

MEMORANDUM

FROM: Steering Committee

To: CAP

RE: Increase in Transfer Credits Accepted and Decrease Residency Requirement

DATE: November 3, 2021

Background: The Department of Nursing has requested (see addendum) that TCNJ revise its Undergraduate Transfer Credit policy to align the policy for transfer students in nursing with policies at peer institutions. The requested change would help with recruitment of nursing students.

Charge: In keeping with the timeline outlined below, Steering asks CAP to review and update the “Undergraduate Transfer Credit” policy and the “Residence Requirements” policy in view of both the Department of Nursing’s request and the potential barriers that the current policies place on transfer students across the institution. In this context – and in order to holistically consider barriers to transfer – CAP should also review and update the requirement in the “Types of Majors and Minors” policy; in particular that “At least fifty percent of the major must be completed at The College of New Jersey or through a prior approved course exchange program.”

In its review, CAP should consider whether these three policies align with similar policies at comparator institutions and with state, accreditation, and other requirements. Steering asks CAP to also consider modifying the name of the Residence Requirement policy to better reflect the true purpose of the policy. In particular, CAP should consider the use of the term residence and how it might be misinterpreted. CAP should seek testimony from Academic Leaders, Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Student Government, Records and Registration, and from any other constituent bodies it deems appropriate.

Testimony Tier: Tier II from Faculty and Staff

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 March 1, 2022 and making a Final Recommendation to Steering by the end of the Spring 2022 semester.

TCNJ Governance Processes

Step 1–Steering issues a 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 below) 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 re-submit 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

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

Step 7–Steering notifies the Campus Community Testimony

For a complete description of all steps and of the testimony tiers, see [Governance Structures and Processes, 2019 Revision](#), pages 23–27.

Request from the Department of the Nursing

TO: Steering Committee

FROM: Deirdre Jackson, Nursing Outreach Coordinator, Department of Nursing

RE: Increase in Transfer Credits Accepted and Decrease Residency Requirement

DATE: October 4, 2021

Background:

The RN to BSN Program at TCNJ is designed for working Professional Registered Nurses (RNs) who have earned an associate's degree or diploma in nursing and want to continue their education by earning a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree (BSN). This program is open to nurses who work for our regional healthcare partners (St. Peter's University Hospital, Hunterdon Medical Center, Capital Health Medical System, Penn Medicine Princeton Medical Center of Princeton, and Robert Wood Johnson-Hamilton Hospital) or at other organizations in the community.

A primary goal of this off-campus program is to support the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Initiative on the Future of Nursing mandate to increase the number of RNs with a BSN to 80%. Additionally, many healthcare organizations in our area have become Magnet certified. This certification requires that 100% of nurse leaders have a degree in nursing (baccalaureate or graduate degree). Magnet certification also requires that a high percentage of nurses in direct care positions hold a BSN. As a result, many hospitals in our area only hire nurses with a BSN or require nurses with an associate's degree to earn their BSN within 12 to 24 months as a condition of hire.

According to TCNJ's current [Transfer Credit policy](#) the number of transfer courses accepted is dependent on the type of institution from which the courses are being transferred as follows:

- schools designated as community colleges or junior colleges may not exceed 16 course units (or 64 credits)
- schools designated as four-year institutions may not exceed 20 course units (or 80 credits).

- schools designated as diploma schools of nursing may not exceed 7.5 course units (or 30 credits) and is limited to candidates matriculated in the RN to BSN program
- maximum number of courses transferred from all sources (with the exception of National Student Exchange and study abroad under the auspices of The College of New Jersey) will not exceed 20 course units (80 semester hours).

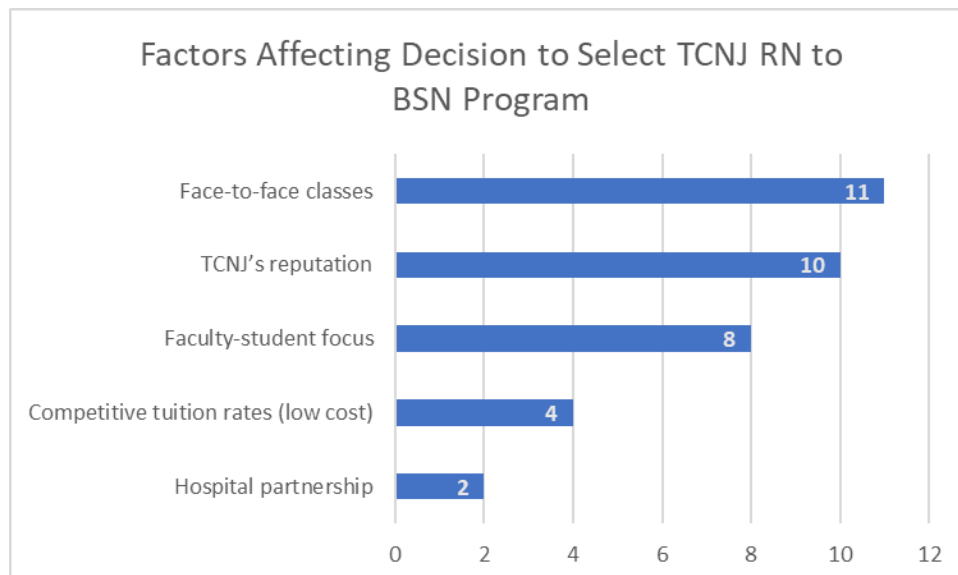
TCNJ also requires 32 course units (128 credits) to meet degree requirements and at least 12 of these course units must be earned at TCNJ. ([Residence Requirements](#))

The Department of Nursing performed a review of competing RN to BSN programs. The review included the number of transfer credits accepted, the number of credits needed to graduate, and residency requirements. Data revealed that on average competing RN to BSN programs accept 30 credits from diploma schools of nursing, 66 credits from two-year institutions, and up to 90 credits from a combination of two-year and four-year college coursework. Most colleges and universities require 120 credits to meet degree requirements with 30 of those credits earned at the institution that is granting the degree. Additionally, most area programs have shifted to online offerings and several also offer compressed terms (5-7 weeks).

These findings reveal that TCNJ's current transfer credit policies and degree completion requirements place the RN to BSN program at a distinct disadvantage when recruiting students. New student enrollment in the RN to BSN program has declined in recent years.

Academic Year	Number of New Students
2018-2019	16
2019-2020	9
2020-2021	5

Potential students are looking for programs that are cost effective, support working professionals, and can be completed quickly. A recent RN to BSN student survey (N=11) showed that TCNJ's RN to BSN program has a positive reputation in the community. However, graduating students have identified the number of electives that need to be completed and the number of credits required to graduate as areas for improvement on RN to BSN End of Program outcome surveys.



Recommendation:

The Department of Nursing asks CAP to revise the Transfer Credit Policy to allow RN to BSN students to transfer in:

- up to a maximum of 66 credits from schools designated as community or junior colleges
- up to a maximum of 90 credits from all sources

We also request that the Residence Requirement Policy be revised to decrease the residency requirements to 32 credits to allow students to complete electives at a college or university of their choosing. We request that these policy changes extend to all current and future students in the RN to BSN program to make our program more competitive and thus increase enrollments.