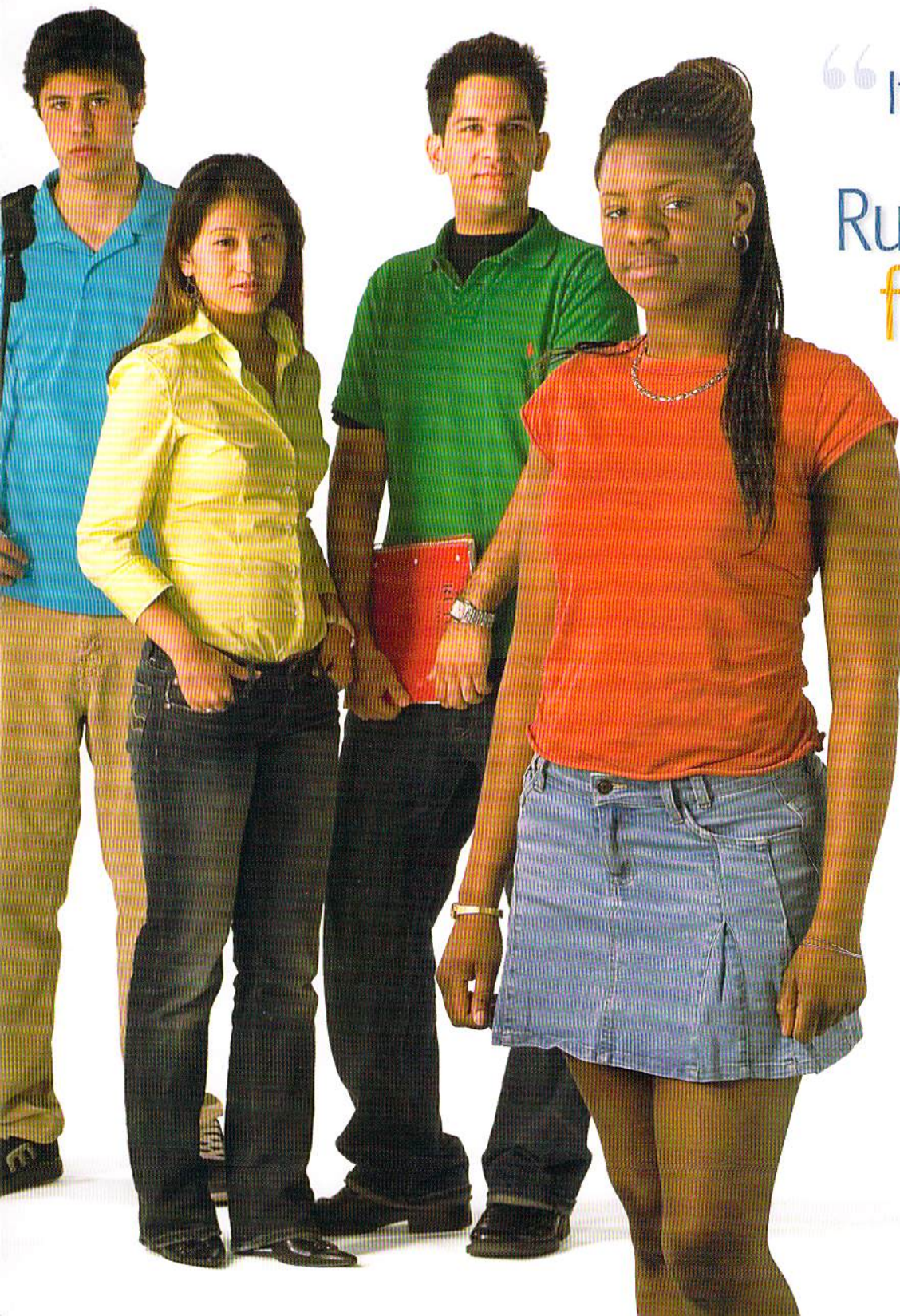


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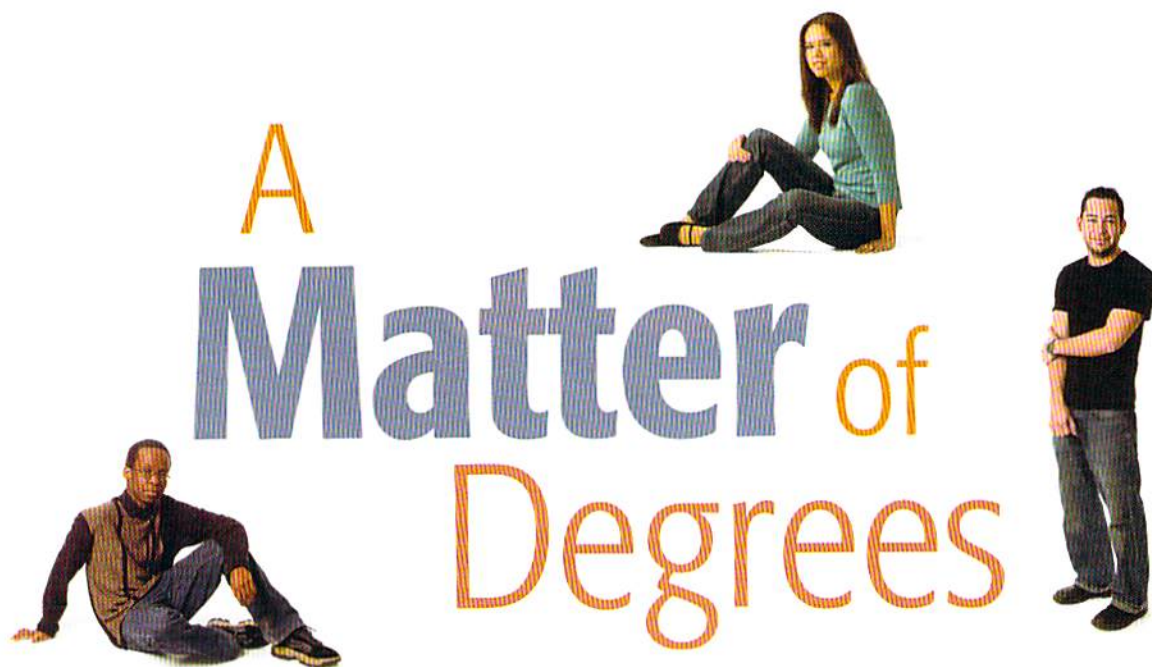
“It is time
to move
Rutgers
forward”

UNDERGRADS
WILL SOON
FIND A
UNIVERSITY
REINVENTED
WITH THEM
IN MIND

Fear in Cambodia

Joan Snyder
Colors Your World

Rutgers & the Plaza



A Matter of Degrees

A far-reaching plan will reinvent undergraduate education on the New Brunswick/Piscataway campus

By Bill Glovin

In the elegant boardroom at Winants Hall in March, President Richard L. McCormick wears a grin as wide as the Raritan as he shakes hands, accepts congratulations, and gives out hugs. After two years of careful planning and eight months of intense discussion, the Rutgers Board of Governors (BOG) has just overwhelmingly approved his 22-page plan to improve undergraduate education on the university's largest campus.

The board's resolution to accept the president's sweeping recommendations represents a watershed moment in university history. At the start of the BOG's three-and-a-half-hour public session, McCormick tells the group, "Working together, we will complete this historic undertaking and transform our campus. We will empower Rutgers undergraduates to take advantage of the distinctive educational experiences that characterize a great research university."

Over the next several months, implementation committees will advance the goals set forth by the president's plan so that by the fall of 2007, students will find a significantly simplified institution. The liberal arts colleges—Douglass, Livingston, Rutgers, and University—will merge into a single School of Arts and Sciences. Faculty members will be responsible for setting criteria for admissions, general education and advising, degree certification, and the honors program. Cook College will operate as the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, while the

Douglass Residential College will have its own women-centered academic and cocurricular programs and single-sex housing.

The transformation process began in April 2004 when McCormick and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Philip Furmanski created the Task Force on Undergraduate Education and named Barry V. Qualls, longtime humanities dean in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, as its chair. The task force, made up of deans, administrators, senior and new faculty members, staff, and students, then extensively researched and wrote a 178-page report examining all elements of undergraduate education, from student experience to university structure.

After the report's release in July 2005, the university community began discussing it in depth at nearly 40 hearings, forums, and meetings organized by university groups, with McCormick, Furmanski, and BOG members in attendance at many of the sessions. The New Brunswick Faculty Council and the Rutgers University Senate also released recommendations and revisions to the report.

At a March press conference announcing his plan, McCormick, with more than a dozen members of the task force standing behind him, said, "For the sake of our undergraduates, for the good of our university, and for the benefit of our great state of New Jersey, Rutgers needs to change. We cannot and should not hold Rutgers back. It is time to move Rutgers forward."

“This is about improving education for all undergraduates in every conceivable way.”

