

From the Desks of...

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August 7, 2017

President Robert Barchi
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President Barchi,

As a former State Assemblywoman representing Central New Jersey and a current Somerset County Freeholder, respectively, we were troubled to read a recent report about Rutgers University's decision to mandate that incoming freshmen pay a \$175 fee, in part, to take a course on the impact of so-called microaggressions.¹

Frankly, aside from this new mandate being political correctness run amok, the associated cost required of students and parents to take this course – in the wake annual tuition increases over the last three years totaling around \$500 – is ridiculous.^{2 3 4}

Respectfully, we are asking you to officially waive the requirement for incoming students to take this course, and any fee associated with it immediately.

We should be finding ways to make college more affordable, not driving up costs and pushing higher education further out of reach for middle-class Americans. Furthermore, we should be encouraging our students to engage in a vigorous public discourse with their peers while on campus, not stifling their right to free speech and coddling them with “safe spaces” that leave them ill-prepared for the real world that awaits.

This mandated course appears to be related to the University's “Language Matters” campaign, which last year went so far as recommending that students limit the things they say to only words that are “necessary” to avoid offending people. It also makes the wild claim that

¹ <http://reason.com/archives/2017/08/02/rutgers-orders-freshmen-to-add-microaggre>

² http://www.nj.com/education/2017/07/rutgers_hikes_tuition_for_upcoming_school_year.html

³ <http://news.rutgers.edu/news-release/rutgers-continues-trend-modest-rate-increases-17-percent-increase-tuition-and-mandatory-fees-state/20160720#.WYR9s4WcEyl>

⁴ <http://news.rutgers.edu/news-release/board-approves-23-percent-tuition-and-fee-increase-increases-aid-grants-32-percent/20150715#.WYR-HYWcEyl>

unintentionally offending another person with an *innocent* remark could somehow compromise that persons' immune system and long-term health. ⁵

Give us a break.

As parents of young adults, we both abhor bullying and discrimination of any kind and should seek effective ways to stamp it out. As New Jersey taxpayers, we believe Rutgers has an obligation to represent the state in a positive way and spend taxpayer money wisely.

On both fronts, this mandatory microaggression course fails to advance those objectives.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Donna Simon
Former Assemblywoman
Candidate for Assembly (NJ-16)



Mark Caliguire
Somerset County Freeholder
Candidate for Assembly (NJ-16)

⁵<http://nation.foxnews.com/2017/07/27/rutgers-requiring-freshman-pay-their-own-microaggression-training>