



THE STATE UNIVERSITY *of* NEW YORK

October 6, 2010

**University
Faculty Senate**

State University Plaza
Albany, New York
12246

1 800 547 1548
518 443 5326
fax - 518 443 5327

[www.suny.edu/
facultysenate](http://www.suny.edu/facultysenate)

Professor Paul Panayotatos
Chairperson
Rutgers University Faculty Senate
Administrative Services Building III
Cook Campus
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559

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Dear Professor Panayotatos:

On behalf of the faculty and professional staff of the State University of New York, I extend our most sincere condolences to you, your colleagues and students at Rutgers University. The recent tragedy, which culminated in Tyler Clementi's suicide, has shaken those of us in higher education, reminding us of the extraordinary efforts we must yet make to create safe and healthy environments for all our students.

These sentiments are deeply personal, as well as collegial. I spent five wonderful years "On the Banks," where I discovered an open, engaged academic community that I came to love. I found it so appealing that I, a first-generation college student, decided to live my professional life in such places, a decision I have never regretted, even at times such as these. Rutgers then was for me a very special place, and it continues to be so today.

Our shared obligation as educators to create environments that provide respect for all members of the community and spaces in which privacy can be maintained is obviously more difficult today than ever before, especially given the damage intrusive electronic media can do. These media are so readily available and our young are inventively adept in their use and misuse. Consequently, we all hope that "Project Civility," your university's "ongoing inquiry about the nature of true respect for others," is able to generate a meaningful dialogue about these issues, a dialogue in which students become active, engaged participants.

In this effort, we wish you every success.

Sincerely,

Kenneth P. O'Brien
President

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Carol Donato