



# UNION OF RUTGERS ADMINISTRATORS

LOCAL 1766, AFL-CIO  
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

## Statement on College of Nursing/School of Nursing Merger

URA is a member of the Labor Management Committee established by the Higher Education Re-Organization legislation of 2012, and Local 1766 represents about 30 staff members in the College of Nursing in Newark, New Brunswick and Camden. This process could be an opportunity to set precedents which will make the integration of legacy units and functions transparent, effective and productive. Unfortunately, the steps and procedures which could set such an example have been left out of this proposal. I'm going to read from one of many messages sent by our members to our University Senators.

*...little to no information has been provided to staff regarding this proposed merger and its potential effect on staff. This proposed "skeleton" plan does not address the impact of the merger on staff, staffing levels, seniority, workloads or changes to assignments.*

*Mergers usually result in instances of redundancy. Redundancy can lead to layoffs, or may require shifting roles of staff. Reducing uncertainty among staff should be of the utmost importance. Staff should have clear guidelines on their "new" role(s), and a **development plan** that will help them adjust to subsequent changes.*

*When organizations come together, culture clash is inevitable. Rarely do two organizations have the same culture. This may result in conflict and perceived or real losses on both sides. Staff may fear losing their jobs or losing opportunities that they formerly had. **This fear can negatively impact productivity.** It is important for organizations to recognize this and to provide opportunities for staff to get to know each other, to openly address concerns, and to **work together toward the creation of a new culture that will merge the best of both worlds.***

*...change is often difficult for employees **especially if they were not directly involved in decisions that impact their jobs.** ...Communication is critical during these times – and that communication has been non-existent. Questions have typically been answered with "I don't know"; "I can't answer that right now." "We will have answers once the merger is approved." This is not acceptable.*

This message is typical of what we are hearing. Our Labor Management Committee meetings found the same absence of answers. And while we recognize that the concerns of staff may seem trivial to you, we hope you recognize that the lack of detail in this proposal carries over into issues of costs and tuition, student recruitment and retention, accreditation and reputation.

We've all been taught different approaches to planning. The elements vary, but they include: timelines, budget and financial projections, assignments and responsibilities, objectives and procedures. Without those, you don't have a plan. You just have an idea. Today you are being asked to vote on an idea, when what we really need is a plan. We urge you to defer this decision until you have a plan, to defer this merger until July 2015, and to extend the job security provisions of the Higher Education Reorganization of 2012 until July 2015.

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