

## MEMORANDUM

To: Task Force on Living Learning Communities  
Cc: Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government  
From: Steering  
Re: Initial Charge  
Date: May 18, 2021

### **Background**

In Fall 2018, a study of FSP-based living learning communities (LLCs) led to the recommendation to discontinue housing students based on their First Seminar Program course. This in turn created an opportunity to examine the role of living learning communities at TCNJ and to develop a broader range of LLCs for students.

### **Charge**

Steering convenes an ad hoc task force to develop and present to the campus community a report on living learning communities. The task force report will serve as a resource and guide for the future development of LLCs at TCNJ. The report should include an analysis of a range of models and explore their varying impact on: student experiences; student learning; serving residential and non-residential students; campus resources (e.g., space, equipment, personnel time—faculty and staff); campus culture; and opportunities for partnerships across divisions of the college. The report should consider and include examples of different types of LLCs (e.g., theme-based, affinity group-based, major-based, etc.) and duration of LLCs (e.g., short-term, those that last for only a few years; and long-term examples of those that are more enduring). Although the task force is asked not to recommend a specific LLC model or models, the task force may recommend general procedures or best practices for LLC creation (proposal, review, and approval steps), assessment, and closure.

The ad hoc task force will be composed of:

- The Director of Residential Education and Housing, serving as co-chair;
- 3 faculty members (one to serve as co-chair), appointed by the Faculty Senate;
- 2 additional staff members, appointed by Staff Senate, including one assistant/associate dean; and
- 3 undergraduate students, two appointed by Student Government, and one member of the Residence Hall Association.

In completing its charge, the task force should consult widely across campus. At a minimum, the task force should consult with the Office of Student Services, including the Residential Education and Housing staff; the Office of Student Transitions; Council of Deans; Academic Leaders; the Office of Assessment; the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning; and the Accessibility Resource Center.

At the end of its work, the task force should submit a formal report to Steering as well as prepare a formal presentation to the campus community. The group should elect a co-chair from among the faculty members. Minutes of meetings should be submitted to Steering.

### **Timeline**

The task force will present a draft report to the Steering Committee for comment by October 2021. It will present its final report to the campus community by December 2021.

### **Testimony Tier**

#### ***Tier II - Faculty, Staff 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).

### **The Governance Process** (from TCNJ's "Governance Structure and Processes" document)

#### ***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 24) 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 24) 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.

*[Due to the scope and work of this ad hoc task force, the Vice President for Student Affairs will partner with the Provost in Step 6.]*

***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.