**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Committee on Academic Programs and CSCC

**FROM:** Steering Committee

**RE:** Undergraduate Certificate Programs

**DATE:** November 21, 2011

**Background:**

One of the major strategic initiatives announced by the President is the coordination of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs in support of an “Integrated Transformation”. To that end, a proposal to create a Leadership Development Certificate has been developed by an ad hoc committee composed of faculty, academic administrators and student affairs administrators. Because Undergraduate Certificate Programs are likely to be ones that go beyond the normal academic purview, we are asking that these questions be addressed jointly by CAP and CSCC and recommend that they do so by forming a subcommittee with representatives from both committees. This proposed Undergraduate Certificate Program contains both academic and experiential components and it raises the following questions that the Steering Committee believes need to be addressed through governance.

1. What is an appropriate definition of an Undergraduate Certificate Program? In developing a definition, Steering believes it could be helpful to CAP and CSCC to look at existing definitions of Academic Programs (majors, minors, etc.) <http://www.tcnj.edu/%7Eacademic/policy/Majors-typesof.htm>. Also helpful might be the example of the WILL program <http://will.pages.tcnj.edu/about/aboutwill/>

The definition should address these questions:

Should there be a maximum and minimum number of courses? Should there be a maximum and minimum of other learning experiences? What are the components of an Undergraduate Certificate? Should it always be a combination of coursework and experiential learning; or could it be wholly experiential or wholly academic?

1. What should the approval process for an Undergraduate Certificate Program be? In developing an approval process, Steering suggests that CAP and CSCC consider the existing procedure for approving a minor <http://www.tcnj.edu/%7Eacademic/policy/minors.html>. However, CAP and CSCC should also make sure that the approval process includes all elements of the college whose resources and expertise would be involved in a proposed Undergraduate Certificate Program.
2. What structure(s) should be involved in overseeing both development and administration of the Certificate? Should a certificate be housed in a specified administrative unit (e.g., a specific school), and how should this be determined?

The above referenced proposed Leadership Program/Certificate developed by the ad hoc committee could serve as a prototype for other Undergraduate Certificate Programs, and it is likely the first of many such integrated Programs to be developed. The Steering Committee therefore encourages CAP and CSCC to both look at the Proposed Leadership Program and any issues it may raise as they carry out this charge. Steering imagines that if the concept of an Undergraduate Certificate is approved and defined, this would be the first Undergraduate Certificate Program for which approval would be sought.

**Charge:**

The Steering Committee considers this a two-part charge. The Committee on Academic Programs and the Committee on Student and Campus Community should develop a definition of Undergraduate Certificate Programs and a process for their approval. Then the proposal for a Leadership Development Program should be reviewed in light of that definition and approval process.

**Timeline:**

The Steering Committee requests that both parts of the charge be completed by the end of the end of the Spring 2012 semester.

**TCNJ Governance Processes**

**Step #1 -- Identifying and reporting the problem:** When a Standing Committee receives an issue from the Steering Committee, the first responsibility is to clearly articulate and report the problem to the campus community through regular updates to the campus community and the Governance Web Page ([www.tcnj.edu/~steering](http://www.tcnj.edu/~steering) ). The problem may have been set out clearly in the charge received from the Steering Committee, or it may be necessary for the Standing Committee to frame a problem statement. The problem statement should indicate the difficulties or uncertainties that need to be addressed through new or revised policy, procedure, or program. The problem statement should be broadly stated and should include a context such as existing policy or practice. Problem statements may include solution parameters but should not suggest any actual solutions. Clearly stated problems will lead to better recommendations.

**Step #2 -- Preparing a preliminary recommendation:** Once the campus community has received the problem statement, committees can begin to collect data needed to make a recommendation. Committees typically receive input through committee membership, formal testimony, and open comment from affected individuals and all stakeholder groups. Committees must be proactive in inviting stakeholder groups (including Student Government Association, Staff Senate and Faculty Senate) to provide formal testimony prior to developing a preliminary recommendation. 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 through regular updates and the Governance Web Page.

**Step #3 -- Making a Final Recommendation:** Committees must use sound judgment to give the campus adequate time to review the preliminary recommendation before making their final recommendation. Again, committees are expected to be proactive in receiving feedback on the preliminary recommendation. 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, in the best judgment of the committee, the campus community has responded to the proposed resolution of the issue, the committee shall send their final recommendation (complete documentation) to the Steering Committee.

**Testimony**

The presenting of testimony is central to the concept of shared governance. All stakeholder groups will have an opportunity to provide input into governance issues through direct membership as well as invited testimony. Individuals appointed or elected to the governance system are expected to take a broad institutional perspective relative to issues being considered. In contrast, invited testimony will reflect the stakeholder perspective on the issue being considered. Committees are expected to be proactive in inviting stakeholder groups to provide testimony at both step # 2 and #3 of the process. Committees need to identify stakeholder groups that are interested in each particular issue and invite their testimony at scheduled Committee meetings or hearings. Committees should report in their minutes which groups were targeted as stakeholders, how testimony was invited, the form of the testimony (written, oral, etc.), and the substantive content of the testimony.