual campuses. Another idea is the creation of a centralized location for all professors to list research opportunities for undergraduates, which would make the process of undergraduate participation in research activities more transparent and equitable.

#### *Educational and Scientific Significance*

At a local level, it is expected that the university will utilize and publicize this evaluation data about the efforts and progress toward implementing the transformation, and recommendations made by students, faculty, staff, and administrators on how to further

improve undergraduate education at the university to this end. Additionally, the results from the evaluation report can be shared with the university community to give stakeholders official information about the process changes and short term outputs of the transformation—data promised to be provided to the university by the university president. This report can also be used to build future evaluations at the university. In the view of the input-environment-output model for approximating an institution’s influence on student change during college (Astin, 1993; Terenzini & Upcraft, 1996), this study describes the important environmental variables of institutional characteristics and student involvement that affect a student’s college outcomes. On a broader level, this evaluation model and literature review can be shared with other higher education institutions looking to implement institutional transformations or conduct evaluations of similar changes. Finally, lessons learned about the organization and management of large research institutions and changes within these organizations will be promoted widely.

#### *Limitations of Study*

This evaluation has a number of important limitations that must be considered in interpreting the findings. One of the most notable limitations of this study is its limited participant pool. Though information was collected from university sources such as its magazines, student newspapers, and websites, most of it came from interviews with administrators. Administrators were asked to reflect on their impressions of the TUE, the positive and negative short term impacts, and its unexpected consequences; therefore much of the information in this study is the subjective point of view of administrators. These reflections could suffer from misremembering what took place, anger or resentment over a change that has clouded their impression, the social desire to be positive about the changes and what happened, or other problems associated with self-report (Pascarella, 2001). Efforts were made to describe whether one, a couple, a few, many, or most administrators held a point of view, but only 46

administrators were actually interviewed, out of many more university administrative employees. At the same time, these 46 administrators represented many levels of the RUNB administration, from the President and several Vice Presidents, down to department directors, and some assistant directors.

Similarly, the 21 faculty members who responded to the online survey given to faculty chairs and TUE committee members are an even smaller number of people representing a larger group. Though the 90 faculty invited to complete the survey are in positions of authority within their departments and schools, they can only truly represent their own point of view and their perceptions of others' points of view. Finally, only 21 students were part of focus groups responding to questions about the TUE, and these students only represented EOF student leaders, Honors Students, DRC leaders, the Cook Campus Council, and the University College Community Council; most were juniors or seniors, and therefore the perspective of new students was not measured in this study. The student perspective was very limited, which highlights the need for a large-scale survey of Rutgers constituents about the findings and impressions of the TUE changes.

Despite the limited sample, these individuals were able to describe what had by done as a result of the TUE, what some of the positive and negative short term impacts have been, and provide ideas for future directions are for institutional change at RUNB. These descriptions just do not represent the views of the entire university, nor should they be valued past the point of view of a few people. Care was taken to provide an array of points of view in each section, but it is difficult to know how pervasive each point of view presented actually is, with the limited data available. For this reason, information provided about a program or office might have an array of negative points of view provided. This type of information was thought to be useful to university officials in determining where to follow up with surveys and resources.



Related to the limited sample is the limitation of the promise of confidentiality to administrators, faculty, and students. Administrators were told that what they said was not confidential within the university, but it would be in documents that left the university, such as this dissertation. Not being able to provide information about which administrator made which comment or provided information limits the credibility of what is read in this dissertation. However, “one administrator” and other such terms will be repopulated with administrator positions in many areas of the final report to the university.

Additionally, this report’s documentation of what was done and what happened in the short term after the TUE comes mostly from the perspective of the School of Arts and Sciences, since it was changed the most. Changes to SEBS were also addressed. However, the points of view of the other undergraduate professional schools at RUNB are not well told here, so these perspectives should be included in further study of the TUE. Also, it is not known how the TUE in RUNB affected Rutgers- Newark or Rutgers- Camden. The points of view of other stakeholders, such as graduate students, alumni, parents, prospective students, community members, students and faculty at the professional schools, and staff are also not well told in this report.

