

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Undergraduate Academic Advising Models Task Force  
CC: Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government  
FROM: Steering  
RE: Initial Charge  
DATE: February 17, 2021

### **Background**

Academic advising is central to students' timely progress toward graduation and post-graduation success. TCNJ faces a number of challenges and opportunities in undergraduate advising, including but not limited to a growing number of undeclared and open-option students, a lack of formal guidance for students who find themselves without a major, and disparities within and between programs in faculty and staff advising loads.

### **Charge**

Steering convenes an ad hoc task force to explore, research, identify, and present to the campus community a range of different models for undergraduate academic advising (e.g., faculty-based advising; professional staff-based advising; a mix of faculty- and professional staff-based advising; school-based and institutional based approaches; etc.). The task force's analysis should be underpinned by consideration of the dimensions of successful undergraduate academic advising (e.g., developmental elements, transactional elements, etc.) and how they are measured.

In its comparative analysis of the different models, the task force should outline the effectiveness of serving all students, resources needed, and advantages and disadvantages for each model. The college needs a model(s) that serves:

- students with declared majors;
- undeclared, open-option, and transfer students;
- students who have left or been dismissed from their original major; and
- students belonging to underrepresented and/or minoritized groups, including first-generation students.

The task force's analysis should also consider equity in advising loads and responsibilities across offices, programs, and groups of faculty and staff members. The task force's analysis should also consider models that exist on campus as well as at other institutions of higher education. The task force may also present new or hybrid models at its discretion.

Steering is charging the task force with producing a comparative analysis, not to recommend a model(s).

The ad hoc task force will be composed of:

- 1 Dean, serving as co-chair;
- 4 faculty members (one to serve as co-chair), appointed by the Faculty Senate
  - including at least one Department Chair;
- 4 staff members, appointed by Staff Senate;
  - including at least two Assistant/Associate Deans;
  - including the Associate Director of the Center for Student Success;
- 3 undergraduate students, appointed by Student Government.

In completing its charge, the task force should consult widely across campus. At a minimum, the task force should consult with the Council of Deans, Assistant and Associate Deans, Academic Leaders, the Center for Student Success, School/Departmental staff advisors and Program Assistants; the Accessibility Resource Center; the Office of Student Transitions; and a wide variety of student groups that represent various student constituencies. In addition, the task force should consult professional higher education organizations focused on undergraduate academic advising (e.g., NACADA).

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 to serve with the Dean. Minutes of meetings should be submitted to Steering.

### **Timeline**

The task force will present a draft report to the Steering Committee for comment by May 5, 2021. It will present its final report to the campus community no later than the last day of classes for the Spring semester 2021 at a date and time to be determined in consultation with Academic Affairs.

### **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**

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.

#### 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.

