MEMORANDUM

TO: Steering
FROM: CAP
RE: Program and Curricular Change Policy
DATE: May 27, 2020

Background & Charge

In October 2019, The Committee on Academic Programs (CAP) was asked by Steering to conduct a five year review of the Program and Curricular Change policy. CAP was asked to ensure that the policy language was clear and to specifically consider the language that discusses the role of the Dean in the review of program and curricular change.

Methods

CAP sought testimony from the Council of Deans, Academic Leaders, and Faculty Senate during the Spring 2020 semester. This particular policy resulted in an iterative process that incorporated an initial round of feedback from both the Council of Deans and the Faculty Senate body that informed a revision of our first preliminary recommendation. Our revised preliminary recommendation was then shared again electronically with the Council of Deans, Academic Leaders, and the Faculty Senate Executive Board to ensure that the final recommendation was vetted and informed by the various stakeholders.

Final Recommendation

We revised and expanded the policy to more clearly articulate the role of the all parties involved in curriculum change and to clarify the steps in the curriculum change review process.

In addition to minor revisions/addition of clarifying language we made the following substantive changes to the policy:

1. We suggest that the name of the policy be changed to "Curriculum Change" to be in line with the intention of the policy.
2. We added an expanded Introduction and a Definition of Curriculum Change.
3. We added in a section at the beginning of the policy that lists the steps of the routing process depending on whether the proposed change impacts a single department, departments with a school, or departments in two or more schools.
4. We added in language to help clarify the role of each of the units in the review process (see Responsibilities section).
5. For curricular changes that impact more than one program within a School or additional programs in other schools, we added in a process step for the curricular change to be reviewed by all of the Affected Departments prior to submission to the Originating School Curriculum Committee.

6. For curricular changes that impact programs in more than one school, we added in a process step to be reviewed by the Affected School Deans prior to submission to the Council of Deans and Steering.

Additional Recommendations

In addition to our final recommendation for the Curricular Change Policy, we identified two issues as we reviewed this policy that have not yet been resolved and we believe are beyond the scope of this policy:

First, in our review of this policy, as well as reading of other TCNJ policies that involve program or curricular changes (e.g. Degree Program and Minor Approval), it became apparent that there is no formal mechanism for a proposing party to appeal a decision or to resolve continued disagreement between two parties. For example, what if there is continued disagreement between a Department that is proposing a change and the School Curriculum Committee? Or between a School Curriculum committee and the Dean? How would these disagreements be resolved? Who adjudicates these disputes? We believe that this is an issue that goes beyond the scope of this charge and we propose that Steering consider this issue as it impacts several TNCJ policies.

Second, as we reviewed this policy, as well as other TCNJ policies, we realized that mechanisms for approval for "mini-courses" that are utilized by several programs are defined. We ask that Steering consider whether these mini-courses should be included as part of the Course Approval policy or Special Topics Approval policies or whether they require an alternate approval process.