

MEMORANDUM

TO: LLC

CC: CAP

FROM: Steering Committee

RE: Student Feedback

DATE: March 17th, 2021

Background

On March 6th, 2019, Steering [charged](#) the Liberal Learning Task force:

“...to consider the information already gathered from the external reviewer’s report (January 2016); from their own self-study and surveys; from campus personnel (Andrew Bechtel, He Len Chung, and Piper Kendrix Williams as well as Associate Provosts Kit Murphy and Mosen Auryan) who attended the AAC&U Summer Institute on General Education and Assessment; and input from the Faculty Senate (see the Faculty Senate memo to incoming President Kathryn Foster entitled “The Current State of The College of New Jersey,”) and to move forward by recommending a range of models for Liberal Learning including our current model. In explaining the recommended models the task force should note advantages and disadvantages of each.

The task force should also consider how Liberal Learning designations would be assigned to coursework or experiences under each model proposed. Under our current system Liberal Learning designations have been automatically assigned to specific departmental prefixes. Faculty have noted disparity in our current system: designations are automatically assigned to some prefixes while other prefixes must apply for a designation.”

On February 11th, 2020, Steering issued a revised [charge](#). Steering asked that the Liberal Learning Task Force:

“...recommend short-term improvements to the current Liberal Learning model. The task force need not recommend a new model, as such a change should follow the new strategic planning process; however, the task force should share what it has learned about a range of Liberal Learning models and how the campus might change its curriculum in the future *in light of its emerging strategic priorities*. The task force need not address the course designation approval process at present. Any such recommendations would be premature.”

On May 12th, 2020, the Liberal Learning Task Force delivered a [final report](#), recommending a series of short-term changes to the Liberal Learning program as well as sharing what it had learned about liberal learning models.

Charge

Steering charges the Liberal Learning Council to review, evaluate, and decide whether to adopt the following short-term changes recommended by the Liberal Learning Task Force (Recommendation number from the Liberal Learning Task Force's final report in parentheses):

- expand both the number of courses meeting the mid-level writing requirement and student access to them (Recommendation 2);
- consider expanding the definition of “communication” to include visual and multimedia communication (Recommendation 2);
- consider renaming the liberal learning program (Recommendation 3);
- rename the domains (Recommendation 3; see also Recommendation 7); and
- consider whether additional aspects of liberal learning should be renamed and retained (i.e., Civic responsibilities, Intellectual and scholarly growth, and Broad areas of human inquiry; Recommendation 3).

In keeping with the timeline below, Steering requests that LLC consult with the Committee on Academic Programs, the Council of Deans, Academic Leaders, and Records and Registration. Once the LLC has completed this work, it should prepare a preliminary recommendation and seek broad testimony from across the campus community, including, but not limited to: Student Government, Faculty Senate, and Staff Senate.

Timeline

LLC should begin work on the charge immediately. LLC should prepare a preliminary recommendation by September 30th, 2021. LLC should solicit campus testimony soon after with the goal of making a final recommendation to Steering no later than November 10th, 2021.

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