



SEPTEMBER 2008

FRANK TALK



I greet you in Rutgers spirit!

Greetings to the members, spouses, family and friends of the Rutgers Alumni Association, the fourth oldest alumni association in America! We have now completed nearly three months of our 2008-09 year and have made significant progress in our transition. Now the real action begins! With September nearly complete, our undergraduate and graduate students have returned to campus, our football team is back in action under the stewardship of our extraordinary head coach, Greg Schiano, and the Rutgers Alumni Association gets into the thick of its year.

As our year began back in July, we faced significant challenges. Most notably was finding a place for us to operate. Prompted by the university's implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on Alumni Relations, on July 1 the Alumni Relations Department fully reorganized its structure to support the newly launched, and very similarly named, Rutgers University Alumni Association (RUAA). As a result, the existing nineteen alumni associations (yes there were that many at Rutgers!) lost their staff support and those headquartered in Winants Hall had to find new operating space.

That didn't mean the nineteen associations and additional thirty six regional clubs went away, they just became volunteer driven and supported. In fact, all of the existing associations and regional clubs are automatically chartered and continue to exist as affinity organizations of the RUAA, including ours as the very largest.

My first order of business as president was to appoint a transition team, led by Past President Garry Katz ENG '68 to ensure our operations continued unimpeded. I am pleased to say this has been a success. The transition team secured new office space for us to operate, established a new mailing address at a New Brunswick postal facility, set up new telephone and computer systems, and retained our part time assistant Athena Angelus, upgrading her to the position of Rutgers Alumni Association Office Manager. Our new office space is located just a few miles off campus in nearby Piscataway and includes conference facilities where we can host committee meetings of up to ten participants. Committees which will have more than ten, or on which undergraduates serve, will continue to be held at campus facilities designated by the committee's appointed officer liaison.

Keri DeMayo RC '94 RBS '06, a constituent and former Executive Director of the Rutgers Alumni Association, left her paid post at the university in June to begin a new career in corporate finance. The university's loss of Keri is a boon for the Rutgers Alumni Association as she immediately stepped up to volunteer. I appointed Keri to the role of Special Assistant to the President giving her a non-voting seat on my executive committee where she will assist me in leading the Rutgers Alumni Association uninterrupted. Our President-Elect, Cara Bufanio MGSA '85 is closely involved in the process to ensure a seamless transition to her come next July 1.

As if those changes weren't enough to make your head spin, the Rutgers University Alumni Federation (RUAF) elected to terminate to make way for the new RUAA. The RUAF or Federation as it has been commonly known is an amalgamation of the nineteen associations with apportioned representatives from each one.

The difficulty in the Federation's existence was the fact that it had no direct membership of rank and file alumni. In the past, alumni who joined their alumni association as dues-paying members were scattered among the nineteen associations, separated and largely disconnected.

Last May, the Federation voted to donate two thirds of the residual revenues beyond July 1, 2008 to the university for the express purpose of providing seed money to build an Alumni Center on each of Rutgers campuses in Camden, Newark, and New Brunswick/Piscataway. That donation will be matched through a pledge from President McCormick and the remaining funds will be raised through private donations over the course of the next several years.

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A Federation Termination Committee was formed effective July 1 on which the presidents of each of the nineteen associations serve as members with one non-weighted vote each. Given my obligations as Rutgers Alumni Association president and RUAA inaugural board member, I have appointed John Hugelmeyer RC '72, our immediate past-president, to serve on the Federation Termination Committee on my behalf. John will work with the other members of the Termination Committee to ensure the administering of Federation funds are appropriately disbursed as lingering contracts expire.

In place of the Federation, the new RUAA has united members from Rutgers across the globe, regardless of which school or campus they attended and eliminated dues as a barrier for membership and participation. It doesn't matter if you attended as an undergraduate or a graduate or whether you are a graduate from Camden, Newark, or New Brunswick. Unlike the Federation, RUAA members come directly from the enormous pool of Rutgers alumni around the world. When volunteers serve the RUAA, as I do as a member of the inaugural board, they do not represent a certain campus, school, or segment of alumni, they serve all Rutgers alumni.

Of course the scope of the RUAA is very broad and does not account for geographies, special interests, affinities, or specific campuses, which is why their charter allows for and encourages the participation of affinity organizations to do exactly that. This includes the Rutgers Alumni Association as the largest.

While the Rutgers Alumni Association encourages and endorses any and all alumni with an affinity for Rutgers to volunteer with us or the larger RUAA, we are a New Brunswick/Piscataway centric organization. The representative schools, colleges, and special interests we've historically united all hail from New Brunswick/Piscataway, the largest campus, and include alumni from both undergraduate and graduate ranks. While we alone do not represent all of the alumni from New Brunswick/Piscataway, we represent most of them and will continue to collaborate with the other associations to ensure the specific needs of all New Brunswick/Piscataway alumni are met.

Lastly, I was deeply saddened by the loss of Walter H. Seward, RC '17, an icon at Rutgers who passed away on September 14, less than a month away from his 112th birthday. While the entire Rutgers community was saddened by the loss of Walter, his loss is particularly felt by the active and loyal members and supporters of the Rutgers Alumni Association. Walter loved his alumni association and we loved him. Walter will be sorely missed but we were all enriched in having known him. My heartfelt condolences go out to the Seward family.

This month's update was extensive, but I thought it necessary that our members fully understand that despite the transitions and inevitable confusion that accompanies it, the Rutgers Alumni Association is still here. We are functioning and operational, and as strong as ever, meeting the volunteer needs of New Brunswick/Piscataway alumni, keeping them connected with each other, the university, and supporting the mission, vision, and interests of the university. With these recent changes comes tremendous opportunity for the 4th oldest alumni association in America to thrive. It is all thanks to and only possible through the tremendous effort of our volunteers.

In Rutgers Spirit,

Frank Hundley RC '86
President, Rutgers Alumni Association