

Research Townhall Q&A

Q: How will high fringe rates be addressed?

While the high cost of fringe benefits historically has limited the competitiveness of Rutgers-sponsored award applications, persistent efforts by Rutgers leaders, faculty, and staff, and by colleagues at other research universities in the state have been made to the State Legislature and the New Jersey Office of the Governor. As a result, the State of New Jersey will continue to allocate fringe relief funding through the State budget to offset the high cost of fringe benefits on **Federal and Federal Pass-Through sponsored awards** in FY25. This funding enables Rutgers' rates to be more competitive relative to peers. This relief does not apply to nonfederal sponsored awards or to non-sponsored funding sources; there are efforts underway with the State to moderate the high cost of fringe charges in these circumstances that, if successful, could take effect in a future fiscal year.

Q. Can you provide an update on the implementation of the research core services policy?

The research core services policy is being implemented broadly. Training is being developed for research core leadership and research leaders are being educated on the benefits that research cores provide.

Q. How is the turnaround of senior research officers at Rutgers being addressed?

There have been some new senior research officers hired recently. Rutgers has a growing research enterprise, and with appropriate support for research from the university we hope to retain leaders and faculty.

Q. Are there any particular guidelines at Rutgers regarding training grants (i.e., through IES or other federal bodies), and support from Rutgers Office of Research?

The Office for Research provides pre-award and post-award support for all grants. However, more is required than the Office for Research can offer with its current staffing to support the specific needs of training grants. Research development support is currently provided by the Chancellor-led units.

Q. What drives the government regulations on research and discovery efforts?

Many criteria drive government regulations, however recently research security has been a primary focus.

Q. What planning can be done, especially for NIH-funded researchers, to prepare for the upcoming changes in the federal administration?

Change is inevitable, however remaining flexible and being able to adapt to change is what will make us successful.

Q. The State of New Jersey rarely allows the Federal rates on Pass-Thru funding. How are the departments to handle this?

The State of New Jersey will not typically honor the 57% indirect rate on pass-thru funding from the federal government. The decision on whether or not to accept an award must be made at the local level since the funding to support the indirect costs must be provided at the local level.

Q. Is AI being considered only for process improvements or for research and other areas as well?

AI is being considered for applications beyond just operational and process improvements. As the university develops a framework for AI through several universitywide committees with representation from all four chancellor-led units, we are focusing on how to securely implement AI and approach common challenges.