

Media Release

For Immediate Release
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A STATEMENT FROM RUTGERS AAUP-AFT Endorsement of a “once in a generation” opportunity for a “true partnership” in higher education for all of New Jersey

Rutgers-Camden faculty and the faculty union representing all Rutgers University campuses on February 15, 2012 **strongly endorsed the decision by Senator Steven Sweeney and a large number of southern New Jersey elected officials to embrace a “once in a generation” opportunity** for what **Rutgers AAUP-AFT President Adrienne Eaton called “a true partnership rather than forcibly merging Rutgers-Camden into Rowan University**, ending the opportunity for residents of southern New Jersey to attend Rutgers unless they went to New Brunswick or Newark.” **Eaton** pointed out that “partnership” required that there remain two distinct and separate universities since there could not be partnership with only one partner.

Professor Laurie Bernstein agreed with Eaton’s praise of Senator Sweeney’s bold idea. Bernstein said she looked forward to a future for higher education in southern New Jersey where Rutgers University-Camden, by remaining part of the Rutgers system, would be allowed to keep the irreplaceable resources that only Rutgers provided, such as the \$6.2 million per year that the Rutgers Library System spends on research databases and that are seamlessly available to the libraries of every Rutgers campus. With fruitful partnerships Rutgers could undertake to share such resources with a vibrant Rowan University and Cooper Medical School so that students from all the different universities could benefit from them.

The new possibility of the independent universities engaging in partnerships will enhance educational opportunities and promote regional growth. “We always understood that Senator Sweeney and the other leaders wanted what was best for South Jersey,” said **Associate Professor Andrew Shankman**. “Senator Sweeney and the other legislators did what leaders do, they led a conversation, they listened to all of their constituents, and they acted wisely not to destroy what they already had but to construct something new and forward looking.” The partnership plan, which Rutgers faculty feel should be similar to what exists between Rutgers-Newark and the New Jersey Institute of Technology, needs to have its details finalized. The bottom line for Rutgers faculty, staff, students and alumni is to have Rutgers-Camden continue to exist as a core part of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. The legislators seemed to endorse this, insisting, “The history, degrees, accreditation and identities of both Rutgers and Rowan should be respected.”

"That's what a partnership is," said **Adrienne Eaton**, "a cooperation between two distinct universities that keep what they had going into it, their different histories, their distinct degree programs, their very different identities, and by partnering and coming together they provide more for all than either could alone. We're so excited that our elected representatives understand this, that accreditation, which takes so long to achieve and that can only be granted by independent outside evaluators such as the American Bar Association and the Middle States Commission will not now be threatened by forcing all of the programs that achieved this difficult accreditation to change in anyway their institutional affiliation" she said.

Professor John Wall added, "We think Assembly Higher Education Chair Woman Celeste Riley said it best," as Riley was quoted in the press release saying that higher education in southern New Jersey would move forward by "respecting Rutgers history and traditions while at the same time capitalizing on the exciting expansion of Rowan and its new medical school in the City of Camden."

"We're just about there," concluded **Professor Lorrin Thomas**. "Obviously the Barer Report, which sought to end the existence of Rutgers-Camden, showed no respect for our history and traditions and even more importantly for our future educational purpose of providing a Rutgers education to southern New Jersey and developing medical and research enterprises that stimulate the regional economy. The hard work of providing us a much better vision of the future has been done. Now we all need to work with our elected officials to spell out the details of how they plan to ensure that two great universities will remain two great universities so that we can bring all the strengths of the Rutgers system into partnership with the fantastic things they're doing over at Rowan and Cooper," said Thomas.

Rutgers AAUP-AFT represents over 6,000 full-time faculty, teaching/graduate assistants, part-time lecturers, postdoctoral associates, and winter-summer instructors on all three campuses of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.
We are affiliated with both the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT)

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