



THE INDEPENDENCE AND DEMOCRACY EXPANSION ACT - PETITION *of* 2025 (*IDEA 2025*)

A Petition authored by the Professional Governments of Rutgers - New Brunswick to pose three referendum questions to the student body to grant independence to the professional governing councils, and the respective organizations they fund from RUSA in various capacities to remain autonomous.

Authored by (Official Organizers):

Armaan Kazi, *Student Body President of Rutgers Business School - New Brunswick*

Lakshita Sharma, *Student Body President of the School of Engineering*

Renee Procaccini, *Student Body President of the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences*

Stacey Zhang, *Student Body President of the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy*

Clark Mitchell, *Student Body President of the Mason Gross School of the Arts*

Student Organization Sponsors Supporting:

Mason Gross Student Governing Association, Engineering Governing Council,
SEBS Governing Council, Pharmacy Governing Council,
Rutgers Business Governing Association

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ARTICLE I: Introduction

Whereas, the professional governing councils operated under an 80/20 fee structure to ensure autonomy to address the needs of organizations specific to the professional school student bodies, while simultaneously assisting in the funding of RUSA and its constituencies, and,

Whereas, following the failure of the RUSA Allocations Referenda Act of 2024 (ARA 2024), the RUSA Assembly has voted to change the funding structure to retain 100% of the student fee through the Transparency and Fairness for All Act (TFAA 2025), and,

Whereas, on February 13th, 2025, 26 members of RUSA voted in favor of the TFAA and 6 voted in opposition, following 5 minutes of questioning and 20 minutes of debate, and,

Whereas, TFAA would diminish the professional councils' ability to adequately fund over 100 school-specific societies and organizations, which provide essential academic, professional, and extracurricular opportunities to all students of Rutgers, regardless of school affiliation, thereby undermining the equitable funding model that has historically ensured fair support across Rutgers' various schools, and,

Whereas, the above sponsoring professional governing councils are concerned by an extreme lack of proactive communication with the professional governing councils or considerations for them and their own representative organizations as constituents of RUSA, and,

Therefore, be it hereby resolved, that through the formal processes, as dictated by RUSA Constitution Article VII Section 1, the authors and sponsors will urge a minimum 2% of undergraduate students to petition for constitutional amendments to Article I and Article VI and other ballot initiatives, and,

Therefore, be it hereby resolved, that the following questions, upon successful petition by 2% or more of the Rutgers New Brunswick Undergraduate student population, be posed to the student body in the form of a Referendum under RUSA Constitution Articles XIII and IX, and

Therefore, be it finally resolved, that if the Referendum or any part thereunto passes according to RUSA Constitution Articles VIII and IX, the RUSA Constitution be amended as worded in the referendum question(s) and RUSA amend its standing rules to conform with the Constitution Amendment(s).

ARTICLE II: Professional School Government Activity Independence Question

Section 1: Context

- RUSA is the Rutgers New Brunswick-wide student government and has laws that impact professional school councils and governing associations.
- The proposed question in Section 2 shall be the first question of the referendum and seeks to give the professional school governments more autonomy by asking the entire undergraduate student body of Rutgers New Brunswick/Piscataway.
- Seeks to reword Article I of the RUSA Constitution.

Section 2: Question Posed

- “Should the RUSA Constitution be amended so that its Article I, §5, Part A reads, “Professional

schools may have their own respective representative governing councils and / or governing associations, independently governed and independent of RUSA law, having legislative powers and an executive board. Membership shall be composed of the professional school constituency. These councils and / or governing associations may determine their preferred governance structure. The Professional School Councils and / or Governing Associations shall elect a number of Senators as determined by the University Senate.”?”

Section 3: Summary of the amendment

- The proposed change of wording to the RUSA Constitution would amend Article I, §5, Part A and replace the words “subject to” with “independent of” when referring to professional student governments and their relationship with RUSA creating a distinct but equivalent standing and authority of professional school governments.

Section 4: Implementation of Results

- If Question 1 passes, the relevant members of the RUSA administration, in constant coordination and communication with at least one member of RBGA’s Executive Board, at least one member of EGC’s Executive Board, at least one member of SGC’s Executive Board, at least one member of PGC’s Executive Board, and at least one member of MGSQA’s Executive Board, and the respective Associate Deans of the Professional Schools are expected to coordinate its implementation by any other relevant members of the Rutgers University administration immediately and before May 15th, 2025, and ensure the wording of the RUSA Constitution is also changed before May 15th, 2025.

