

Rutgers-Camden Deserves Equity and Respect



What We R Fighting For

Cancel the debt

Fix the funding

Respect Camden's success

Diversify the faculty
and the academic focus

Equal pay for equal work



Rutgers-Camden Deserves Equity and Respect

Rutgers-Camden is nationally recognized for its excellence in serving lower-income students. Along with Newark, it has the highest percentages of Black and Brown students in the Rutgers system. What could be more important to a public university for *all* the people of New Jersey than a thriving Camden campus?

Yet Rutgers-Camden has suffered from years of underfunding and neglect because of top-down central administration policies that favor New Brunswick and starve the campus of the resources it needs. The effects of these policies are seen and felt every day in Camden: meager course offerings, deteriorating dorms and classrooms, inadequate equipment and supplies.

Camden deserves better than this. President Holloway has promised that diversity and inclusion will be a hallmark of his presidency. Rutgers-Camden—located in a majority BIPOC city and serving many students who would have been shut out of higher ed in the past—should be central to that vision. We urge him and his administration to take the following steps to ensure a stronger, more secure future for Rutgers-Camden students, staff, and faculty:

Cancel the Debt

Every year, the Camden campus runs an operating surplus. According to [the university budget summary for 2021–22](#), Camden is expected to take in \$10.9 million more than it spends this year. But after tens of millions of dollars are transferred to the central administration, Camden is saddled with a \$30 million-plus deficit, year after year.

This deficit—caused by the transfer of revenue out of Camden to the central administration—is then used to justify budget cuts and spending restrictions. Until the start of this school year, any non-grant-related spending at Camden greater than \$500 had to be personally approved by the New Brunswick-based Chief Financial Officer of the university.

At an all-faculty meeting last year, Rutgers-Camden’s new Chancellor, Antonio Tillis, acknowledged that Camden’s supposed deficit is artificial, the product of the university’s flawed budgeting system. “The solution seems simple,” he said, telling faculty that he had discussed the matter with President Holloway. “If this perceived philosophical deficit is \$30 million, and we know that’s what it takes to run Rutgers-Camden, then just do a line-item increase to our budget.”

We agree. The central administration should replace the funds they transfer out of Camden with a budget increase that keeps it out of the red. Will President Holloway and Chancellor Tillis commit to this?

Fix the Funding

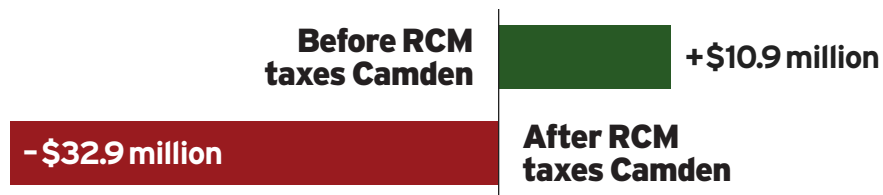
Camden’s manufactured deficit highlights a problem that plagues all of Rutgers: the [Responsibility Center Management budget system](#), or RCM.

Under RCM, each department and program of the university is required to pay for its expenses out of the revenue it generates from tuition, grants, and other sources. But the central administration siphons off hundreds of millions of dollars first, to spend however it wishes, with no accountability or transparency.

Some of this “cost-pool transfer” goes to centralized expenses, like libraries, but most of the money—around [one out of every seven dollars that comes into Rutgers](#)—stays in the pockets of the central administration. Meanwhile, academic units have to

How RCM Turns a Surplus into a Deficit

All Rutgers campuses are expected to have more revenues than expenses in 2021–22. But the surpluses are greatly reduced—and in Camden’s case, turned into a deficit—by the RCM transfer to the central administration.



Source: [Fiscal Year 2022 Budget](#), University Budget Office

scramble to balance their budgets after the administration takes its cut off the top.

The burdens that RCM places on all academic units fall disproportionately on the Camden and Newark campuses—chiefly because RCM makes no allowance for the important mission of these campuses to make college accessible to lower-income and BIPOC students.

If the Rutgers budget system served the university’s critical priorities, including ensuring access for all students in New Jersey, regardless of income, funds could be transferred to Camden, eliminating the need for cuts and austerity. [The university’s five-year review of RCM](#), ordered by President Holloway when he took office, made just such a recommendation, among many other proposals for significant changes in RCM. Will these recommendations gather dust? Or will President Holloway’s administration implement them?

Respect Camden’s Success

In January, [the Department of Education named Rutgers-Camden](#) a “Minority Serving Institution,” a designation given to institutions where a majority of undergraduates are nonwhite. It was cited in Fall 2021 by *U.S. News and World Report* and *Washington Monthly* for its [success in giving non-wealthy students access](#) to an education at a renowned research institution.

