



RUSA Executive Board Resolution S20 - 02

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Sponsors: Executive Committee

Co-Sponsor: Douglass Governing Council

Resolution to Acknowledge COVID-19 REFUNDS, Grading, and University Workers

Whereas, in times of a crisis, it is of importance for the advocates of the student body to be aware of events transpiring and address them in an efficient manner;

Whereas, COVID-19 (otherwise known as the coronavirus), is shutting down all non-essential activities in the State of New Jersey¹ which includes but is not limited to: the cancelation of all Rutgers University's in-person education and student activities, has evidently presented itself as such a present and pressing crisis, and would, therefore, require a response from the Assembly in scale;

Whereas, the Rutgers University Student Assembly (RUSA) must be cognizant of the various hardships the student body has endured and may endure in the immediate future;

Whereas, this Assembly is tasked with advocating for student needs and creating tangible change on campus², and this resolution seeks to address the change as such;

¹ [Governor Murphy Response](#)

² <https://rusa.rutgers.edu/>

Therefore, the Executive Board, acting on behalf of the Assembly in accordance with the emergency provisions of the Standing Rules, passes the Resolution to Acknowledge COVID-19 REFUNDS, Grading, and University Workers which shall have the following sections:

Section A, on the topic of refunds and student fees;

Section B, on the topic of amending the grading system for the spring semester of 2020;

Section C, on the topic of advocating for student and University workers impacted by the economic downturn;

SECTION A: REFUNDS AND STUDENT FEES

Whereas, due to the circumstances that COVID-19 presents, students have been ordered to be evacuated and have been forcibly removed from all Rutgers' campus sites;

Whereas, as of March 26th, 2020, the University has officially agreed, and notified the student body via email, to reimburse the following expenses: housing, dining, and parking; these funds will be distributed on a prorated basis to compensate for their value starting on March 23rd to May 16th;

Therefore be it hereby resolved that the Executive Board endorses the following statements:

- A. RUSA acknowledges the current efforts taken by the administration and appreciates the continuing actions that will be taken.
- B. RUSA commits itself to ensure that these actions are executed in a fashion that reflects the needs of the study body.

SECTION B: AMENDING THE GRADING SYSTEM

Whereas, the University has changed grading for the Spring 2020 Semester to allow students, on a class-by-class basis, the option to change a letter grade to a Pass/No Credit grading, for which students in the Assembly and in the greater student body had previously advocated;

Whereas, the spread of coronavirus likely impacted the academic standings of many students, and this should be rightfully and appropriately taken into account by prospective employers, recruiters, and graduate programs;

The Executive Board hereby advocates for the following:

- A. On any official transcript distributed by the Office of the Registrar, a note must be made under the section which shows grades for the Spring 2020 Semester that indicates that this was the period of time in which the coronavirus impacted the student body. An example note would be as follows: “Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 at Rutgers University, classes were moved online and in-person lectures were canceled. As such, normal procedures this semester were heavily affected, and those considering the grades of Rutgers graduates in this specific period of time should appropriately take this into account.”
- B. The University and schools should further clarify guidelines regarding the Pass / No Credit option for Spring 2020 classes and allow the Pass / No Credit option to be permitted for all classes, including graduation requirements.

SECTION C: ADVOCATING FOR STUDENT WORKERS

Whereas, there is a large portion, 9,753 hour employees as of early 2018 according to a independent study done by the United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS)³, of the undergraduate student body employed by the University;

Whereas, those students employed in the Federal Work Study Program will continue to have their salaries paid until the end of the semester with respect to Policy 675 which pertains to “disaster affected students”;⁴

Whereas, the Assembly acknowledges that all workers at the University have an innate value, while recognizing that this body’s primary concern aligns with those of students;

Whereas, student workers, who depend on their on-campus job to pay bills, groceries, and other expenses, have effectively been rendered jobless;

Whereas, in order to be eligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits, one “must have earned at least \$200 per week during 20 or more weeks in covered employment during the base year period”;⁵

³ [Independent Research](#)

⁴ [Federal Work Study Texts](#)

⁵ [Unemployment Eligibility in State of New Jersey](#)

Whereas, many students, due to lack of hours or other circumstances, are not eligible to file for unemployment;

The Executive Board endorses these subsequent provisions:

- A. The petition⁶ by New Labor to protect student workers and have them compensated for the value of their work.
 - a. Specifically the following provisions:
 - i. For all student workers:
 - 1. Earned sick leave to be awarded to all student workers in a timely fashion.
 - 2. Baseline communication from their managers.
 - ii. For Students out of work:
 - 1. Paid time off for the remainder of the semester, consistent with TA/LA positions where they get paid per semester, recognizing that a majority of these students are occupied in research positions.
 - iii. For Students still working:
 - 1. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and training on proper use of PPE.
 - 2. Hazard pay for workers at increased risk.
 - 3. Time and a half pay for workers who are not required to work but are still working.

⁶ [New Labor Petition](#)