Another limitation is that the administrator interviews took place over a time period of seven months, and for this reason, facts and opinions shared by administrators in June are likely different than the state of reality in January, or when this report is released. For the most part, administrator, student, and faculty reflections represent what they have been feeling up until the point of the interview or survey; these views may have since changed. Half of the administrators interviewed were given relevant sections of the report in February, 2009, so they could update any facts, and correct any misconceptions or factual errors. Additionally, I continued to read the university magazines and newspapers until the end of February 2009 to include as up to do information as possible in this report. But the university and its programs are

evolving and changing every day, so it is likely this report could be updated in a number of ways. Further limitations related to the theoretical framework, measurement, and analysis are discussed in Chapter 2: Evaluation Philosophy.

### *Future Directions for Evaluation*

This study documents people's impressions of the TUE change process and the short term impacts of these changes, using mostly administrator points of view, though the administrators represent a variety of levels and areas of the university structure. As this evaluation study was conceived, the initial interviews with administrators were intended to feed information and desired questions into surveys of students. Because university officials and these initial administrators were more interested in continuing the administrator interviews to determine what had been done as a result of the TUE, student surveys were never developed because of the need for this initial study to inform the survey, and the lack of time. Future studies of the impact of this reorganization can also look more to students, faculty, and staff. An idea for assessing the changes is designing a school-wide survey of students on the topics discussed in the literature and the results, to gain a broad and objective view of what impacts programs have had on students who enrolled in them. Much of the literature reviewed for this report, as well as the findings of this study, provide a strong basis for a survey of Rutgers student engagement and satisfaction with the TUE-related status of the university. A survey of students would be useful for the additional reason that NSSE data are not very informative to individual areas of the university, such as those that are described in this study.

For instance, the literature viewed on Learning Communities discusses the potential benefits of these programs, especially for students who may otherwise be less engaged with the university. It would be interesting for RUNB to look at the value added by participating in a Learning Community, especially considering the additional costs and resources it takes to run

one. Though the benefits of LC participation may not appear until late in the college career (Zhao & Kuh, 2004), high academic performance, student engagement satisfaction with the college experience, personal development, and persistence are all noted outcomes of participation in learning communities (Stassen, 2003; Zhao & Kuh, 2004). Students could be surveyed to assess for these and other outcomes as one measure of the utility of the Learning Communities.

Similarly, the level of institutional information that was desired to monitor the short term impacts of the TUE changes was not accessible in the time period that was given. This does not negate the importance of tracking the performance of historically underrepresented students and nontraditional students; this remains a critical strategy to close the historical gap between low income and advantage students and high SES students, and should be part of future institutional evaluations and research, because monitoring performance by race and SES status draws attention to disparities that exist. The university can systematically track underrepresented and nontraditional student performance or status in: majors that result in high paying jobs, financial aid access, access to internships and fellowships, retention rates by major, the percentage who graduate, the percentage who earn GPAs over 3.5, and the percentage who continue on to graduate school, as indicators of the university ability to reduce the performance gap (Bensimon, 2004; USDOE, 2006). The continuing assessment program impacts in all areas at Rutgers is especially important given the current world economic crisis; programs and offices will be increasingly called to demonstrate the impacts of resources that are invested in a program, to ensure money is being spent efficiently and with adequate return.

### *Conclusion*

Rutgers has not been immune to the current challenges facing higher education (AACU, 2002), the changing goals of higher education (AACU, 2002), and the changing nature of a

research university (Boyer Commission, 1998) that was discussed in the introduction. It seems that Rutgers has paid especially close attention to the recommendations for higher education research institution goals put forth by the Boyer Commission in 1998, as many of these goals were realized with the changes of the TUE. The university has worked to construct an inquiry-based freshman year and to build on the freshmen foundation, through the creation of its Byrne Family First-year Seminars, FIGS, and many learning communities for freshmen. Cultivating a sense of community is another goal mentioned by this report, which the university has worked to do through the creation of learning communities, and by facilitating student participation in research activities such as through the Aresty center, or by supporting faculty to include and engage students. Another report, from the Secretary of Education in 2006, called for an increase in accountability and assessment, which Rutgers is also embracing by encouraging and piloting the use of assessment in the areas of Student Affairs, Undergraduate Education, and in academic departments.

