MEMORANDUM

TO: Steering Committee
FROM: Committee on Academic Programs (CAP)
RE: Recommendation on Temporary Online Proctoring
DATE: August 10, 2020

Background:

TCNJ transitioned to emergency remote teaching and learning in March 2020 in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Remote teaching and learning presented a host of challenges, including administering online assessments, such as quizzes and examinations. Online proctoring of exams was prohibited in Spring 2020 because home proctoring is considered to be "a private environment quite unlike the classroom" (Interim Provost Keep's March 22 email to faculty). At the request of the Office of Instructional Design, Interim Provost Keep convened an ad hoc group of faculty members from across campus to consider pedagogical and technical issues related to the online proctoring of exams. The working group prepared a report including a set of recommendations, which it shared with the co-chairs of Steering on July 14th, 2020 for consideration.

Steering asked CAP to review the working group's report and recommendations, and if deemed necessary, the evidence on which the recommendations are founded. CAP should consider implications of the report's recommendation for students' (and their families') privacy, as well as for equity across different student populations. CAP should also consider implications for relevant policies.

The following information is the final recommendation from representatives of CAP.

Review:

CAP convened three virtual meetings with many committee members on July 23, July 28, and August 7, 2020. During that time, we reviewed the report from the ad hoc committee and communicated with appropriate stakeholders. We corresponded with representatives from: the ad hoc committee who submitted the recommendations, Faculty Senate, Student Government, General Counsel, Accessibility Resource Center (ARC), Campus Diversity Council, Information Technology (IT), Instructional Design, and Center for Inclusive Excellence. We also queried Academic Leaders and the Council of Deans through a brief online survey asking about general proctoring needs on campus. We solicited and reviewed testimony from the campus community and used this feedback as a guide as we developed our final recommendation.

We continued to seek consultation with many of these representatives as we progressed towards a final recommendation. We appreciate the time and consultation of these representatives.

CAP's Recommendation for Temporary Online Proctoring:

In August, President Foster announced the movement of all Fall 2020 courses to online delivery mode. We recognize that this is not a normal semester and cannot assume **all** of our students always have equal access to a safe and quiet place to complete assessments. During the 2020 fall semester, low and high stakes assessments will be administered remotely. In an attempt to adapt to the remote learning environment while still maintaining academic rigor, both students and instructors are facing adjustments to their traditional learning assessments. Our recommendations for the upcoming semester are made with an effort to consider the perspectives of instructors, students, administrative oversight, technological elements, instructional design, and time constraints. We considered the difficult balance between maintaining the academic integrity of exams with concerns over student privacy and equity.

Our recommendations were also guided by TCNJ instructors's strong commitment to the student learning experience. The move to remote learning brings with it an added need for instructors to find creative and successful ways to evaluate students in courses, and the potential to exacerbate anxieties around tests and assessments for students themselves. Testimony provided by the TCNJ community documented varying perspectives, and student feedback highlighted first hand stress-inducing experiences and concerns. Examples of additional obstacles associated with the assessments outside the "traditional" in-person class experience include discomfort with video monitoring, the inability to find spaces that are conducive to online learning and test-taking, student concern that showing their learning space through video might distract the professor or other students during a class or exam, and resource or technological limitations, among many others. Taken together, our recommendation is designed to give pedagogical autonomy to course instructors, while attempting to minimize any privacy and logistical issues that could inadvertently impact a student's ability to demonstrate their potential on an assessment.

Accordingly, first and foremost, CAP strongly discourages the use of online proctoring tools due to concerns that it violates student privacy and exacerbates inequities. We encourage instructors to consider the various factors that might impact a student's inability to comply with additional monitoring. Unlike when a student deliberately enrolls in remote learning knowing the expectations for meeting the requirements of such arrangements ahead of time, our current situation does not enable students to find alternate locations outside of their home due to COVID-19 restrictions, and there are additional pressures within living spaces to accommodate multiple full-time learners or workers. In addition, students might need to take on caregiving roles, have unexpected technical issues, and have any number of stressors associated with restricted work spaces, economic distress, and health issues. We also encourage instructors to consider students' desires to maintain privacy by not wanting to reveal the personal circumstances that might contribute to their inability to comply with online proctoring. In light of these points, **CAP highly recommends the use of features available in Canvas to modify exams and quizzes and the principles of Universal Design to deter academic integrity issues.** The use of a Universal Design for Learning framework offers all students, regardless of background and ability, the opportunity to succeed.