ARTICLE III: Professional School Government Financial Independence Question

Section 1: Context

- The current rules listed within the RUSA Standing Rules states that the funding for the respective governing councils and governing associations is recognized as coming from RUSA’s authority, despite the fact that it is derived directly from the student fee paid by the respective professional school students of those respective governing councils and governing associations.
- Furthermore, these professional school students have paid their student fees during years like COVID-19, where a reserve and emergency fund for each professional governing council and governing association has been established and maintained for extreme cases as well as considerable expenditures (for example, RBGA’s \$45,000 donation to the MARK Conference in 2024).
- The proposed question in Section 2 shall be the second question of the referendum and seeks to make professional governing councils and governing associations recognize the authority of the funding being sourced from the professional school students that each body represents, not RUSA or its RUSA Allocations Board.
- The proposed question in Section 2 shall be the second question of the referendum and also seeks to maintain control of the unused funds (referred to as the Control Account) so that each council may allocate and use them for emergency purposes and extreme expenditures.
- The proposed question in Section 2 shall be the second of the referendum and seeks to give the professional school more autonomy in their funding structure to the student organizations that they are financially responsible for
- Seeks to reword Article VI of the RUSA Constitution.

Section 2: Question Posed

- “Should the RUSA Constitution be amended so that its Article VI, §1. read, “The RUSA Allocations Board shall be the primary allocating board that distributes funding each semester to organizations registered with The RUSA Assembly. It shall have auditing power over these organizations, and it shall allocate funds for special events to these organizations. Additionally, the RUSA Allocations Board shall have the authority to oversee the usage of all student activities fee money, except student fee money directly allocated to Professional School Councils and Professional School Governing Associations and money held in their respective control accounts. The Assembly Allocations Board shall allocate funds to any registered student organization at Rutgers University or any special event fulfilling special event status. The total budget prepared by the RUSA Allocations Board shall be submitted to The RUSA Assembly for approval. Once approved, the groups shall be notified within one week of their total allocation for the following semester.”?”

Section 3: Summary of the amendment

- The proposed change of wording to the Constitution would amend Article VI, §1. by adding “except money controlled by Professional School Councils and Professional School Governing Associations and money held in their respective control accounts” thereby limiting the power of RUSA to influence the monetary policy of the professional school councils / professional school governing associations or subject groups to audits not sanctioned by their own governing council or governing association.
- The purpose of these changes is to revert the original jurisdiction of professional school students’ fee money in alignment with the changes made in the Article IV amendment of this referendum.
- The purpose of these changes is to reflect the ‘distinct but equivalent’ clause and independent nature of the RUSA and professional school council relationships in the RUSA Constitution as established in the Article II amendment of this referendum.

Section 4: Implementation of Results

- If Question 2 passes, the relevant members of the RUSA administration, in constant coordination and communication with at least one member of RBGA’s Executive Board, at least one member of EGC’s Executive Board, at least one member of SGC’s Executive Board, at least one member of PGC’s Executive Board, and at least one member of MGSGA’s Executive Board, and the respective Associate Deans of the Professional Schools are expected to coordinate its implementation by any other relevant members of the Rutgers University administration immediately and before May 15th, 2025, and ensure the wording of the RUSA Constitution is also changed before May 15th, 2025.

ARTICLE IV: Professional School Government Funding Split Question

Section 1: Context

- The current rules listed within the RUSA Standing Rules allows for the funding structure to be changed by only a select few within the RUSA Assembly.
- The proposed question in Section 2 shall be the second of the referendum and seeks to give the professional school more autonomy in their funding structure to the student organizations that they are financially responsible for and aims to maintain the amount of money each student in the Professional Schools gives to each distinct but equivalent student government at Rutgers

New Brunswick/Piscataway.

- Seeks to reword Article VI of the RUSA Constitution.

Section 2: Question Posed

- “Should the RUSA Constitution be amended so that its Article VI, §4. read “Each Professional School Government shall receive 100% of the student fees collected from its respective professional school students and exempt from RUSA takebacks, but must afterwards then fund RUSA a percentage of the collected student fee money in between 20% and 40%, in a procedure determined by each respective Professional School Government, independent of each other. Student organizations may choose to be administered and receive allocations from either the RUSA Allocations Board or a Professional School Council's funding board / Professional School Governing Association’s funding board. Organizations may not change their affiliation more than once per academic year, and cannot be directly administered by both the RUSA Allocations Board and a Professional School Council’s funding board / Professional School Governing Association’s funding board.”?”

