

Dear Governor Christie,

I am writing to you in regards to the rumor about a merger between Rutgers-Camden and Rowan University. I am deeply concerned about news reports suggesting that a potential merger might end the long-standing and productive relationship between Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey and Rutgers-Camden. It would be ruinous to tear down what the faculty, staff, students, and alumni at Rutgers have spent years building into a fine research institution.

Rutgers is of crucial importance because it embodies academic excellence and innovative research that is integral to the economy of South Jersey. Rutgers-Camden students report the highest level of satisfaction with their education of any Rutgers campus. If we lose the Rutgers name, so much is at risk.

Any merger that severs the Rutgers bond between the people of South Jersey and our state's research institutions will incur considerable cost and liability. The cost of any merger is likely to be significant and divert millions of dollars from much-needed new construction and infrastructure projects. I find it troubling that no responsible discussion of such likely expenditure has been made public.

I am deeply concerned that the exemplary work of teaching and research at Rutgers-Camden should continue. I would urge that a consortium model like those successfully used elsewhere (whereby collaborating institutions preserve their own identities while pooling their resources) could preserve the distinctiveness of Rutgers-Camden and other institutions in the region, and produce a more dynamic engine for the economic, cultural, and intellectual growth of the region.