—Barry Qualls, dean of humanities in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences—New Brunswick/Piscataway

Changes at a **Glance**

RUTGERS' LARGEST CAMPUS WILL BE TRANSFORMED IN AT LEAST A DOZEN WAYS

Sweeping changes are already under way so that a new structure will be in place for the class that enters Rutgers—New Brunswick/Piscataway in the fall of 2007. The following will improve virtually every aspect of undergraduate learning for all students:

- The establishment of a single School of Arts and Sciences, which will bring together faculty and students and grant degrees.
- A first-year seminar program—open to all first-year students as a 1-credit course—that connects students to academic and research opportunities.
- A single admissions standard.
- The establishment of the Douglass Residential College on the Douglass campus, which will provide special academic and cocurricular programs for all women students.
- A single set of graduation requirements.
- Accelerated plans to expand the student center on the Livingston campus, starting in 2007.
- A single core curriculum, developed by faculty.
- Opportunities for students to complete their undergraduate careers with a “capstone experience”—such as a senior thesis, a research project, or a public-service learning experience.
- Increased participation by faculty in undergraduate education.
- Equal access to academic programs and services for undergraduates.
- A campuswide undergraduate honors program.

■ Improved student services that will maximize quality and convenience on Busch, College Avenue, Cook, Douglass, and Livingston campuses.



“I hope that over time Douglass alums will feel as to continue to thrive and grow.”

Middle Ground

STRIKING A BALANCE AT A UNIVERSITY WHERE MORE THAN HALF THE STUDENTS ARE WOMEN

The task force proposal to refer to Douglass College as a residential campus was by far the most debated issue in the transformation process. But in Douglass Dean Carmen Ambar's view, President Richard L. McCormick heard everyone's opinions and made recommendations "that maintained those things critical to us. Our expectation is that we will continue to have cocurricular programming and all the pieces that have made Douglass so special," she says.

Based on the president's recommendations, the Board of Governors approved the creation of the Douglass Residential College, which will provide its own women-centered and cocurricular programs and single-sex housing on the Douglass campus. The college will no longer grant its own degrees nor maintain its own admissions standards; the faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences will approve curricula and all courses will continue to be open to men.

"Some people perceived Douglass to be insular; that all we cared about was our view," says Ambar, who will remain as dean. "That was just not accurate. This was always about Rutgers University, both in terms of where we fit in and how we might most benefit the state of New Jersey."

Related efforts will also be launched to improve women's education throughout the university. The president created the position of an associate vice president responsible for advancing women in the fields of science, mathematics, and engineering. Joan Bennett, a distinguished microbiologist from Tulane University and member of the National Academy of Sciences, has accepted the post.

The university's Academic Excellence Fund will establish an Institute for Women and Art, which will bring together faculty, curators, researchers, and artists to promote dialogue and interdisciplinary projects in the arts. The institute will be led by Professor Emerita Judith Brodsky of the Department of Visual Arts and Ferris Olin, head of the Margery Somers Foster Center of the University Libraries.

New & Improved

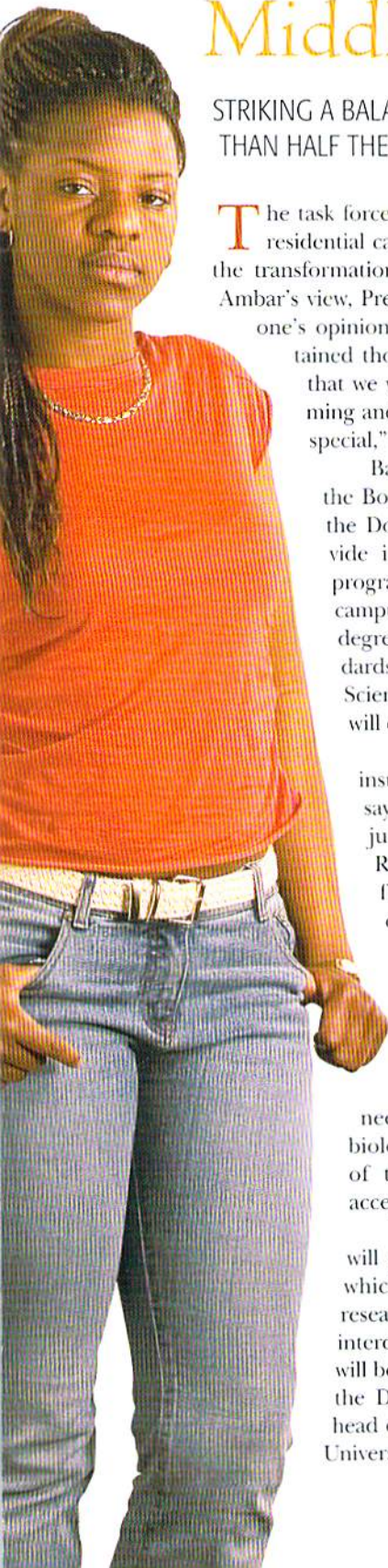
Efforts to enhance undergraduate education on the Newark and Camden campuses are also under way. Here, a sampling of initiatives:

Newark

- In May, a task force will unveil plans for reinventing undergraduate education.
- University Square, the new 600-bed undergraduate residence hall, opens this fall.
- An expanded Honors College.
- A new interdisciplinary major in public service.
- An improved writing and mathematics proficiency program.

