

MEMORANDUM

TO: Andrew Leynes, Chair of the Committee on Faculty Affairs
Matthew Wundt, Vice Chair of the Committee on Faculty Affairs

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

FROM: Shaun Wiley, co-Chair of the Steering Committee

RE: Charge to Create a Plan to Assess Undergraduate Advising

DATE: February 19th, 2020

Background

The College's [Undergraduate Advising Policy and Practices document](#), approved by Governance in 2016, asserts that "The College and Schools will assess the success of advising" (p. 3). In 2016, Steering [charged](#) the now-defunct Advising and Student Support Program Council (ASSPC) with developing a plan to assess undergraduate advising at the College. Steering subsequently charged the Committee on Academic Programs (CAP) to review ASSPC's preliminary recommendation. [CAP was unable to agree on a recommended assessment plan](#), however, and CAP could not refer the issue back to ASSPC because ASSPC had been eliminated by changes to the College's governance structure. CAP considered referring its questions back to the Teaching and Learning Council (TLC), the successor to ASSPC, but was unsure whether assessing advising fell under its charge. As a result, the College has failed to meet its mandate to assess undergraduate advising for four years.

Charge

The Committee on Faculty Affairs should recommend an approach for formative assessment of advising at the level of the College, schools, departments, and programs. It is equally important that the approach highlights areas of strength in advising as that it identifies areas in need of improvement. It should recognize that satisfaction with advising is, at best, an incomplete metric and the plan should aim to develop a fuller picture of advising at the College.

At a minimum, CFA should examine:

- (a) students' and faculty members' experiences with advising *without identifying individual faculty members or students, directly or indirectly*;
- (b) advising by designated advisors and informal advising by other faculty, staff, and students;
- (c) differences between schools and departments in advising policies, practices, and experiences;
- (d) barriers to and opportunities for advising for students and faculty from underrepresented and/or minoritized groups;
- (e) individual and group advising;
- (f) best-practices in and/or problems with advising that affect students' time-to-degree, cost-for-degree, and post-graduate outcomes.

In developing their recommendation, CFA should consult widely, including (but not limited to) Faculty Senate, Student Government, Staff Senate, Campus Leaders, the Council of Deans, Associate and Assistant Deans, Dean of Students, the Teaching and Learning Council, the Committee on Academic Programs, the Provost, the AFT, the Center for Student Success, the Accessibility Resource Center, and the Office of Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Testimony Tier: Tier III, Faculty Students, and Staff

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.

Timeline:

CFA should begin work on the charge as soon as possible, with the goal of preparing a preliminary recommendation by December 2020, soliciting testimony in the spring of 2021, and submitting a final recommendation to Steering by May of 2021.

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