However, we recognize there are rare instances where this is not possible for some courses. Thus, if an instructor decides that monitoring is absolutely necessary (e.g., live proctoring is required for

accreditation), CAP is recommending the use of the Respondus LockDown Browser program (embedded within Canvas) individually or in conjunction with course instructor or designated proctor monitoring via Zoom or Google video meeting. In addition, instructors should all use the same technology platform across campus to minimize instructors, students, and IT from having to support and learn multiple platforms. Where instructors choose to use video monitoring or lockdown features, we strongly recommend that instructors clearly communicate methods and procedures to students: 1) at the start of the semester through syllabi statements; and 2) with reminders over the course of the semester. **We recommend against any third party monitoring tools or systems.** All instructors must include language in the syllabus that explicitly describes whether or not video monitoring and/or LockDown Browser will be used and for which assessment(s) it will be used.

More detailed and additional recommendations follow:

1. Wherever possible, **instructors should revise course assessments to de-emphasize the need for high-stakes, closed-book exams.** In accordance with the college's [Final Evaluation policy](#), final projects or papers are acceptable alternatives to final exams. Examples of alternative assessments are included in the online training modules provided by the Office of Instructional Design. Instructors should consider assessment designs and strategies that minimize opportunities for cheating. Open-book assessments should be designed to preclude collaborations between students or other avenues, such as on-line help or pay-for-assignment sites.

2. **When additional monitoring is deemed absolutely necessary, we recommend that instructors have the option to utilize a feature in Canvas called LockDown Browser (with the mandatory implementation of items 4-12 below)**. LockDown Browser inhibits students from printing, copying, going to another URL, or accessing other applications on the device being used during an assessment. LockDown Browser might promote an environment of academic integrity and, when partnered with a video monitoring element (see item 3 below) makes the use of other resources or devices more challenging. It is embedded in Canvas, thereby providing the opportunity for instructional and technical support through TCNJ resources. However, there are notable drawbacks to LockDown Browser that instructors must consider before implementing its use:

- LockDown Browser requires students to download software onto their personal computers, adding in layers of technical complications that might occur. Not all devices and operating systems support LockDown Browser, and it is not compatible with cell phones.
- LockDown Browser alone does not preclude students from learning how to circumvent the technology, taking pictures of the questions and posting to other websites that offer help, or accessing materials from alternate devices.
- Instructors and students will need training on how to use and troubleshoot LockDown Browser. It is strongly recommended that instructors implement practice assessments with students prior to high stakes quizzes or examinations. Both parties should start with reviewing the resources available via LockDown's website: https://web.respondus.com/he/lockdownbrowser/resources/
- There is no straightforward way to contact the instructor during an exam to ask questions (unless an alternate device is used, which not all students have and defeats the purpose of the LockDown Browser).

3. **When a video monitoring element is deemed absolutely necessary (e.g., live proctoring is required for accreditation), instructors may require that students turn on cameras and microphones in a Zoom or Google video meeting while they are taking the assessment (with the mandatory implementation of items 4-12 below).** Zoom or Google video meeting and Lockdown Browser can be used independently or in partnership with each other. If instructors deem this type of monitoring necessary, they should **not** ask students to scan their environments with their camera. There are serious privacy and equity concerns that instructors should consider before utilizing video monitoring, including, but not limited to:

- Taking a monitored exam in a home environment may disadvantage already vulnerable groups. For example, students in small and/or crowded living environments may not have a quiet, private space and may face more distractions than other students. They may have to relocate themselves during the exam, which could be flagged by an instructor for a potential instance of cheating. In addition, students who live in such environments could be further stigmatized by being on camera.
- Students with poor internet connectivity, or students who are sharing their bandwidth with family members, may have trouble connecting to Zoom or Google Meet during an exam (especially when used in conjunction with LockDown Browser). The use of a camera during video monitoring also requires more data coming in and out of the students' computers which could lead to issues with staying connected during an assessment.
- Students' only private, quiet space may be their personal bedrooms, which they may not be comfortable displaying on camera to their instructor and their peers.
- Students will be able to see and hear each other's home environments during an exam, which can be highly distracting. All noises originating in every student's environment will be broadcast to each person in the Zoom/Google Meet session. In addition, there are examples of student shaming on social media based on home environments seen in video feeds during monitoring.
- Students and their families may have serious concerns over their family's privacy while being monitored, as other household members may be seen and heard in the background.
- Being actively monitored exacerbates testing anxiety, particularly for students with mental illness (e.g., anxiety disorders).
- There is a lack of clarity with respect to what would be considered an academic integrity violation. For example, it is not clear what kind of eye and head movements would constitute an assumption of possible cheating, or how such actions would be adjudicated. Additionally, there are biases in how the same behavior may be interpreted differently based on the identity (e.g., race) of the student, thereby exacerbating inequities.
- In conjunction with the LockDown Browser, there is no straightforward way to contact the instructor during an exam to ask questions.

