MEMORANDUM

TO: Cindy Curtis, Chair of the Liberal Learning Task Force
         Piper Kendrix Williams, Vice Chair of the Liberal Learning Task Force

CC: William Keep, Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs
         Matthew Bender, Faculty Senate President
         Joseph O'Brien, Staff Senate President
         Patty Kou, Student Government President

FROM: Steering Committee

RE: Ad Hoc Liberal Learning Task Force

DATE: February 11, 2020

Background

Steering initially charged the Liberal Learning Task Force on May 16, 2018 to "discern faculty opinion regarding the scope and nature of the revision of the Liberal Learning Program and to define parameters for this revision, to engage the faculty in conversation regarding the role of Liberal Learning vis-à-vis the major, and to lead the faculty at large in defining the goals and composition of a revitalized Liberal Learning Program." On December 7, 2018, the Liberal Learning Task Force made a final recommendation to Steering:

> Based on the survey, forums, and other discussions, the Liberal Learning Task Force believes there is interest in having further discussions about Liberal Learning. While 59% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the current undergraduate curriculum adequately prepares our students, only 5% of respondents felt that the only change to the Liberal Learning Program should be revision of its outcomes. This result suggests that faculty are generally happier with the current Liberal Learning curriculum than unhappy with it, but faculty see important needs for refinement/revision to the program.

On March 9th, 2019, Steering further charged the the Liberal Learning Task Force,

> "to consider the information already gathered from the external reviewer's report (January 2016); from their own self-study and surveys; from campus personnel (Andrew Bechtel, He Len Chung, and Piper Kendrix Williams as well as Associate Provosts Kit Murphy and Mosen Auryan) who attended the AAC&U Summer Institute on General

Education and Assessment; and input from the Faculty Senate (see the Faculty Senate memo to incoming President Kathryn Foster entitled "The Current State of The College of New Jersey,") and to move forward by recommending a range of models for Liberal Learning including our current model. In explaining the recommended models the task force should note advantages and disadvantages of each.

Steering further asked that the task force,

"to consider how Liberal Learning designations would be assigned to coursework or experiences under each model proposed. Under our current system Liberal Learning designations have been automatically assigned to specific departmental prefixes. Faculty have noted disparity in our current system: designations are automatically assigned to some prefixes while other prefixes must apply for a designation."

The College is now in the final year of a five year strategic plan. In light of the initiation of a new cycle of strategic planning, and in light of a desire from the Liberal Learning task force to gather further testimony from the campus community regarding changes to Liberal Learning, Steering has decided to revise its most recent charge as indicated below.

Charge:

Steering asks that the Liberal Learning task force recommend short-term improvements to the current Liberal Learning model. The task force need not recommend a new model, as such a change should follow the new strategic planning process; however, the task force should share what it has learned about a range of Liberal Learning models and how the campus might change its curriculum in the future *in light of its emerging strategic priorities*. The task force need not address the course designation approval process at present. Any such recommendations would be premature.

In keeping with the revised below, The Liberal Learning Task Force should prepare a final report —which will be used to inform the direction of Liberal Learning throughout the Strategic Planning Process—and gather Tier III testimony.

Testimony Tier: Faculty, Students, and Staff: 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.

Meeting Times
The Ad Hoc Liberal Learning Task Force should continue to meet on the 1st and 4th Wednesdays, as needed, from 1:30 to 2:50.

Timeline
The Ad Hoc Liberal Learning Task Force should prepare a preliminary report by April 2020 and gather Tier III testimony from the campus community. It should share its final report with spring by the end of the spring 2020 academic term.

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.