

# RUTGERS UNIVERSITY SENATE

## University Structure & Governance Committee

### CHARGE

S-0107      *Referendum Guidelines Review: Review the "University Senate Guidelines Regarding Special Student Organizations" and recommend revisions where needed. Include recommendations for clarifying any ambiguities, particularly as may arise when a referendum fails on one or more campuses. Recommend revised language wherever possible. [Partial report to Senate Executive Committee June 2003. Guidelines review deadline extended to indefinite time in Academic Year 2003-04. Later extended to September 2008.]*

### SUMMARY

Since 1972 students have been provided with a procedure to request funding for special student organizations that would not be eligible for funding under traditional student fee allocation processes. Over the past thirty years the nature of the processes to request funding as well as the type of organizations requesting such funding has changed dramatically. The University Structure and Governance Committee (USGC) has spent considerable time in the past 3 years receiving feedback from student leaders, administrators, and University Senators on this issue. The result is a new universitywide process that is streamlined, coherent, and focuses on accountability.

### REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Working collaboratively with the Student Affairs Committee and other university representatives, the USGC has redeveloped the "*University Senate Guidelines Regarding Special Student Organizations.*" The following major content changes were made:

- The guidelines allow for one process for organizations to request funding.
- The guidelines are written in a format that allows for a universitywide approach, allowing involvement from the Newark and Camden Chancellors as appropriate.
- The term "educationally-valuable" programs are defined as to clarify the appropriateness of funding.
- The process for submitting a request for funding and concept plan are streamlined allowing for clear delineation among the Senate (via the Executive Committee and Student Affairs Committee), campus student affairs offices, and requesting student organizations roles.
- The new process includes a revision of information provided by the Office of the Registrar to referendum coordinators on eligible voters, limiting information as to protect student information.
- Polling processes are reflective of both paper and online polling practices.
- Provides clarity in the role of the Oversight Committee, Referendum Staff, and polling staff, including the compensation of workers.
- The financial reporting requirements provide for tighter financial controls and greater accountability.
- The guidelines include a three-year waiting period for a group to request another referendum should the initial question fail.

In addition, throughout the review process it became clear that the procedures for referendum are more appropriate placed in an administrative unit, rather than the University Senate. The Division of Student

Affairs, rather than the University Senate, has the expertise and resources to guide student leaders through these processes.

Therefore, the USGC suggests the following recommendations.

**Recommendation #1:**

The attached “Procedures Regarding Special Student Organizations” be adopted by the University Senate.

**Recommendation #2:**

The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs will become the administrative office responsible for the oversight and administration of the Procedures Regarding Special Student Organizations. This office will be responsible for making any future changes to the procedures.

**Recommendation #3:**

The Office of Academic Affairs, in conjunction with the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, will be encouraged to revise University Policy 10.3.3, *Funding of Special Student Programs*, to reflect the new procedures.

**University Structure and Governance Committee, 2008-2009**

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