

Governor Christie Signs Historic Legislation to Reorganize and Secure Future of New Jersey's Higher Education System

Bipartisan Higher Education Achievements Create Three Centers of Excellence, Strengthen State's Economic Future and Competitiveness and Move Forward \$750 Million Capital Investment

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Trenton, NJ – Continuing his strong record of bipartisan cooperation and compromise to put results before politics, Governor Chris Christie today signed the bipartisan “New Jersey Medical and Health Sciences Education Restructuring Act” into law, achieving a long-awaited, dramatic overhaul and strengthening of the state’s higher education system that had eluded leaders in the state for more than a decade. This significant accomplishment represents the latest action of Governor Christie’s commitment to improving New Jersey’s system of higher education, including his signing of a \$750 million bond referendum for capital improvements – the first in 24 years – the enactment of multiple pieces of legislation to support public-private partnerships for infrastructure improvements and investments at colleges and universities, an overall state aid increase of \$65 million to colleges and universities this year, and \$28 million in additional student financial assistance this year.

“This is a transformative and historic day for higher education in New Jersey. After decades of politics getting in the way of a desperately needed rethinking and restructuring of our higher education system, we have again come together in a bipartisan way to put our state’s students, our long-term economic viability and our future generations first,” said Governor Christie. “Along with our commitment to support a bond referendum to invest three-quarters of a billion dollars in capital improvements, we are undertaking the broadest, boldest, and most important restructuring of New Jersey’s higher education landscape in decades.”

This significant and sweeping restructuring legislation, A-3102, will promote long-term, sustainable economic growth and high academic achievement by fostering three hubs of higher education excellence in the northern, central, and southern parts of the state. The reform, effective July 1, 2013, transfers all schools, institutes and centers of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), other than the School of Osteopathic Medicine and University Hospital, to Rutgers, while establishing Rowan University as a public research university. Rutgers University will become a Top-25 research institute based on the combined outside funding sources of the merged universities, a reality that will attract more top faculty and students, creating a cycle of excellence that will propel Rutgers to sustained excellence.

“Today, we give Rutgers University the medical school and research potential it needs to earn a place among the finest academic institutions in the world. We also establish a framework that will support rapid growth in the southern part of the state and, critically for our most-vulnerable residents, we protect medical facilities that provide lifesaving care and services to thousands of people in the northern part of New Jersey,” added Governor Christie. “By establishing Rowan University as a research institution, we help Rowan continue its rapid climb and capitalize on the opportunity to grow this hub of higher education in South Jersey and give students in every part of our state the chance to obtain a world-class education near home.”

Secretary of Higher Education Rochelle Hendricks said the Act creates unprecedented opportunities for newly restructured institutions to dramatically enhance educational programs and increased federal, private and philanthropic research dollars.

“Today, the Governor fulfills his promise to make higher education in New Jersey a priority after decades of neglect,” said Secretary Hendricks. “The changes enacted by this legislation will help the state attract and retain exceptional talent. The creation of regional centers of excellence will aid New Jersey’s comeback by making it easier for our higher education institutions to create innovative partnerships with

New Jersey's worldwide leaders in pharmaceutical research. Today's restructuring will help New Jersey win its fair share of research funding that has, for decades, been going to other states."

The restructuring transfers the School of Osteopathic Medicine in Stratford from UMDNJ to Rowan. In Newark, University Hospital becomes an independent entity while maintaining its affiliation with the medical school and other programs that are now part of Rutgers. In Camden, the Cooper Medical School of Rowan University already has welcomed the arrival of its first class of students for the fall semester.

"A highly trained, capable work force is essential to New Jersey's future, because it is the most important element in attracting new businesses to our state," said Senate President Steve Sweeney. "That is what made this legislation so critical. Not only will it dramatically increase the standing of our institutions of higher learning, but it will, in the long term, create a thriving business climate for New Jersey. It is a win-win for everyone."

"This law will provide for the future growth and development of Rutgers-Newark and the expansion of graduate medical education in Newark, creating a focal point that will serve residents from throughout the state," said Speaker Sheila Oliver. "The reorganization will position New Jersey to develop economic opportunity and jobs in the health professions - the fastest growing sector of our nation's economy - to the benefit of not just Newark and surrounding counties but the state as a whole. This is a good thing for everyone. This was always about creating a better and stronger New Jersey and building a better future, and in the end the bill sent to the Governor was written in a way to ensure that indeed is the case. I look forward to seeing the progress it brings in the coming years."

"This restructuring will create a world-class network of institutions in the area of life sciences that will spur research and development, create new jobs and fuel economic growth," said Senator Donald Norcross. "In South Jersey, it will improve access to college for our students and help meet the educational demands of a rapidly-growing region. Most importantly, it will fulfill a promise I made to keep Rutgers in South Jersey, a brand which is a symbol of pride for current and former students and faculty as well as the community. And it will correct long-standing regional funding disparities by bringing substantially more education-related funds into our region at the same time it creates new funding opportunities statewide."

"This restructuring will create a 'perfect match' between the medical and academic institutions in New Jersey," said Senator Joseph Vitale. "We have some of the best hospitals, medical schools and universities in the country and now they will be empowered to capitalize on their abilities to pursue research, to train new generations of doctors and to put New Jersey on the cutting edge of life sciences. This is good for education, for medical care and for economic progress."

The New Jersey Medical and Health Sciences Education Restructuring Act is the third significant higher education bill signed by the Governor this month. On August 8, Governor Christie signed legislation to allow a \$750 million higher education bond referendum to appear on the ballot in November. If voters approve, the initiative would provide the first higher education general obligation bond issue for capital improvements since 1988. The Governor also signed a bill that will make it easier for public colleges and universities in the State to enter into public-private partnerships for construction on campus, enabling the deployment of investment dollars by giving public colleges and universities a new tool at their disposal.

Primary sponsors of A-3102/S-2063 were Assemblymembers Thomas Giblin (D-Essex, Passaic), Vincent Prieto (D-Bergen, Hudson), Celeste Riley (D-Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem), and John Wisniewski (D-Middlesex), and Senators Stephen M. Sweeney (D-Cumberland, Gloucester, Salem), Donald Norcross (D-Camden, Gloucester), and Joseph F. Vitale (D-Middlesex).