

MEMORANDUM

TO: CAP

FROM: Steering Committee

RE: Review of Syllabus Policy

DATE: October 2020

Background: According to TCNJ policy (the [Policy Framework](#)), all campus policies should be reviewed every five years. In reviewing the [Syllabus Policy](#), Steering has noted that it was last reviewed in November of 2014.

Charge: In keeping with the timeline outlined below, Steering asks CAP to review the Syllabus policy. In particular, CAP should consider:

- (a) how syllabi can more effectively convey the range of required and recommended syllabus statements (e.g., ARC accommodations, academic integrity, etc.);
- (b) the process by which syllabi (and course policies and requirements) are communicated to and/or discussed with students at the beginning of the semester (e.g., reviewing the syllabus in class in the first week);
- (c) recommending strategies to communicate a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (formal name TBA) on the syllabus, in consultation with the Division of Inclusive Excellence;
- (d) recommending that instructors include guidance for students regarding how they use Canvas and where to find the most up-to-date information about assignments and due dates;
- (e) recommending that instructors include required technologies for students to be successful in class; and
- (f) the process by which changes to syllabi are communicated to and/or discussed with students throughout the term.

Corresponding to this charge, CAP should update the syllabus template. CAP should seek testimony from Academic leaders, Council of Deans, Faculty Senate, Student Government, the Accessibility Resource Center, the Office of Title IX & Sexual Misconduct, Office of Inclusive Excellence, the Chief Academic Integrity Officer, Office of Instructional Design, and from any other constituent bodies it deems appropriate.

CAP is asked specifically to consider whether this policy is consistent with related policies, including (but not limited to) the [Sexual Harassment, Misconduct, and Discrimination policy](#), the

[Academic Integrity policy](#), the [Absence and Attendance policy](#), the [Final Exams, Evaluations and Reading Days policy](#), as well as the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#). CAP is also asked to consider whether the policy should include a statement about the party responsible for ensuring compliance with the syllabus policy.

Testimony Tier: Tier II from Faculty 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).

Timeline: CAP should begin work immediately on the charge, with the goal of completing its preliminary review by the start of the Spring 2021 semester and making a Final Recommendation to Steering late in the Spring of 2021.

TCNJ Governance Processes

Step 1 – Steering issues a charge

If Steering considers the issue appropriate for Governance, it will generate a charge and assign it to the appropriate committee or council. The charge will include:

- A clearly defined statement of the issue;
- A specific action that the committee or council should undertake;
- A list of individuals or groups with which the committee should consult in the development of a preliminary recommendation;
- The testimony tier (see page 27) that the committee or council should use in presenting the preliminary recommendation to the campus community;
- A suggested timeline for completing the charge.

Copies of all charges will be cc'd to the presidents of the three representative bodies. This will notify them that Governance is undertaking a new charge. It will also give them the opportunity to request that the testimony tier (see page 24) of the charge be changed. If such a request is made, it must be made within one week of receiving the 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 page 27) 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 resubmit 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

Once Steering receives a final recommendation from a committee or council, it should consider whether or not the proper process has been followed. If it determines that the full process has been followed and that the recommendation is sound, it should approve the final recommendation and forward it to the provost.

If Steering decides that the process has not been followed, or that the recommendation is not sound, it should return the final recommendation to the appropriate committee or council and the charge should move back to Step 4.

Step 6 – The Provost and/or President and Board consider the Final Recommendation

The provost will consider the final recommendation and then accept it, accept it with minor revisions, accept it with major revisions, or reject it. In the case of acceptance, the final recommendation will either be sent to the next relevant individual for approval or will become policy, and will proceed to step 7.

If a final recommendation is rejected, or if changes are suggested, the provost will relay concerns and suggestions to Steering and the relevant committee or council chair. The steps listed under section X of this document – Governance Resolution – will then take place.

Step 7 – Steering notifies the Campus Community

Once an issue has been formally approved and has become policy, the provost will notify the faculty co-chair of the Steering Committee, who will in turn notify the campus community through the appropriate means. This may include email, a notification on the Governance website, and/or email to the presidents of the stakeholder representative bodies.

For a complete description of all steps and of the testimony tiers, see Governance Structures and Processes, 2019 Revision, pages 24-26