

MEMORANDUM

TO: Committee on Academic Programs (CAP)

FROM: Steering Committee

RE: Upper level courses in minors

DATE: November 15, 2017

Background:

On November 8, 2017, Prof. Terry Byrne, chair of the Curriculum Committee for the School of the Arts and Communication, sent an email to Steering noting that some minors in the school are out of compliance with the rule requiring two 300- or 400-level courses for any minor. Mr.

Byrne notes:

It appears that there are solid pedagogical reasons for some departments (Art and IMM, for example) to have the programs for minors structured the way that they do. While it is often the case in other subject areas that course numbering correlates with a rising expectation of workload and rigor, that may not be true in these subjects. In some cases, the minor is designed to broaden the experience of students who enroll in it rather than to focus narrowly and require deeper inquiry. Often, too, these courses are numbered to fit the sequencing demands of the major course of study, and to re-number them to accommodate a sequential expectation of the minor would be counter-productive.

Accordingly, the Committee asks that the course-number requirements of the minor model be revisited with an eye toward modification.

Charge:

Steering asks CAP to consider the course numbering rule in light of the request from the School of the Arts and Communication Curriculum Committee to determine whether the policy should be modified or whether a waiver of the policy should be granted for one or more minors from the school. CAP may wish to gather additional testimony from the School of the Arts and Communication Curriculum Committee to better understand their concerns. If CAP determines that the policy should not be changed but that one or more waivers should be considered, CAP should review this request in light of the previous decisions and deliberations made by CAP with regards to past waiver requests. CAP may act on any such waiver without further testimony.

If CAP determines that the rule regarding 300- and 400-level courses for minors should be amended, then testimony on the final recommendation should include testimony from the faculty following Tier III guidelines.

Testimony Tiers: Tier I if only waivers are considered. Tier III (faculty) and Tier I (staff and students) if the rule requiring upper level courses for minors is to be amended.

Timeline:

CAP should completed its work by the end of March, 2018

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 III – 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. The completed preliminary recommendation should then be made available to the relevant stakeholder groups. Testimony should be solicited in the form of both written and oral feedback, as well as approval by the appropriate representative bodies.

Written feedback should take the form of a survey and/or email feedback. Oral feedback should take the form of public testimony at a meeting of the appropriate representative body or bodies (as identified by Steering). These meetings should be open to the general public, and publicized so that individuals not represented by that group but interested in the issue may attend. Following that meeting, the representative body may, at its discretion, issue a formal response to the preliminary recommendation, which should be sent to the relevant council or committee as well as Steering. On the completion of a final recommendation, this response should accompany the final recommendation to Steering, and it should be considered as part of Steering's final review.

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