

TO: Jacqueline Taylor, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs
Mosen Auryan, Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness
Amanda Norvell, Faculty Senate President
Kevin Kim, Student Government President

FROM: Steering

RE: Student Feedback on Teaching Task Force

DATE: May 17, 2017

Background

Steering received the attached email from Alex Molder on behalf of the Student Government requesting a review of the content and process for administering the Student Feedback Forms for the evaluation of courses and faculty, noting student concerns with the content of the form and with the current process for administering the forms.

Steering notes that it last charged a review of this form in November, 2010. At that time CAP was charged with making recommendations concerning the content of the SFF as well as the procedures by which the SFF is administered. In its preliminary recommendation dated May 25, 2011, CAP recommended that we pilot a process of electronic administration, and that we implement this process if the pilot is successful. In addition CAP recommended that the charge be split and that the portion of the charge regarding the examination of the content of SFF be sent to CFA rather than CAP. The first part of the recommendation was eventually adopted. One year later, in an email to Steering, CAP asked Steering to rescind the second part of the charge. In this email CAP recommended that the content of the SFF should be examined outside the governance system by a task force “representing faculty (tenured and nontenured), Faculty Senate, the Union, and campus expertise in the assessment of teaching and learning. Furthermore, CAP proposes that the discussion of this matter be deferred until after the campus has reviewed the results of the electronic feedback process because if that process is adopted for the entire campus, the community may wish to revise some of the questions in the feedback form to take advantage of different survey techniques available through the electronic form.”

Upon discussion, Steering approved the creation of an ad hoc task force to meet for the fall semester of 2017 in order to review the literature and to make recommendations for changes to the form and its administration.

Charge

The Student Feedback on Teaching Task Force will review literature regarding nationwide research and best practices on student feedback on teaching. Academic Affairs will provide a reading list to the task force; the task force may also consider literature not taken from this list. In addition the task force will consider the concerns raised by students as outline in the attached memo from Alex Molder. Finally, the task force should solicit preliminary testimony from the Faculty Senate Executive Board, from Academic Leaders, and from the Deans Council regarding faculty and administrators concerns with the current form and procedure.

After gathering this information, the task force should prepare a preliminary recommendation addressing any proposed changes to the current student feedback form or its administration.

The Student Transitions Council shall consist of nine members as follows:

- 1 – Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness or designee
- 5 – Faculty (appointed by the Faculty Senate)
- 3 – Students (appointed by SG)

The first meeting will be convened by the Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness or designee. In keeping with the standard practice for Councils, the group should elect a chair and vice chair from among its members. Minutes of meetings should be submitted to Steering. The Council should see fit to draw on expertise from across campus or outside to assist it with particular issues.

Testimony Tier: 3

The issue requires a high degree of testimony from the campus community. The assigned council or committee should consult with relevant individuals and groups in developing a preliminary recommendation.

Meeting times: The Task Force will meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 1:30pm.

Timeline:

The Ad Hoc Task Force should complete its work on this charge by the end of Fall, 2017.

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

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

Steering Committee:

On behalf of SG Cabinet, I request the review of the Course Evaluation Feedback Form. Extensive consultation with students confirms that the current form and the process through which it is administered do not effectively nor efficiently provide an opportunity to offer meaningful feedback.

Assuming approval for review, I ask that the assigned committee solicit input from Student Government, Faculty Senate, the Office for Information Technology and any other stakeholders deemed relevant by Steering/the assigned committee.

I also request that the assigned committee consider the following items in their review:

- 1) Is the form targeting specific benchmarks/should the form target specific benchmarks? If so, what are they? Are they clearly communicated to the student?
- 2) Does the form clearly communicate to the student that the form is truly anonymous and that the feedback is actually read closely?
- 3) Does the form provide appropriate/sufficient space for written feedback?
- 4) Do multiple choice questions avoid redundancy and allow for meaningful collection of data?
- 5) Are there too many questions?
- 6) Are all questions clearly worded?
- 7) Does the current process for administering the form optimize the quality and quantity of the feedback solicited?

Best,
Alex Molder
SG Cabinet