Despite a few aforementioned snags, the Transformation of Undergraduate Education marked an important step in the evolution of RUNB. According to most administrators, the reorganization was a long time coming, and was very necessary to move the university to the next level and meet more of the expectations set forth in these national recommendations. One of the more interesting reflections on the TUE is about how it began. One experienced administrator mused,

It's fascinating how institutions can get into a rut and you can't get out of it. And there were discussion during these 25 years, only Nixon can go to China, and when Dr. McCormick came, I said he's the only president who can bleed scarlet enough to bring about the reorganization. Because, the politics are so intense that it would have been just as easy for a president to fail miserably, as much as succeed remarkably. The other outcome is I don't think you'll see the real flowering of the outcomes of this. We're seeing things if you really experience it, because you really understand it, going 'wow this is amazing'. But it'll be 10 years before we say, 'wow, why didn't we do this before, because look at all of these wonderful things that have been accomplished.' And this presidency, and because of how presidencies turn around, will be over. So he will get

the credit historically, but not at the time it occurred. I think he has, but it makes it difficult for institutional leaders to make those decisions to make those big changes, because as institutions we don't do a good job of being able to understand what that means, and the entrenched politics are such that you have to give up your pound of flesh. So I think it is fascinating that you are studying this: how do you help institutions get over those humps to make these important decisions. I digress, but I think that this is some of the stuff that's out there. But again, there was always this expectation that it would happen and it just never did. And then I was amazed that there were people who really truly believed the world would come to an end because of this, and it ended in a whimper. It reminds you almost of looking back at the breakup of the Soviet Union, where everyone thought the world would come to an end, and it just kind of ended, and everything was done. In many ways, I think that's what happened here, surprisingly so.

This study serves as one way to document this extraordinary change.

Borrowing from the Awbrey (2005) metaphor about an institution being similar to an iceberg, RUNB essentially had five small iceberg structures (or silos) that needed to be combined into one large body of ice. In consolidating the four liberal arts colleges and changing the nature of the former Cook College, both the visible iceberg elements of the college hierarchies, missions, goals, procedures, and practices, and the underwater cultures of norms, power patterns, personal views, and emotions, needed to be melted and refrozen into one mass. The visible portions of the iceberg are coming together through the hard work of many individuals in the university, but the ice below the water's surface is still not completely formed.

Readers should take away from this study an appreciation of the vastness of the changes associated with the TUE. The university spent a few years studying the problems of the university, and devising a way to address those problems, mainly through the consolidation of the four historical liberal arts colleges. After 26 years, the consolidation of the faculties of the individual colleges into one Faculty of Arts and Sciences was extended to the students of these colleges, creating one School of Arts and Sciences. The previous system, while rich in culture and tradition, created many inequities and confusions for students and staff. The mechanical changes were made over the course of a summer, as offices were moved and jobs were rearranged, but the changes in policies and procedures, in further developing new offices and

working relationships, and in learning how to work in the new system, are still changing a year and a half after SAS was born, and will continue to do so, to improve and adapt to new realities.

Many people were challenged by figuring out how these changes and new systems would work, but many were also reinvigorated in their new roles and positions. Staff members have old colleagues that they can turn to for help and previous experiences to inform best practices, and also now have new colleagues and ways of doing things. There were some disruptions to student understandings of how things at the university worked, but the new classes of students are said to be functioning well in the new, more logical, system. Students should no longer face discrimination by fellow students, faculty, and employers, based on which RUNB school they attended, because they all follow the same policies, procedures, and Core Curriculum. While the university needs to monitor the success of underrepresented and nontraditional students, all students now have access to many new and important opportunities, such as Byrne Family First-year Seminars and Learning Communities, and have endless options to engage in cocurricular activities, as well as many student life programs. RUNB is further becoming a place where students have many opportunities to engage with faculty members, to pursue many areas of interest, and to do much more than just attend class and attend parties. Its new structure promotes specialization and collaboration, instead of competition and animosity among colleges. Prospective students are increasingly responding to the many changes at the university and outside factors, and are applying to and enrolling in RUNB in record numbers, indicating the success of many of its TUE-related goals. Overall, the Transformation of Undergraduate Education has been an historic step for Rutgers- New Brunswick, toward the ultimate goal of providing an engaging and high quality education for all undergraduates.

