Faculty Council President's Report to the RWJMS Faculty
Dean's Faculty Meeting
February 6, 2012

The Council has met twice since the last Dean's Faculty Meeting was held in December, on December 13 and January 31.

1. The Faculty Council website is accessible:
http://rwjms.umdnj.edu/faculty/index.html
Posted there are minutes of Council meetings, recommendations made to the Dean and links to sites or information that may be of interest to the Faculty. Standing agenda items for Council meetings include a review of Executive Council meetings and communications to and from the Dean.

2. At the December meeting of the Council we were pleased to have in attendance Dr. Sunita Kramer, Chair of the Research Committee, and Dr. Celine Gelinas, Associate Dean for Research, to discuss drafts of proposed research policies that were presented to the Executive Council in September. According to the RWJMS Bylaws the Research Committee has the responsibility "of advising the Dean on general policy related to research". The goal of the Council was to understand the role of the Research Committee in development of policy, and how to ensure that the Administration hears the advice of the Committee.

3. In a previous report to the Faculty, the Council noted that changes in the Bylaws would be needed regarding membership on Standing Committees of the Faculty to reflect the conversion of Camden faculty to adjunct positions and the reorganization of the basic science departments. The Council urged the Administration to communicate with Standing Committee chairs with regard to the impact of losing their Camden faculty committee members, and to solicit faculty input in preparing the necessary revisions to the Bylaws. The Dean has called for a task force to examine the Bylaws and sought input from the Faculty Council in suggesting potential faculty members to serve on the task force.

4. The Council continues to discuss the challenges faculty face in an era of diminished resources as we balance our efforts toward teaching, research, clinical care, community service and service to the School and University. To this end, the Council intends to invite members of the administration to come to future Council meetings and engage in discussion of expectations on the part of the Dean’s office with regard to faculty effort.

5. The Council remains in contact with the Rutgers New Brunswick Faculty Council and University Senate, as well as the UMDNJ Faculty Senate. The Council intends to invite Dr. Chris Molloy, Interim Provost for Biomedical and Health Sciences at Rutgers to meet with us as preparations are made for the transition to becoming faculty members at Rutgers.

6. On January 31, 2012 the Council learned of the New Jersey Senate Higher Education Committee meeting scheduled for February 6, 2012 at 10 a.m. The committee was to "hear testimony from invited speakers regarding the recommendations submitted to the Governor in the final report of the UMDNJ Advisory Committee." As the public was allowed to address comments to the committee, the Council prepared a statement that was sent by
e-mail on Friday, February 3, 2012. The letter reflected the sentiment gathered from the RWJMS faculty over the past year since the January 2011 release of the report from the Governor’s Task Force on Higher Education (the Kean Commission). The letter, which urged the State of New Jersey to act on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee to merge RWJMS with Rutgers University, is an addendum to this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy C. Walworth, Ph.D.
Professor of Pharmacology
President, RWJMS Faculty Council
February 3, 2012

The Honorable Sandra B. Cunningham
Chairwoman
New Jersey Senate Higher Education Committee

Dear Senator Cunningham,

On behalf of the Faculty Council of Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, we are pleased to have the opportunity to address comments to the Senate Higher Education Committee regarding the Final Report of the UMDNJ Advisory Committee. The RWJMS Faculty Council is elected by and from the Medical School Faculty and recognized by the Medical School Bylaws as having the responsibility to "transmit the views of the Faculty and review "policies that affect the academic mission of the school." As such, we are pleased to endorse publicly the recommendation of the Advisory Committee to merge Robert Wood Johnson Medical School with Rutgers University.

For nearly a decade, the faculty and staff of RWJMS have stood by as the fate of the Medical School and its relationship to Rutgers University has been examined, considered, and debated without action. During this period of uncertainty, opportunities for recruitment and growth have been lost, while the departure of many of our most productive colleagues to more certain futures elsewhere has hurt morale. The Faculty recognizes the complexities involved in realignment; nevertheless, we concur with the Advisory Committee statement on page 10 of the Final Report:

"At stake are...the lives and futures of the faculty, staff and students that bring these institutions to life, and, ultimately, the patients whom medical and health sciences education serves. For all these reasons, uncertainty must finally be put to rest. The time for action is now."

