

MEMORANDUM

TO: CAP

FROM: Steering Committee

RE: Course of Study Designation

DATE: April 17, 2019

Background

On March 26, 2019, Steering received a [memo from Amanda Norvell](#), Chair, Medical Careers Advisory Committee asking Steering to consider developing guidelines or principles for the use of “Course of Study” designations. She gives examples of current course of study designations that are included in a student’s academic requirements report and noted on a student’s transcript that would have benefited from such guidelines. The benefits of doing so would be better advisement of students, better management by departments of seats needed in specific courses, equity across schools, and clear communication with students (and their families) and with graduate schools.

Charge

1. CAP should begin thinking about Courses of Study to ascertain why we currently have Courses of Study and how they serve our students. CAP should consult with department chairs, Deans and/or Assistant Deans, the Honors Council, the Medical Careers Advisory Committee, the Pre-Law Advisory Committee and Records and Registration to help them fully understand what a Course of Study is and advantages of such a designation.
 - a. In conversations with Records and Registration, CAP should identify:
 - b. the College’s current use of Course of Study designations within the Academic Requirements Report
 - c. the ability to note a student’s completion of designated courses of study on the transcript
 - d. Data on the number of current Course of Study designations and the number of students currently in those designations.
 - e. What the impact of having a formal means of noting a Course of Study would be
 - f. What the impact of having students proactively declare a Course of Study would be

- g. How a Course of Study designation would assist with enrollment controls such as predicting the number of sections of a course needed
2. If CAP determines that a Course of Study designation is beneficial to both students and to departments then CAP should formulate a policy that considers:
 - a. a definition of what a Course of Study designation is and how it is different from a minor or specialization within a major
 - b. whether there should be a minimum or maximum number of courses included in a Course of Study designation
 - c. whether there should be a statement about double counting courses in a Course of Study and in a major or minor
 - d. whether a GPA should be calculated for a Course of Study designation
 - e. whether there should be college-wide or Course of Study specific entrance and retention standards for such a designation and a cap on the number of students in a cohort who apply to a Course of Study
 - f. how will students in a Course of Study be advised
 - g. the process for creating a Course of Study and the elements necessary for this designation (Steering strongly suggests that if a policy on Course of Study is created that the approval process *require* a cover sheet which includes signatures from Deans and Departments that are affected by courses in the Course of Study. This sign-off sheet would be similar to what is included in the Minor Approval Process and be included in what is submitted to Steering and then sent on through governance.)
 - h. where on the College's website a list of approved Course of Study programs should be kept
 - i. adding Course of Study to the [Types of Majors and Minors Defined Policy](#)

Steering suggests CAP seek testimony on its preliminary recommendation from department chairs, Deans and/or Assistant Deans, the Honors Council, the Medical Careers Advisory Committee, the Pre-Law Advisory Committee, and Student Government as well as any other stakeholders deemed appropriate by CAP.

Timeline: CAP should begin work immediately on the charges with the goal of making a final recommendations to Steering by the end of the Fall 2019 term.

Testimony Tier: Tier II from Faculty, Staff, and Students

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).

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 below) 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 re-submit 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

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