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## Appendix A: Research Questions and Corresponding Codes

1. What was done to change the structure of the university, and what are people's impressions of these changes, considering the context and culture of Rutgers?
  - T- BEFORE TUE
  - T- CHANGE PROCESS of TUE
  - T- IMPACT of TUE
  - T- Accomplishment of TUE
  - T- Impression of TUE
  - T- DIFFICULTY with TUE. Challenge
  - T- Culture change
2. What has been done to attract and retain high quality students, by way of creating more opportunities for student engagement, including for students in underrepresented groups and nontraditional students?
  - R- Attracting Students
  - R- Profiles of UGs
  - R- Retention of UGs
  - S- Honors Programs
  - S - Cook impact
  - S - Livingston impact
3. What has been done to eliminate roadblocks for students, including by way of improving the structure of UG education at Rutgers?
  - Online/Database shift
  - Centralization impact
  - R- Reduce Roadblocks
  - Partnerships, collaboration
  - E- STAFF impact
  - Budget changes
  - R- Reduce inequities
4. What has been done to increase student engagement with cocurricular activities and faculty members?
  - S- Research for UGs
  - Campus Deans
  - E- Student Engagement
  - Faculty Engagement
  - S- Discovery Houses
  - S- Learning Communities; FIGS
  - S- Douglass
  - S- FYSeminar. Byrne
  - E- Community
  - Continuing Students- effect on
5. Based on any difficulties or unexpected consequences with the TUE, what further changes are being made and can be made to improve undergraduate education at Rutgers?
  - T- UNExpected outcomes
  - T- Future Changes, or TO DO

## Appendix B: Member Checking

	<b>Position Title</b>	<b>Section Checked</b>	<b>What Changed?</b>
1	Exec Director for Res Life	Residence Life Centralization; Creation of Douglass Residential College	Gave data from Res Life survey to be included; disputed section about what happened since TUE
2	Director of Institutional Research and Planning	NSSE findings; Rutgers Demographic Breakdown; Profile of Incoming Students and Other Statistics	Clarifications of reporting or numbers
3	Assistant VP for Academic Engagement and Programming	Creation of the Office of Academic Engagement; Creation of Learning Communities; Discovery Houses Creation; First Year Interest Groups Expansion	[no response]
4	Senior Dean of Students	Refinement of Dean of Students Role; Judicial Affairs Centralization	Slightly changed the wording of the description of DoS
5	Student Support Services	Trio Programs	No changes needed
6	First year seminar director	First Year Seminars Creation	Factual changes, provided differing opinion of a point
7	ARESTY director	Student Research Opportunities	Fixed a statistic
8	Executive Director, Student Life	Student Life Centralization; Student Government Centralization	Updated content; clarified difference between Student Life and student activities; other clarifications
9	Executive Director of Recreation and Community Development	Recreation Services Centralization	Clarifications; wording changes
10	Hurtado Health Exec Director; Assistant Director of CAPS	Health Services and Counseling Centralization	Clarifications, and expansions on what had been done to CAPS; small error corrections
11	Director of Parents Association	Alumni and Parent Associations Consolidated	Updated activities of RUPA
12	Interim Director, Learning Resources	Learning Centers More Centralized	Contributed more facts and statistics
13	University College Dean	Nontraditional Students	Fixed typos

14	VP for Enrollment management	Recruiting and Admissions Changes; Changes to Scholarships and Funding Awarded	Changed title of “director” to “vice president”
15	Asst Dean SAS EOF; forwarded to 4 other EOF deans	EOF program centralization	Fixed one number-tuition grant amount
16	Associate Dean Academic Services SAS	Academic Services Centralized	Fixed wording of a few things, contributed up to date happenings
17	Director Multicultural Student Engagement	Multicultural Student Engagement	Fixed wording of program descriptions, contributed up to date happenings
18	Dean of Douglass Residential College	Douglass Residential College Creation	Clarification of details, quotes; some wording changes
19	Administrative Director of SAS Honors program	Honors Program Unification; Changes to Scholarships and Funding awarded; Creation of University-wide Emergency Assistance Fund	Fixed wording of what was changed, made major clarifications about what happened-inaccuracies were fixed
20	Director of Students with Disabilities	Disability Services Centralized	No changes needed
21	Director of External Fellowships and Postgraduate Guidance	Office of Distinguished Fellowships Creation	Wording changes
22	SAS Dean	Academic Standing and Dismissal Policies and Programs	Fixed wording of policy descriptions for improved accuracy
23	Director of Financial Management and Computing	Budget Centralization	Clarification of what fees are for
24	Campus Dean, Livingston	Creation of Campus Dean Position; Livingston Students; Nontraditional students	Few clarifications
25	VP for UG Academic Affairs	Centralization of Study Abroad and Career Services offices	Minor clarifications
26	Campus Dean, Cook	Impact on Continuing Students, Cook Impact, Debate around Welcoming Communities	No changes needed
27	VP for Student Affairs	Student Government Centralization	Pointed out “school” is not the same as “college” at Rutgers