4. **Where instructors plan to use either video monitoring or LockDown Browser, procedures must be communicated to the student clearly in the syllabus at the start of the semester, as well as by listing the necessary tools (i.e., camera, microphone) as required course material alongside any required reading or similar materials.** CAP has provided syllabi language to align with our final recommendation. Instructors must put in place clear and reasonable policies for how to address issues that

arise while using LockDown Browser and/or video monitoring during an exam (e.g., loss of internet connectivity). Instructors must provide information about instructor and student expectations when monitoring is employed, including but not limited to, examples of prohibited behavior during an online assessment, and reference to TCNJ's Academic Integrity Policy.

5. **Only a course instructor, designated departmental representative, or representatives from ARC may serve as proctors.** This point aligns with our recommendation that **no third party monitoring tools or systems be utilized.**

6. Although regular class sessions may be recorded, students can choose to turn off their video and/or audio if they and/or their families do not consent to being recorded. However, during an exam when audio and video is required, students do not have that option. As such, **CAP recommends that instructors should not be permitted to record video/audio of their live exams**. As noted above, there are serious concerns about privacy and equity for students and their families, who may not consent to being recorded. In-person assessments are not recorded in the classroom, and if an instructor suspects a violation during an exam they must provide a description of the suspected violation via the standard Academic Integrity process. The same process should hold true for virtual exams whereby instructors provide a description of a suspected violation - that is, testing in an online environment does not warrant additional infringements on student/family privacy that would come from recording testing sessions and subsequently storing them.

7. **Instructors who deem it absolutely necessary to use LockDown Browser and/or video monitoring should notify their department chair at the start of the semester** so a running list of courses using online monitoring can be maintained and easily referenced**.**

8. For programs or courses that require a more rigorous monitoring system beyond those provided by Zoom or Google video monitoring and/or LockDown Browser, such as for accreditation or certifications, those **parties may appeal to their Deans and work with the Council of Deans and the Provost, as well as Information Technology, to formulate a plan to meet specialized needs**. The reason we highly recommend consultation with the Council of Deans, Provost, and IT, rather than only within a singular School, is to ensure that logistical support can be provided at a College level and to increase the chances that one centralized, rather than numerous individual, platforms might be identified for use and supported by IT.

9. For those courses who have monitoring resources provided through their textbook at no additional cost to the student, we recommend programs consult with their Dean, the Council of Deans, and General Counsel for partnership agreements. **If the Deans and General Counsel determine using tools available through textbook purchases or partnerships is appropriate, we highly recommend that they are at no additional cost to the student and that they align with the recommendations outlined here by potentially allowing video monitoring by only TCNJ faculty/designated proctors and lockdown browsers, but prohibiting third party or computerized monitoring.** If instructors receive approval from Deans and General Counsel to use resources provided by textbook companies, there should be no expectation for support from TCNJ IT for these tools.

10. Importantly, and as is the case in all assessments, **instructors and designated proctors are responsible for making sure that students receive any and all ARC approved accommodations that they would have in a traditional classroom** (please see Implementing an Accessible Fall Flex Course for an overview of additional support ARC is providing to instructors). If the remote learning environment brings any ambiguity to how certain accommodations might apply, instructors should work with the student and/or ARC to ensure that student accommodations are not being adjusted or denied in ways that will disadvantage the student.

11. **In addition to all ARC approved accommodations being provided by instructors, CAP strongly recommends that instructors consider alternate accommodations that align with the remote learning environment.** One concern is that a student can participate in a course generally, but that having to be video monitored for an assessment at a specific time of day might inadvertently impact their performance (i.e., other family members cannot be silent during the exam because of subsequent remote work or schooling in the home, privacy concerns, work requirements, family-care requirements, etc.). In those cases, we recommend that instructors provide an alternate assessment time for the student either by themselves or a department designee, or through remote proctoring options provided by ARC for the fall semester. ARC can proctor exams remotely (via Zoom and Zoom breakout rooms) for the Fall 2020 semester if this is requested by students and/or faculty. To make a proctoring request, instructors can complete the Exam Administration Request form in advance of the scheduled assessment.

12. As previously mentioned, students should be informed, in the syllabus and at the onset of the class, if they are being required to use Zoom and/or lockdown for exams. Students who are able may opt out of that course, or request technical support from TCNJ, or work with the instructor early on to navigate their concerns. If they need to stay in the course or otherwise cannot switch out of it and have concerns about their privacy or how it might impact their performance in the course, we highly recommend that students be supported via a neutral office to help manage potential obstacles with the remote learning environment. In many cases, instructors and students can work together on these concerns or points; but we recognize that some students might not want to, from the onset, disclose personal information to their instructor or chair for a variety of reasons. **We strongly recommend that ARC and the Dean of Students coordinate approaches needed on the behalf of a student, in the cases when students prefer that privacy or need additional help navigating what their options might be to enable them to stay and succeed in the course.** Both ARC and Dean of Students have responded to CAP's inquiry about the feasibility of this plan and have kindly agreed to help facilitate a system to extend to this remote learning situation.