

## TCNJ GOVERNANCE MEMORANDUM

To: Committee on Academic Programs

From: Steering Committee

Date: February 1, 2023

Re: **Incomplete and In-Progress Grades Policy**

**Background:** On January 12, 2023, a request from the Office of Academic Affairs to review the policy on Incomplete and In-Progress Grades was sent to the Steering Committee. The policy was last updated in 2017. An example of a template student contract regarding incomplete and in-progress grades is provided by an academic program.

**Charge:** In keeping with the timeline outlined below, Steering asks CAP to review and revise the Incomplete and In-Progress Grades policy. CAP should review the memo sent to Steering from the Office of Academic Affairs. CAP should consider revisions to the policy based on the questions below and on a review of standard practices at comparator institutions (e.g. peers and aspirants).

- Academic Load: Should the policy provide guidance, or even limits, to address students with multiple incomplete or in-progress grades who attempt to carry full course loads?
- Communication: Should the policy provide guidance to faculty and staff regarding the communication of requests for incomplete and in-progress grades?
- Criteria (for academic use): The policy currently states that in-progress grades should only be given for “a compelling academic reason.” Should this statement be clarified and/or should additional criteria be put in place? For example, should there be a recommended minimum percentage of coursework completed with a passing grade before an incomplete or in-progress grade would be considered advisable in most cases?
- Criteria (for administrative use): Should criteria for assigning in-progress grades for administrative reasons, such as to track the completion of requirements in 0-level courses or to hold a course grade pending an academic integrity case outcome, be included?
- Department Process: Should a campus-wide agreement/process be adopted, and, if so, could existing agreements, such as the excellent one used by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology (attached), serve as a model?
- Pre-requisites: When incomplete or in-progress grades are assigned to pre-requisite courses, could a mechanism be included to confirm the completion of these pre-requisites for students advancing to subsequent courses? What are the implications for 4+1 programs?

CAP should seek preliminary testimony from faculty senate executive board; student government executive board; department chairs; assistant deans; the Office of the Dean of Students; the Accessibility Resource Center; and the Office of Records and Registration; and from any other constituent bodies it deems appropriate. The final recommendation should

include stakeholders campus-wide. The preliminary and final recommendations should include the names of the stakeholder group, the number of persons responding, and a summary of the testimony collected.

**Testimony Tier: Tier II.** 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, 2023** and making a Final Recommendation to Steering by **April 15, 2023**. In the preliminary and final recommendations, CAP should provide in a memo to Steering the following: the stakeholder groups and the number of persons present; a summary of the testimony gathered; the redlined version of the policy; a clean version of the policy; and any additional recommendations that should be considered.

**Timeline:** CAP should make a Final Recommendation to Steering by **April 15, 2023**.

---

## 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.*