## Curriculum Vitae

## AUBRIE SWAN

## EDUCATION

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2004-2009	Rutgers University	New Brunswick, NJ
<i>Ph.D. in Education: Educational Psychology- Learning, Cognition, and Development</i>		
2004-2008	Rutgers Graduate School of Education	New Brunswick, NJ
<i>Masters in Education in Educational Statistics, Measurement and Evaluation</i>		
2000 - 2004	Binghamton University	Binghamton, NY
<i>Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with Honors, major track in Applied Behavior Analysis (May, 2004)</i>		

## EVALUATION EXPERIENCE

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2009-	Columbia University Medical Center	New York, NY
<i>Evaluation Specialist</i>		
Center for Education Research and Evaluation		
2007-2009	Rutgers University	New Brunswick, NJ
<i>Lead Evaluator</i>		
Program: The Transformation of Undergraduate Education at Rutgers University		
2007	North Plainfield School District	North Plainfield, NJ
<i>Lead Evaluator</i>		
Program: North Plainfield-funded pre-school programs		
2004-2007	Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic	Princeton, NJ
<i>Program Evaluator</i>		
Program evaluation: "Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic Learning through Listening program: Teacher perspectives on program processes and uses with fourth through eighth grade special education students"		
<i>Graduate Assistant</i>		
2006	South Plainfield School District	South Plainfield, NJ
<i>Evaluation Designer</i>		
Program: South Plainfield School District's summer school algebra program		
2005-current	Mellon Technology Grant	Rutgers University
<i>Graduate Assistant (2005-2006), Volunteer (current)</i>		
Research project: Evaluating technology use in various Rutgers University courses		

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

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2006-2009	MetroMath National Science Foundation	Rutgers University
<i>Graduate Fellow/ Research Assistant</i>		
Research project: "District Approaches to the Recruitment and Retention of Urban Mathematics Teachers"		
2005	Center for Educational Policy Analysis	Rutgers University
<i>Transcriptionist</i>		
2005	Just for the Kids	Rutgers University
<i>Assistant Interviewer</i>		
2002-2004	Institute of Child Development	Binghamton University
<i>Research Assistant</i>		
2003, 2004	Mount Hope Family Center	University of Rochester
<i>Research Assistant (2004), Data Manager (2003)</i>		
2001-2004	Mount Hope Family Center	University of Rochester
<i>Transcriptionist, Receptionist</i>		
2001-2002	Research laboratory of Dr. Donald Levis	Binghamton University
<i>Research Assistant</i>		

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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2007-2008	Rutgers University	New Brunswick, NJ
<i>Part-time Lecturer, Summer courses</i>		
Assessment and Measurement for Teachers. 20-23 students, 2-credit Masters in Education course		
2007	Rutgers University	New Brunswick, NJ
<i>Workshop Lecturer</i>		
Designed and gave training to future Teaching Assistants entitled: Designing and Grading Exams		

JOURNAL ARTICLES PUBLISHED, MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

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- Liu, E., Rosenstein, J., Swan, A., Khalil, D. (2008) When districts encounter teacher shortages: The challenges of recruiting and retaining mathematics teachers in urban districts. *Leadership, Policies, and Schools*, 7(3), 296-323.
- Swan, A., O'Donnell, A. The contribution of a virtual biology lab to higher education student learning. Manuscript accepted pending revisions to *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*.
- Liu, E., Rosenstein, J., Swan, A., Khalil, D. Urban districts' strategies for responding to mathematics teacher shortages. Manuscript submitted to *Teachers College Record*.

EVALUATION REPORTS

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- Swan, A. (2009) Evaluation of the Transformation of Undergraduate Education at Rutgers University. *Report for Rutgers University- New Brunswick*.
- Swan, A. (2007) Evaluation of the North Plainfield preschool and Kindergarten programs. *Report for North Plainfield School District*.
- Swan, A. (2007) Evaluation of the Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic Learning through Listening Program: Teacher perspectives on program processes and uses with fourth through eighth grade special education students. *Report for Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic*.
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