Section 3: Summary of the amendment

- The proposed change of wording to the Constitution would amend Article VI, §4. By swapping “RUSA Allocation Board” with “Professional School Government” in sections representing the direct recipient of student fee money from professional school students and subsequent allocation of funds to RUSA and exempt the professional school governments from RUSA takebacks.
- It would also amend Article VI, §4. by swapping “RUSA Allocation Board” with “Professional School Government” in sections representing the direct recipient of student fee money from professional school students and subsequent allocation of funds to RUSA.
- The purpose of these changes is to revert the original jurisdiction of professional school students’ fee money in alignment with the changes made in the Article III amendment of this referendum.
- This amendment would also amend Article VI, §4. by adding the phrase “Each Professional School Government shall receive 100% of the student fees collected from the professional students and exempt from RUSA takebacks, but must then fund RUSA a minimum of 20% of the collected student fee money or a maximum of 40% of the collected student fee money or a percentage of the collected student fee money in between 20% and 40%, in a procedure determined by each respective Professional School Government, independent of each other” and striking the phrase “recognizing the funding originated from RUSA authority.”
- These changes aim to insert the 80/20 rules directly into RUSA’s Constitution and reflect the ‘distinct but equivalent’ clause and independent nature of the RUSA and professional school council relationships as established in the Article II amendment of this referendum.

Section 4: Implementation of Results

- If Question 3 passes, the relevant members of the RUSA administration, in constant coordination and communication with at least one member of RBGA’s Executive Board, at least one member of EGC’s Executive Board, at least one member of SGC’s Executive Board, at least one member of PGC’s Executive Board, and at least one member of MGSGA’s Executive Board, and the respective Associate Deans of the Professional Schools are expected to coordinate its implementation by any other relevant members of the Rutgers University administration immediately and before May 15th, 2025, and ensure the wording of the RUSA Constitution is also changed before May 15th, 2025.

ARTICLE V: Public Relations Plan

Section 1: Rutgers Business Governing Association (RBGA)

- RBGA may release information regarding the student fee and the organization's history related to Rutgers Business School and the other student organizations at Rutgers University. RBGA may also work through means of social media and public channels (including, but not limited to, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, X, TikTok, LinkedIn, Slack, GroupMe, etcetera) to spread their own infographics and / or information on the School Fee, club funding, the RBGA Allocations Board, and any other information deemed relevant by the Executive Board during and before the referendum's launch, as well as be tasked with executing zoom information sessions, speaking in congregations with the consent of the Administrator / Executives in charge of said congregation and town hall meetings. RBGA may additionally be able to table on all campuses to spread awareness of the referendum and use its mailing list and any other mailing list that the RBGA Executive Board member(s) receives consent to use. Collaboration with other student organizations and student leaders will be allowed with their consent, and RBGA may attempt to have its Executive Board members reach out to university media organizations to request time to speak on this referendum. RBGA will also attempt to work with the RBS administration on efforts to advertise the referendum within Rutgers Business School's physical building.

Section 2: Engineering Governing Council (EGC)

- EGC will launch an extensive and focused public relations campaign to mobilize students to vote on this referendum. A multi-pronged approach will be used with a combination of social media (including but not limited to Instagram, X, LinkedIn, Tiktok, Groupme, Slack, and Facebook) to spread key messages about the referendum's significance and its direct impact on student fees, funding structure and any other relevant information that we see fit. EGC will also host independent and joint information sessions / town halls and engage with faculty to incorporate referendum discussions into classroom settings while encouraging deans and department heads to support the initiative with email endorsements, announcements, and Canvas. EGC will also leverage our extensive alumni networks, faculty and dean support, and all SOE resources to amplify the push to vote through our student organizations to amplify the campaign further. This includes and is not limited to speaking at EGC org and staff meetings and hosting cross-promotional efforts with other clubs, honors societies, and professional groups. Information tables will also be set up through multiple campuses with flyers (paper and virtual) to communicate our message.

Section 3: SEBS Governing Council (SGC)

- SGC will issue joint statements across our social media platforms, including but not limited to Instagram and our official website. SGC will engage directly with students by tabling and visiting popular SEBS locations to discuss the change and its potential impact on them. SGC will collaborate with SEBS Deans to ensure that awareness is effectively communicated to SEBS students via emails and other outreach efforts. SGC will partner with other professional governing associations and professional governing councils (EGC, MGSGA, PGC, and RBGA) to facilitate accurate information and ensure students are well informed. SGC will work closely with our affiliated clubs to safeguard against any unfair practices and to prevent any undue pressure or targeting from RUSA or its affiliated entities.

Section 4: Pharmacy Governing Council (PGC)

- PGC’s Public Relations committee will be tasked with the distribution of the material that includes but not limited to: infographics and fliers regarding the student fee and the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy’s funding breakdown for student organizations and other events, emails to PGC organizations, Instagram posts, GroupMe messages, and announcements on Canvas.

Section 5: Mason Gross Student Governing Association (MGSGA)

- MGSGA will release information regarding the student fee, Mason Gross’ place within RUSA, and how the proposed referendum affects Mason Gross students, clubs, and programs. MGSGA will use various means to connect with and inform students, including Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, its listserv, GroupMe, its Canvas page, and any other social media pages it has. When and where allowed by Mason Gross administration and faculty, MGSGA will also speak and post on the subject in permitted spaces, classes (only when permitted by the appropriate authorities), and town halls. MGSGA may also table to raise awareness of the issue, particularly on the Cook and Douglass campuses. MGSGA will also work with its clubs and programs to raise awareness and student knowledge on the referendum.

