

MEMORANDUM

TO: CAP

FROM: Steering Committee

RE: Ungraded Option

DATE: February 3, 2021

Background

In January 2021, CAP requested that Steering issue a charge on the [Ungraded Option policy](#) for the Spring 2021 and beyond. CAP's [memo](#) articulates the background on this issue.

Charge

For the rationale listed in CAP's memo, Steering charges CAP, first, to recommend an ungraded option policy for the Spring 2021 semester. CAP should explain clearly how its recommendation is supported by the information available to it, including, but not limited to: testimony on a related charge from the fall of 2020, academic performance data, course evaluation data, and surveys of students at TCNJ. CAP should consult with Records and Registration, Student Affairs (in particular the Dean of Students), the Center for Student Success, the Accessibility Resource Center, the Campus Diversity Council, Academic Leaders, the Dean's Council, Faculty Senate, and Student Government. CAP must submit its final recommendation to Steering no later than March 10th, 2021, one week before Steering's last meeting before the April 5th Withdraw deadline.

Steering charges CAP, second, to conduct a standard five-year review of the ungraded option policy and recommend changes to the policy that will take effect after the Spring 2021 semester and apply thereafter. In developing its recommendation, CAP should consider the experience of the pandemic and imagine other potential disruptions. CAP should also examine models at other institutions, for example, a Pass/D/F policy or special considerations for first-semester students (both first-year students and transfer students). CAP should consult widely on its recommendation, including the groups listed in the preceding paragraph. CAP must submit its final recommendation by May 12th, 2021, one week before Steering's final meeting of the Spring 2021 semester.

Timeline

CAP must submit its final recommendation on the Spring 2021 policy to Steering no later than March 10th, 2021, one week before Steering's last meeting before the April 5th Withdraw deadline. CAP must submit its final recommendation on the five-year review by May 12th, 2021, one week before Steering's final meeting of the Spring 2021 semester.

Testimony Tier: 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.

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.

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