The existing strengths of Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Rutgers University, coupled with our close proximity in Piscataway and New Brunswick, offer abundant opportunities to collaboratively work toward enhancing the reputations and impact of both institutions in each of our mission areas; namely, 1) the education of health professionals, 2) the conduct of biomedical, clinical, and public health research, 3) the delivery of health care, and 4) the promotion of community health for the residents of the state. In an addendum to this communication, we highlight such opportunities identified by the Faculty.

The Faculty of Robert Wood Johnson Medical School looks forward to the implementation of the integration of RWJMS with Rutgers University. We urge the State of New Jersey to act on this recommendation of the Advisory Committee in a timely manner, and with appropriate regard to the financial requirements and respect for faculty tenure and terms of employment necessary to make the merger a successful one. Thank you for the opportunity to communicate our views to the Senate Higher Education Committee.

Sincerely yours,

Nancy C. Walworth, Ph.D.
Professor of Pharmacology
President
RWJMS Faculty Council

John A. Walker, M.D.
Professor of Medicine
Vice-President
RWJMS Faculty Council

Monica Roth, Ph.D.
Professor of Biochemistry
Secretary
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Addendum

Since the January 2011 release of the report from the Task Force on Higher Education (the Kean Commission), the faculty of Robert Wood Johnson Medical School has engaged in thoughtful discussion of the recommended merger of RWJMS with Rutgers University. Here, we summarize observations that have emerged from these discussions:

• A merger of RWJMS with Rutgers would eliminate administrative barriers that complicate existing collaborations and hamper the development of new ones between scientists at RWJMS and Rutgers, thereby enhancing collaborative research efforts that would benefit from the close proximity of RWJMS and the life sciences infrastructure at Rutgers.

• A merger of RWJMS with Rutgers would facilitate the development of new programs to train clinical residents and fellows in basic sciences related to their specialties, sciences that have a strong research base at Rutgers, including neurosciences, infectious disease, obesity, cancer and pharmacogenomics.

• Graduate programs in the Molecular Biosciences, Neurosciences, Biomedical Engineering, Toxicology, and Exposure Science and Assessment, are currently offered jointly by the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at RWJMS and Rutgers. A merger of RWJMS with Rutgers
  o would serve to eliminate administrative disparities faced by students who are in the same graduate program and receive degrees granted jointly by two institutions, but are assigned to one university or the other by virtue of the affiliation of their research advisor
  o could offer GSBS at RWJMS students the opportunity to gain valuable teaching experience as teaching assistants for undergraduate courses.

• Merger with Rutgers University, a nationally recognized, comprehensive educational institution would enhance medical residency recruitment efforts and offer opportunities for
  o expanded faculty development programs, research in education, and development of medical education courses (e.g. in collaboration with the Graduate School of Education)
  o MBA programs for interested residents in collaboration with the Business School
  o alignment of educational efforts with the School of Pharmacy.

• Merger of RWJMS with Rutgers would allow the opportunity to create new translational programs where clinical fellows and junior faculty train in public health and government policies in premiere programs such as the Rutgers University Health, Health Policy and Aging Research Institute.

• A successful merger of Rutgers with RWJMS would enhance career development opportunities for students and post-doctoral fellows by promoting access to career development programs at each institution, for example the RWJMS Post-doctoral Association and the Career Development office at Rutgers.
• Merger of RWJMS with Rutgers should increase opportunities to forge new partnerships with area hospitals, expand subspecialty services, and establish locally deliverable tertiary services to improve patient care to the citizens of New Jersey

• Existing interactions between the Medical School and Rutgers that promote delivery of healthcare to the community, particularly the underserved, would be enhanced by operating within the administrative structure of a single University

• Incorporation of a research-oriented Medical School into a major research-oriented state university offers the opportunity to cultivate cutting-edge research and create opportunity for new growth. A successful merger would include development of a sustainable financial plan, hiring of new faculty who can compete in an extremely competitive funding environment, identification of permanent leadership for departments and institutes, and recognition that scholarship and research efforts of Medical School faculty bring intrinsic value to the academic enterprise in addition to the possibilities they elicit for economic development.