Section 6: The Coalition of Professional Governing Councils and Associations (CPGCA)

- The Coalition (referencing all members of RBGA, EGC, SGC, PGC, and MGSGA) may issue joint statements and infographics through any form of media outlined in Article IV, Section 1, Section 2, Section 3, Section 4, and Section 5 of this document. A joint statement or infographic may be issued from the official Governing Council or Governing Association on behalf of all five organizations. The Coalition may also engage in virtual or in-person town halls.

Section 7: Timeline for Petition and Referendum

- Based on the rules currently outlined in RUSA’s Constitution and Standing Rules, the dates regarding this process are listed below. The five sponsoring Professional School Councils and Professional School Governing Associations will email the Internal Affairs Chair and follow the timeline of events as prescribed in the current versions of the RUSA Constitution and RUSA Standing Rules. Upon a successful petition on getINVOLVED via an election form or a Rutgers verified Google Form set up by one of the five Professional Governing Councils or Professional Governing Associations, where a minimum of 2% of the student body of Rutgers New Brunswick / Piscataway will have agreed to a petition to launch a referendum, the referendum will be launched on getINVOLVED via an election form set up by one of the five Professional Governing Councils or Professional Governing Associations and remain open for 21 calendar days, or 504 hours (the same time allotted initially for ARA 2024).

Dates.

Creation: 02/15/2025

Ratification by the Professional School Governments

Introduced to the Rutgers Business Governing Association	02/18/2025
Approved by the Rutgers Business Governing Association	02/18/2025
Voted: 18 in favor, 2 oppose, 0 abstain	
Introduced to the Engineering Governing Council	02/17/2025
Approved by the Engineering Governing Council	02/17/2025
Voted: 34 in favor, 3 oppose, 0 abstain	

Introduced to the SEBS Governing Council	02/17/2025
Approved by the SEBS Governing Council	02/17/2025
Voted: 24 in favor, 1 oppose, 1 abstain	
Introduced to the Pharmacy Governing Council	02/18/2025
Approved by the Pharmacy Governing Council	02/18/2025
Voted: Unanimous Support (35 in favor, 0 oppose, 0 abstain)	
Introduced to the Mason Gross Student Governing Association	02/16/2025
Approved by the Mason Gross Student Governing Association	02/16/2025
Voted: Unanimous Support (16 in favor, 0 oppose, 0 abstain)	

Notification to RUSA Authorities of Intent to Petition

Notification to the RUSA Internal Affairs Chair	02/19/2025 9:30 AM EST
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RUSA Internal Procedure per RUSA Standing Rules Title IX, Chapter 902

Notification by RUSA Internal Affairs Chair to RUSA Assembly	XX/XX/2025
RUSA Standing Rules, Title IX, Chapter 902, Section 5:	
<i>“If all requirements are met, the Internal Affairs Chair must notify RUSA writ-large within twenty-four (24) hours regarding the status of the petition.”</i>	

Petition Period

Petition Signature Collection Begins	XX/XX/2025
Petition Signature Collection Closes	XX/XX/2025

Submission of a Successful Petition

Notification to the RUSA Internal Affairs Chair	XX/XX/2025
Notification to the RUSA President	XX/XX/2025
Notification to the RUSA Parliamentarian	XX/XX/2025

RUSA Internal Procedure per RUSA Standing Rules Title IX, Chapter 902

Notification by RUSA Internal Affairs Chair to RUSA Judicial Council	XX/XX/2025
RUSA Standing Rules, Title IX, Chapter 902, Section 9:	
<i>“Once the Internal Affairs Chair has determined that the petition has enough students, they must notify the Judicial Council and the Assembly within four(4) days.”</i>	
Notification by RUSA Internal Affairs Chair to RUSA Assembly	XX/XX/2025
RUSA Standing Rules, Title IX, Chapter 902, Section 9:	
<i>“Once the Internal Affairs Chair has determined that the petition has enough students, they must notify the Judicial Council and the Assembly within four(4) days.”</i>	
RUSA Internal Affairs Committee prepares timeline for referendum	XX/XX/2025
RUSA Forms a Referendum Commission	XX/XX/2025

Referendum Timeline

Public Petition is Presented to and Acknowledged by RUSA Assembly	XX/XX/2025
Referendum Begins	XX/XX/2025
Referendum Ends	XX/XX/2025

Referendum shall be live and open for 21 days or 504 hours
Results Announced

XX/XX/2025