

MEMORANDUM

TO: Committee on Strategic Planning and Priorities (CSPP)

FROM: Steering Committee

RE: Centers and Institutes

DATE: November 15, 2017

Background:

On November 10, 2017, Assistant Provost Jennifer Palmgren emailed the Steering Committee to request the development of a policy guiding the approval criteria and processes for the creation of school-based centers and institutes as well as the review of such entities. Dr. Palmgren writes:

The "Program Closure" policy provides guidelines for closing both academic and non-academic programs. However, while TCNJ has policies on academic program approval and review, it does not have similar policies for school-based centers and institutes. The Office of Academic Affairs would like to request the development of a policy for school-based centers and institutes. The "Program Closure" policy defines "Academic Centers" as "academic entities that may enhance the quality of the TCNJ educational experience through research or service, but that are not central to the delivery of the graduate or undergraduate programs of study." Academic Affairs is requesting a policy that includes: definitions for the terms school-based "center" and "institute;" the steps of the approval process; the criteria by which proposals will be reviewed; and the requirements for the assessment of these units once they are established.

Charge:

The Steering Committee charges CSPP to consider the need for a policy on school-based centers and institutes as outlined by Dr. Palmgren. CSPP should also consider the appropriate scope for such a policy. In particular, should it apply to academic or research centers which cross school boundaries? Should it include guidelines for elevating school-based centers to campus-wide centers? If CSPP deems that such a policy is necessary, it should proceed to develop one.

Should it choose to develop a policy, at Step 2, the CSPP should seek input from Dr. Jacqueline Taylor, Provost and VP of Academic Affairs; Mr. Lloyd Ricketts, Treasurer; the Council of Deans; directors or administrators of our current centers and institutes; advisory bodies for existing centers and institutes; and the Faculty Senate Executive Board; as well as other individuals and offices deemed appropriate by CSPP. CSPP should consider all aspects of Dr. Palmgren's request in developing a policy.

CSPP should present any draft policy developed in the form of a preliminary recommendation and seek testimony from the campus community following Tier II guidelines for Faculty and Staff and Tier I guidelines for Students.

Testimony Tier: Tier II (Faculty and Staff); Tier I (Students).

Timeline:

CSPP should review and update these policies by the end of the Spring 2018 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.

Testimony Tier II -- The issue requires moderate testimony from the campus community. The assigned council or committee should consult with relevant individuals and groups in developing a preliminary recommendation. The completed preliminary recommendation should then be made available to the relevant stakeholder groups, and testimony should be solicited in the form of written feedback (through a survey and or e-mail).

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