

Resolution before the Graduate School, New Brunswick

October 9, 2013

Whereas the administration of Rutgers University signed an agreement with Pearson, Inc. (then acting as “eCollege.com”) on September 17, 2012, allowing that corporation to manage online degree programs of the University in exchange for 50% of initial gross revenues from tuition;

Whereas the administration took this step without proper consultation of the faculty, many of whom have taught successful online courses in other formats and under other financial arrangements;

Whereas the agreement with Pearson — along with ancillary contracts drafted by Rutgers — raises serious questions regarding the rights of faculty to their intellectual property, permitting the outsourcing of a course without the consent of the faculty member who created it;

Whereas the same outsourcing threatens to generate a cadre of poorly paid and poorly supported faculty at our campuses and beyond;

Whereas the agreement with Pearson may eventually facilitate the migration of students from classroom-based courses to online courses to the detriment of on-campus learning and culture;

Whereas the Pearson contract censors – without ever defining - “obscene, threatening, indecent, libelous, slanderous, [or] defamatory” content or “material that is harmful to children” (p. 7), a clear infringement upon academic freedom, upon free speech, and upon the diversity of instruction offered to adults;

BE IT RESOLVED

1. That the faculty of the Graduate School, New Brunswick, rejects all current and future proposals for graduate degree programs managed under the Pearson agreement and ancillary contracts of 2012; and that the same faculty also rejects any transfer of existing online graduate programs to Pearson’s management under that agreement.
2. That the University decline to renew the agreement with Pearson, Inc. when it expires on December 31, 2019.
3. That the faculty of Rutgers University, through our representative bodies, holds final authority over contracts signed with outside firms when those contracts alter the curricula, conditions for instruction and/or the educational mission of the University.
4. That the Rutgers AAUP-AFT, our faculty union, holds the right to bargain collectively over the impact of contracts with outside firms when those contracts affect the terms and conditions of employment for current and future employees of the University represented by Rutgers AAUP-AFT.