Camden

- First-year seminars taught by senior faculty.
- Grants targeted to encourage undergraduate research.
- An enlarged dual-degree program that allows students to complete both baccalaureate and master's degrees within five years.
- Grants for first-year students who maintain a 3.5 GPA or higher to study abroad.



I fear only what we will lose at Rutgers

—President Richard L. McCormick

What's Next

- A new interim vice president for undergraduate education will oversee the general honors program, undergraduate research, campus living-learning communities, and academic support services.
- General academic advising, the academic components of the honors program, and graduation certification—all responsibilities of the current colleges—will shift to a new executive dean for the School of Arts and Sciences.
- A new dean's office and a student-advising center will be created on the Busch campus.
- Lea Stewart, a professor of communications, will chair a separate committee charged with developing recommendations for the best structures and programs to serve nontraditional students, including those at University College.
- Current students and those entering in the 2006–2007 academic year will continue to follow the curricular requirements of the undergraduate system now in place and graduate with degrees from the current liberal arts colleges.
- A core curriculum for the School of Arts and Sciences will be in place in time for the 2009–2011 catalog.
- A task force to examine the structure of the Rutgers Alumni Federation will be formed next fall.

Going Forward

THREE COLLEAGUES ARE CHARGED WITH SETTING THE WHEELS IN MOTION

Barry Qualls and Michael Beals have little time to spare. Qualls, who will become the interim vice president for undergraduate education in June, and Beals, charged with directing the implementation effort, need to make sure that most of the plan is in place before the undergraduate class arrives on the campus in fall 2007.



Barry Qualls

Qualls, the soft-spoken chair of the Task Force on Undergraduate Education and dean of humanities in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), will have primary responsibility for undergraduate academic matters that cut across the schools. "There are so many amazing faculty and staff to call on to undertake the transformation process," says Qualls. "I'm hopeful that the campuswide work we all did on the task force report will continue as we move toward implementation."



Michael Beals

The energetic Beals, dean of educational initiatives for FAS, will chair an implementation steering committee made up of 30 members. Having served as cochair of the task force's structure working group—the body responsible for recommending a single School of Arts and Sciences—he will now oversee the work of 15 subcommittees. Cheryl Wall, professor of English, will be vice chair of the steering committee.



Cheryl Wall

Beals predicts that standardizing practices in academic and student services across campuses will be easier than retooling admissions and curriculum policies. He is confident it can all be accomplished. Says Beals, "I know people across the university who will roll up their sleeves and get the job done." □

Bill Glovin is senior editor of RUTGERS MAGAZINE. Special thanks to the New Brunswick/Piscataway undergraduate students who posed for the cover and this article.





The Plaza Hotel (1907) was so beloved by resident E. Scott Fitzgerald that Ernest Hemingway urged him to leave his liver to Princeton and his heart to this National Historic Landmark. Other devoted denizens: the Vanderbilts, the Beatles, and the fictitious Eloise of children's literature.

I do, that this is an opportunity for Douglass

—Douglass College Dean Carmen Ambar

An Open Mind

PRESIDENT RICHARD L. MCCORMICK LISTENED AND LEARNED

Q Were the problems with undergraduate education readily apparent when you were a young faculty member at Rutgers?

A I received tenure the same day the last reorganization took place: July 1, 1981. It's a total coincidence, but it places me here at that point in time. It was wonderful to suddenly have all my history colleagues together. The reward came eight years later with Rutgers being admitted to the Association of American Universities. There's a direct connection: previously dispersed departments like history, English, and political science now had a critical mass, and people from across the country saw, for the first time, that Rutgers had a great deal of academic distinction.

But at the same time, the faculty lacked the authority to make critical decisions on graduation requirements, curriculum, honors programs, academic discipline, and admissions standards. If a Livingston College student came for advice and asked what courses she needed to fulfill her core graduation requirements, I—like 99 percent of my colleagues—couldn't help. It was also obvious in many other ways that students were subject to conflicting, unfair, and unequal treatment.