Camden has nearly [three times the percentage of African American students](#) as Rutgers-New Brunswick. It is nationally recognized for its excellence in serving first-generation and low-income students. Its Bridging the Gap program, which provides free or discounted tuition to students from households making less than \$100,000 annually, [increased undergraduate enrollment by 57 percent](#) in just the first semester after it was implemented in 2016.

Camden is central to Rutgers’ mission of providing a world-class education to all the students of New Jersey. But the campus has been neglected and starved of resources for years. That has to end. If Rutgers is going to stand for equity, inclusion, and racial justice, the administration has to stop punishing Camden for its commitment to providing access to higher education and start supporting it.

Diversify the Faculty and the Academic Focus

Rutgers-Camden has been designated a Minority Serving Institution, yet the majority of its faculty, especially among tenure track and tenured professors, are white. This tells students of color that they are good enough to be in the classroom at Rutgers, but people who look like them aren’t qualified to teach them.

The central administration’s initiative for diversity hiring isn’t sufficient for overcoming this underrepresentation. In fact, because of the budget constraints and hiring restrictions imposed

on Camden, funds for diversity hiring have too often been used to fill urgent teaching needs, without regard to a long-term goal of building a diverse cohort of faculty.

A commitment to making the faculty at Camden more reflective of the demographics of their students should be matched by a diversification of the academic focus. If diversity hiring is confined to priority programs defined by the administration, such as cybersecurity and the professional schools, Rutgers-Camden won't be responding to the interests of its students of color. Why does the Rutgers campus with the highest percentage of African American students starve its Africana Studies program of resources? Why is there no full-time Africanist? Why is there no language instruction offered around indigenous African languages?

We need a consistent, long-term commitment on the part of both the administration and faculty to diversify the faculty and diversify the academic focus.

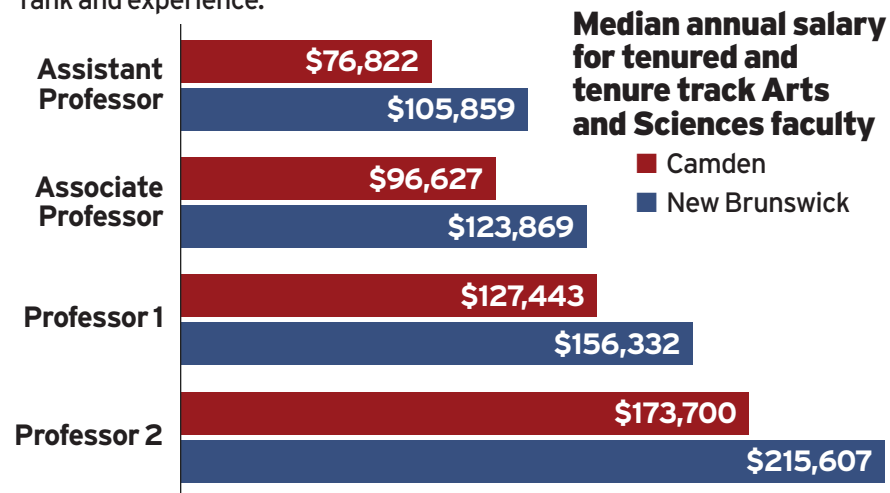
Equal Pay for Equal Work

One of the clearest examples of the lack of respect for Rutgers-Camden is the huge salary gap for its faculty. The median salary for tenure track and tenured Arts and Sciences faculty in Camden lags behind the median in New Brunswick across all ranks, with the gap as large as 37.8 percent for Assistant Professors, according to a union analysis of November 2021 salaries.

Last year, the initial decisions in a university-wide program designed to address these inequities [once again left Camden behind](#). On average, equity salary adjustments for Camden faculty were less than half of what their colleagues in New Brunswick received, and about one in five Camden equity applicants received nothing at all. Those disparities were partially corrected after Camden faculty, grad workers, staff, and students [raised their voices in protest last fall](#). But there is still a long way to go before we have equal pay for equal work.

The Equity Gap at Camden

Salaries for Rutgers-Camden faculty, whether they are tenured, tenure track, or non-tenure track, trail their New Brunswick colleagues of similar rank and experience.



Source: Analysis of November 2021 salaries

The faculty salary gap at Camden is an insult to the values of equity and inclusion that Rutgers should stand for. Camden professors are judged by the same standards as their colleagues on other campuses. They should enjoy the same compensation.



Repairing the damage done by the long-standing mistreatment of Rutgers-Camden is a test of the university's priorities and values. Camden is critical to Rutgers' mission of serving all the people of New Jersey. We urge President Holloway to turn a new page and give Camden the funding and resources it deserves. If Rutgers is to be the "beloved community" he aspires to, nothing less than equity and respect for Camden will do.