

MEMORANDUM

TO: Committee on Academic Programs (CAP)

FROM: Steering Committee

RE: Review of policy on Departmental Honors

DATE: September 20, 2017

Background:

According to TCNJ policy (the Policy Framework), all campus policies should be reviewed every five years. The Departmental Honors Policy has not been reviewed since 2004.

During the 2003-2004 academic year, a task force was convened by the President to consider honors at TCNJ in all of its forms. These recommendations were discussed the following year in the Faculty Senate and beyond. However new policy was not developed.

Charge:

Steering asks CAP to review this policy to ensure that it is consistent with current practice and to make any other changes to the policy that CAP deems appropriate. CAP should bear in mind that the task force report, which called for the development of clear and consistent guidelines for departmental honors, was issued after establishment of the current policy. CAP may wish to seek testimony from Department Chairs and the Council of Deans in determining current practice.

If CAP determines that new guidelines for departmental honors are needed, CAP may develop these or may ask Steering to charge HSC with this task. If CAP finds that no new guidelines are required and makes changes solely to bring the policy in line with current practice, no additional testimony is required.

Testimony Tier: Tier I, provided no new guidelines are required.

Timeline:

CAP should review and update these policies by the end of the Fall 2017 semester.

TCNJ Governance Processes

Step 1 – Steering issues a charge

Step 2 - Governance prepares a Preliminary Recommendation

Once the appropriate standing committee or council has received the charge, it should start by collecting data needed to make a preliminary recommendation. It should receive input from affected individuals and all relevant stakeholder groups prior to making a preliminary recommendation. For issues that have broad implications or that affect a large number of individuals, initial testimony should be solicited from the campus community at large. For some

issues, sufficient initial testimony may come from input through committee membership or solicitation from targeted constituent groups.

When, in the best judgment of the committee, adequate clarity of the principles contributing to the problem are known, a preliminary recommendation should be drafted and disseminated to the campus community.

Step 3 – The Relevant Stakeholders provide Testimony

Once a preliminary recommendation has been completed, the standing committee or council should seek testimony from the campus community. The testimony should be gathered in accordance with the Testimony Tier (see page 24) assigned to the issue by Steering.

For issues that require public testimony from the campus community, the chair of the standing committee or council should approach the president of the appropriate representative bodies to schedule the next available time slot at a meeting of that body.

Testimony should be gathered in a way that allows stakeholders to weigh in fully on the issue. Members of the standing committee or council that wrote the preliminary recommendation should be present to hear and record the testimony.

Step 4 – Governance prepares a Final Recommendation

Once the standing committee or council has received appropriate testimony, it should revise the preliminary recommendation into a final recommendation. Once the final recommendation is complete, the standing committee or council should use sound judgment to determine whether or not more public testimony is required. If, in its feedback to the original preliminary recommendation, a stakeholder representative body requests to review an issue again, the committee or council is bound to bring it back to that body. If a full calendar year has passed since the formal announcement of the preliminary recommendation, the committee must resubmit a preliminary recommendation to the campus community.

When the committee or council has completed the final recommendation, it should forward it to the Steering Committee. The final recommendation should be accompanied by a cover memo that summarizes the initial charge, how testimony was gathered and the nature of that testimony, and how the committee responded to that testimony, including a description of how the preliminary recommendation evolved as a result of testimony.

Step 5 – Steering considers the Final Recommendation

Step 6 – The Provost and/or President and Board consider the Final Recommendation

Step 7 – Steering notifies the Campus Community

Testimony Tier I – The issue requires minimal testimony from the campus community. The assigned council or committee should consult with relevant stakeholders before preparing the final recommendation, but there is no need for surveys or open fora.

For a complete description of all steps and of the other testimony tiers, see Governance Structures and Processes, 2017 Revision, pages 21 – 24.