Q What did you learn from sitting in the audience at the Transforming Undergraduate Education campus forums held last year?



A I learned a lot, including some things that caused me to depart somewhat from the task force recommendations. Students place a lot of emphasis on their local campuses. For example, I heard the Cook student who said he didn't want his student center changed and the Livingston student who wanted assurances that she would be able to get high-quality advising on her campus.

It also became quite clear that the quality of the campuses differs. So we are going to a system where opportunities are available equally, no matter which campus students live on or commute to. We need to make sure that the campuses are equally attractive, even if they can't be identical.

I learned about the continuing need to focus on educational opportunities for women. When the New Jersey College for Women was established in 1918, there were no other higher education opportunities for women. And since that time, the college has inspired enormous loyalty. I heard that message loud and clear and took to the board a recommendation that led to the creation of the Douglass Residential College on the Douglass campus.

Q Will the new structure help attract better students and keep the campus diverse?

A Yes. It will now be clear to high school students, parents, and guidance counselors what Rutgers is. Students won't be discouraged from applying due to the confusion over the multiplicity of colleges. Second, students are going to receive a better academic experience, from first-year seminars to increased access to research to the fundamental openness of the programs.

Our diversity will be retained through a serious outreach strategy by the Office of University Undergraduate Admissions to minority communities and all high schools. We need to make sure that need-based financial aid grows. These are all doable things. We are committed to improving our student body and, at the same time, preserving the hard-won diversity that already exists.

Q Was there anything that surprised you?

A I knew there would be concern about Douglass, but not as much as there was. While my final proposal owes a lot to the New Brunswick Faculty Council and the Rutgers University Senate, it also owes a lot to Douglass alumnae, who are very passionate about the college.

Also, Martha Cotter [chair of the Senate and professor of chemistry] had assured me in the early fall that the University Senate would finish its work the afternoon of Friday, February 24, 2006—and they did. It is astonishing how they stepped up to the challenge of dealing comprehensively with undergraduate education in record time.

“ I do not fear having our feet held to the fire.
if we do not seize the moment.”

First of Its Kind

PHILIP FURMANSKI SAYS CHANGES
WILL BREAK NEW GROUND



After serving as a major adviser to President Richard L. McCormick on formulating the plan for undergraduate education, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Philip Furmanski is working closely with implementation director Michael Beals on putting the plan into action. He says that he is hopeful that ongoing fund-raising efforts will help cover the cost of implementation.

Furmanski believes the plan helps set “a new paradigm in American higher education.” He says all the pieces—first-year seminars, initiatives to encourage undergraduate research, capstone courses—exist at other institutions, but no other public university has ever attempted to so closely align undergraduates to the core missions of teaching, research, and service on this scale.

He is excited about the prospect of increased emphasis on undergraduate research. For him, the emphasis is not about creating researchers, but about students learning from the very people who make knowledge. Along the way, students will develop skills such as analytical thinking, forming questions and arguments, and breaking a problem into manageable parts. Says Furmanski, “That is something that will benefit all students, no matter what career they decide to pursue.”

Gauging Reaction

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES SEE THE POSITIVES IN THE PLAN

Students played an important role on task force committees. At campus forums, many expressed concerns, made suggestions, or just listened. We asked four student leaders to share their reactions and provide a sense of how the plan was received by fellow classmates:

Ed Ezgilioglu CC'06, chair, Cook College Council: “Students were concerned we would lose control over the things that make Cook Cook, such as our great student life program and campus center. But based on the resolution adopted by the Board of Governors, I’m confident that whatever is good is going to stay, and whatever is bad is going to go away.”

Brigid Farrell DC'06, student representative to the Board of Governors: “The BOG ensured that the mission and leadership experience that Douglass College provides will continue. But the resolution was vague in a lot of areas, so [much]

depends on how the recommendations are implemented.”

James Boyd LC'07, president, Livingston College Governing Association: “Not only did the task force outline that Livingston needed some help, but President McCormick explicitly mentioned us over and over again in regard to accelerating the groundbreaking for our student center, which, as it stands, has practically no space for students to congregate. We also have the worst dining hall and travel more than other students to other campuses because we don’t have quality lecture halls. These issues need to be addressed in implementation.”

Jillian Curtis RC'07, executive member, University Senate, and officer, Rutgers College Governing Association: “The president’s recommendations showed very appropriate and excellent compromises. They were exactly what they needed to be and we are happy that the board passed them as is.”

Learn More

For more on the Transforming Undergraduate Education plan and process, including the original task force report and President Richard L. McCormick’s final recommendations, visit ur.rutgers.edu/transform_ru.