Date: September 20, 2010

To: Steering Committee

From:  Carol Bresnahan, Provost

      Gregory Pogue, Vice President Office of Human Resources

      TCNJ Advance Program (TAP) Family Friendly Policies Group

Request

The New Jersey Family Leave Act gives eligible TCNJ employees, including faculty members, the right to take up to 12 weeks of leave in order to care for a newly born or adopted baby, or other immediate family members.   Given the nature of faculty work, it is likely that full 12-week leave from the College may not be possible, nor optimal for individual faculty members.  For example, as the major responsibility of faculty members is in-class instruction, the timing of a 12-week leave period would have to align with the semester calendar, and clearly this is not always possible.  Furthermore, professional scholarship or creative activity is also a major portion of faculty work, and complete cessation of this activity may not be possible or desired for a complete 12-week leave period.  To provide faculty members flexibility in attending to family responsibilities or situations, it seems appropriate that TCNJ consider adopting a Modified Duties Policy.  Similar policies have been enacted at other colleges and universities (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and Marshall University are examples), and they provide a mechanism for individual faculty members, in consultation with the administration, to design a plan for a modification in the assignment of duties/responsibilities.  Indeed, such practice is currently in use at TCNJ, although it occurs on an ad hoc basis with little to no transparency or consistency across the campus. We therefore request that Steering ask the appropriate governance committee firstly consider whether TCNJ should adopt a Modified Duties Policy; if the Committee recommends that TCNJ adopt such a policy, we also request that the Committee offer recommendations regarding the nature of the policy and a timeline for reinstatement of normal duties and responsibilities.