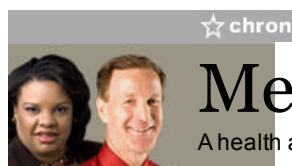


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# MedBlog

A health and medicine blog with **Cindy George** and **Todd Ackerman**

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December 15, 2009

## Rice faculty divided on whether to unite with Baylor

Fifteen months into negotiations, the long wait for a decision on [the proposed merger of Rice University and Baylor College of Medicine](#) keeps dragging on, but some news emerged from Rice's faculty last week.

Unfortunately, the news was just as inconclusive as everything else about the deal.

Merger critics who've wanted an official faculty vote on the merger — an [unofficial poll](#) made public in September found 55 percent of professors thought the merger a bad idea — finally got their wish Thursday. But in a blow to critics, a slight majority narrowly rejected a [resolution](#) saying the deal "poses unnecessary and unacceptable risks to the university and is incompatible with the vision that has served (Rice) so well." Fifty-nine professors voted for the resolution, sixty-one against it.

This being academia, the vote was not without its internal squabbling. Rice President David Leebron and three other faculty administrators voted against the resolution, raising some eyebrows even though as tenured faculty members they're entitled to cast votes. Noting the resolution would have passed without their votes, one merger critic called the final result "a moral victory."

Still, with or without their votes, the resolution's narrow margin suggested something else: no faculty consensus for or against the deal.

A more definitive word is expected in the next few days when Rice's faculty senate is expected to have results from a written survey. The survey gave professors a range of opinions to describe their opinions of the merger.

The schools' boards are expected to make a decision on whether to merge by Jan. 31, the expiration date for the memorandum of understanding guiding talks. But since [a September statement](#) by the school's presidents reported "substantive progress" on a deal, there has been no indication of how things are going.

Posted by [Todd Ackerman](#) at December 15, 2009 04:30 PM

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## Comments

There will be no Rice - BCM merger unless the Baylor Board in Waco approves it. More BCM Arrogance. Do all this work and now Baylor in Waco can block it. More of the same... Wait until the Rice faculty learn this news...

Posted by: [Anon](#) at December 16, 2009 10:52 AM

It's probably a good thing that "Anon" chose to remain anonymous, as his/her facts are about 40 years out of date. The relationship between BCM (Houston) and Baylor University (Waco) is and has been more a matter of courtesy than of some legally binding partnership in which one party or the other has veto power over the internal decisions of the other. To be fair, this misunderstanding of the historical relationship between the two institutions seems to be a common enough mistake. In any event, my understanding is that the merger has already been presented to the University Board in Waco and has already received their pro forma approval. Anon's crack about BCM arrogance is totally unsupported in his brief and error-ridden comment, so again,

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