

Statement and Resolution on Rutgers as a Safe and Welcoming Environment

Adopted by the Camden Faculty Council
December 2016

Recent events at colleges and universities across the country have raised concerns about a number of serious challenges to American higher education relating to academic freedom, free speech, safety, confidentiality and privacy, and the position of undocumented students.

At Rutgers, students in Camden, Newark, and New Brunswick held rallies during November 2016 reacting to recent events. Faculty members in various units have also voiced their opinions. President Barchi issued a letter “Supporting Our Students’ Respectful Free Expression and Privacy” to the university community on November 15, 2016 and another letter “Clarifying Rutgers’ Position [sic] on Protecting Student Rights” on December 8, 2016. Those letters are available at <http://president.rutgers.edu/public-remarks/letters/supporting-our-students-respectful-free-expression-and-privacy> and <http://president.rutgers.edu/public-remarks/letters/clarifying-rutgers-position-protecting-student-rights>. In addition, both President Barchi and three of the four Chancellors at Rutgers added their names to a “Statement in Support of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program and our Undocumented Immigrant Students” endorsed by college and university officers around the country. That Statement is available at <https://www.pomona.edu/news/2016/11/21-college-university-presidents-call-us-uphold-and-continue-daca>.

Most recently, on December 9, 2016, the University Senate overwhelmingly approved a resolution on “Rutgers – A Safe and Welcoming Environment.” That resolution is available at <http://senate.rutgers.edu/ECResolutionOnSafeAndWelcomingEnvironmentDecember2016.pdf>

In presenting the “Safe and Welcoming Environment” resolution to the University Senate, the Executive Committee of the Senate explained the urgency of Senate action by noting the following:

- Some who hold biases based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or political views have been responsible for a significant increase in the number of hate-based acts of intimidation and violence on campuses across the country.
- Threats to repeal the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy are creating insecurity and fear among a significant number of students.
- A new website has been created, called the Professor Watchlist, whose “mission...is to expose and document college professors who discriminate against conservative students and advance leftist propaganda in the classroom.” And to help to “identify, and expose more professors who have demonstrated liberal bias in the classroom.” So far about 160 faculty members, including four from Rutgers, are on this

Watchlist. Such lists inevitably have a chilling effect on academic freedom, discourse, and the exchange of ideas.

- There have been calls for Rutgers to declare itself a “sanctuary campus.” In contrast, there is a view that the term itself is loaded and open to misinterpretation, and that what matters most is the reality of what we do, not the labels we adopt. For others, labels too are important.

The Executive Committee concluded that “Rutgers, as one of the most diverse universities in the country, must take a leading role in responding to all these and similar challenges.” It also observed that

we are not necessarily all agreed, in our academic community at large, in the Rutgers University Senate, or in its Executive Committee, on the perfect balance between protection of free speech and the prevention of harm of various sorts to members of our community, or the most appropriate remedies to be adopted. The Executive Committee’s position in presenting this resolution now is that discussion of many of these matters must and will continue at the Executive Committee and, if deemed appropriate, through charges to other standing committees, but that it will be a useful contribution to the debate and of value within and outside Rutgers if at this time we adopt a resolution summarizing those important points on which we are agreed. In some cases, we have used the same words as the President’s letter; in others, we have extended them.

In the light of these developments, the Camden Faculty Council also considers it vital to put itself on record supporting the safety and security of all our students.

We therefore *resolve* that:

I. The Camden Faculty Council endorses the following principles adapted from the December 8, 2016 Resolution of the University Senate:

1. Rutgers provides a safe, diverse, inclusive, and welcoming environment for the advancement of research, education, health care, and community outreach.
2. Free expression, privacy, and safety are cherished rights that are afforded to all members of the Rutgers community.
3. Rutgers faculty members, students, alumni, and staff are free to express their viewpoints in public forums as private citizens, including viewpoints that the University itself may not share, with the full expectation that they will be heard and respected.
4. Rutgers celebrates diversity and all members of our community, no matter their viewpoint, political view, ethnicity, religious beliefs, race, gender identity, sexual

orientation, nationality, differing abilities, citizenship, or immigration status are owed our respect, our support, and our best efforts to provide safety and security.

5. Rutgers opposes all forms of intolerance, bigotry, and oppression and supports mutual respect for the dignity of all persons.
6. The rights of free expression protected by the First Amendment lie at the heart of academic debate and intellectual discourse, and the University must continue to protect those rights, and to ensure the safety and support of all of our students, whatever their viewpoint, political view, ethnicity, religious beliefs, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, differing abilities, citizenship, or immigration status.

II. The Camden Faculty Council also

1. Endorses and supports the various statements and resolutions, at Rutgers and nationally, enumerated above.
2. More specifically commends President Barchi for his defense of academic freedom, freedom of expression, student confidentiality, and the respect, support, and protection of all Rutgers students.
3. Commends Chancellor Haddon for her support of the national statement in support of DACA and for her other related efforts.
4. Joins the University Senate in calling on President Barchi to continue to lead and respond vigorously to acts of hate and bias on campuses, to confront and respond to attacks on academic freedom, and to continue to assure students who are not United States citizens that Rutgers will do everything legally possible to protect them.
5. Calls on the administration at Rutgers University-Camden to continue their similar efforts on behalf of our students.
6. Commits itself to assisting the administration of Rutgers University and Rutgers University-Camden in their continuing efforts to respond to the difficult challenges we now face.

III. The Council directs its Chair to

1. Request the Chancellor and Provost to distribute this Statement and Resolution to the faculty, students, and staff at Rutgers University-Camden.
2. Share this Statement and Resolution with the Communications Office at Rutgers University-Camden.