

MEMORANDUM

To: Committee on Academic Programs

From: Steering Committee

Date: February 21, 2024

Re: Academic Structural Changes to Support Institutional Financial Sustainability

Background: On February 9, 2024, Steering received a [request](#) from the Faculty Senate Executive Board (SEB) to issue a charge to CAP to look deeper into the three structural changes listed below and make the suggested recommendations to support financial sustainability:

1. Adjusting the number of units for a typical baccalaureate degree at TCNJ from 128 credits (32 units) to 120 credits (30 units) - CAP should provide a yes/no recommendation on the idea upon collection of campus testimony and exploration.
2. Adjustments to the first-year writing curriculum and more holistically look at writing program at TCNJ keeping in mind the writing proficiency of our students across the curriculum - To move forward and make a recommendation, CAP should use the faculty expertise in HSS (English faculty) to identify best practices, propose a plan for implementing the delivery of writing across majors along with the Core courses and FYS. We are recommending that CAP should consider the reduction of the pair of courses (FYW and FYS) to a single course for writing and that CAP then request broader campus testimony.
3. Reevaluate the language requirement in light of the fact that more than half of TCNJ students are exempt from the requirement - CAP should consult with the working group that is working on this charge, consisting of Admissions, World Languages and ASL faculty, faculty representatives across schools, Honors program, Phi Beta Kappa and the Associate Provost, and create a plan that involves departments evaluating their need for a language requirement. The plan should address removing a College Core language requirement and evaluate the possibility of having these courses count for correlate requirements in certain majors. This would encourage students to still continue to take language courses, but provide flexibility and along with alignment with other peer colleges in NJ. CAP should oversee this work and collect campus testimony regarding the plan.

The SEB has collected initial testimony and included a [summary](#) of their findings. Interim Dean Lisa Grimm from HSS has also created a [proposal](#) to support writing instruction and FYS courses that is relevant to this charge. Due to the short timeline for the President's LIONS plan working groups, these items need to move quickly through governance to coincide with discussions occurring on campus.

Charge: Steering is aware that CAP has already begun review of a proposal from the College Core Council related to the writing curriculum, and Steering asks CAP to continue this work, keeping in mind the suggestions in the SEB memo. Steering also asks CAP to review the other

two items outlined above and in the SEB summary and proceed as suggested in the SEB summary.

Testimony Tier: Tier 3 – 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.

Timeline: CAP should make a Final Recommendation to Steering by **March 20, 2024** on adjustments to the first-year writing curriculum and by **April 15, 2024** on the other two recommendations. In the submission of the final recommendation CAP should note the stakeholder groups, number of persons responding, and summary of testimony collected.

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.