TO: Committee on Academic Programs

FROM: Steering Committee

RE: Internships-Undergraduate Policy

DATE: February 23, 2015

Background:
On October 2, 2014 Dean Ben Rifkin sent the attached memo to Steering, which notes that the existing Internships-Undergraduate policy requires 50 hours of on-site experience per academic credit. Thus, a one-unit internship requires 200 hours on site. In a 14-week semester, this comes out to over 14 hours a week. The Dean's memo suggests that this requirement is not reasonable and is out of alignment with our larger academic system.

On October 8, 2014, Steering issued a charge to CAP asking the committee to review the Internships-Undergraduate policy's requirement that students must complete 50 hours of on-site experience per academic credit.

Steering now wishes to revise and expand this charge. On December 19, 2014 the Task Force on Mentored Internships completed its report (attached). The recommendations section of the report contains several suggestions that Steering believes warrant immediate attention. Therefore, Steering would like CAP to consider the Task Force's recommendations along with Dean Rifkin's memo.

Charge:
Steering asks CAP to review the Internships-Undergraduate policy as a whole and, if changes are warranted, to recommend a revised policy. In reviewing the policy, CAP should consider Dean Rifkin's memo and the report of the Task Force on Mentored Insternships. Steering notes that some of the Task Force recommendations are directed to administrators (Short-term Recommendations #2 & 3 and Further Consideration #3), but others (Short-term Recommendations #4 & 5 and Further Considerations #1, 2, 4, & 5) contain specific suggestions for policy.

Before crafting a preliminary recommendation, CAP should seek testimony from Academic Leaders and the Career Center. It may do so via email.

Once CAP has written a preliminary recommendation, it should seek testimony from faculty, students, and staff through the constituent organizations (Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government) and at least two open forums.

Timeline:
CAP should complete its preliminary recommendation by the end of the Spring 2015 semester. If it is not possible to seek testimony on the preliminary recommendation this semester, it should do so early next fall.

TCNJ Governance Processes

Step #1 -- Identifying and reporting the problem: When a Standing Committee receives a charge from the Steering Committee, the first responsibility is to clearly articulate and report the problem to the campus community. 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 specific 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 preliminary recommendation. Committees 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 through regular updates and the Governance website. At this point, committees typically receive input or testimony 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, Staff Senate and Faculty Senate) to provide formal testimony. In cases where testimony results in significant and substantive changes to the preliminary recommendation, the new recommendation will be considered to be in step #2.

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 its final recommendation (with documentation) to the Steering Committee. That final recommendation should include a suggested implementation date. Accompanying the final recommendation shall be a report of how testimony was gathered, 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.

Testimony

The presenting of testimony, prior to both the preliminary and final recommendations, 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 steps # 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 transmittal memos 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.

To see the Steering Committee's guidelines for gathering testimony and making a final recommendation, see the "Governance Toolbox" at http://academicaffairs.pages.tcnj.edu/college-governance/a-governance-toolbox/

To: Steering Committee
From: Ben Rifkin
Re: Internships Policy
Date: October 2, 2014

I request that Steering consider assigning to an appropriate governance committee (perhaps CAP) the question of expectations for hours at an internship for a credit-bearing internship experience.

The current policy, attached, says that we require 50 hours of on-site experience per academic credit (not unit). That seems to me to be out of line with broader academic expectations.

For instance, if a student had a 1-unit internship course, that would mean 200 hours on site. In a 14-week semester, that would mean 1.5 days per week at the site, a schedule not compatible with taking other classes.

It seems to me, as a dean, that this is not an appropriate correlation with our larger academic system.

A full academic load at TCNJ is 4 units / 16 credits. It does seem to me that a student spends approximately 200 hours on each class (including both class time and homework assignments / preparation for class / papers / exams, etc. all taken together.)

I believe that most if not all of our credit-bearing internships require students to write papers and many also require a presentation of one kind or another.

It seems to me that the 200 hours per unit of credit should *include* all the time students spend preparing for and reflecting on the internship experience and that we as a campus must also recognize the time that it takes students to get to their internship sites (which are often in New York and Philadelphia).

Therefore, I ask Steering to consider assigning to an appropriate governance committee (perhaps CAP) the question of expectations for hours at an internship for a credit-bearing internship experience given the academic expectations of a credit-bearing internship experience.

Internships are a very important part of the education we provide our students in HSS and in TCNJ more broadly. They are one of our signature experiences. Therefore, I believe this is an important discussion for us to have.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Members: Ashley Borders, Tammy Germana, Janet Gray, Debra Kelly,
                Emilie Lounsberry, Michael Ochs, Jennifer Palmgren
Submission Date: December 19, 2014

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Mentored Internship Task Force (MITF) is one of the five Signature Experience Task Forces formed by Academic Affairs for Fall 2014. The charge to the task force was as follows:

> While TCNJ is currently a best-practice institution with regard to Mentored Undergraduate Research, the adoption of our second signature experience gives us good reason to take a systematic look at how we are structuring mentored internship experiences for our students, particularly those for which we offer course credit. The Mentored Internship Task Force will pull together information on current internship programs and practices in various schools, through the Career Center, and within student affairs; consider how these experiences build upon students' curricular work; examine best practice for undergraduate internships (both paid and unpaid) in Higher Education; and generate recommendations on how we might strengthen and scale up the mentored internship opportunities available to our students. The Task Force will recommend a standard minimum dataset to track our practice and progress.

During Fall 2014, the task force discussed and surveyed TCNJ practices, consulted national higher education resources, and compiled both immediate recommendations and items for further consideration. Before beginning any research, the task force first agreed upon a definition of mentored internships as posted on the TCNJ Career Center website, with an implied assumption of at least one faculty or on-site supervisor serving as a mentor:

> "An academic internship is a form of experiential education that integrates knowledge and theory in the classroom with practical application and skill development in a profession setting. Students can earn academic credit, or there is some other connection to a degree-granting, educations institution. The internship is usually the length or equivalent of an academic term, may be part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid. An integral component of the experience that distinguishes it from other types of work is one of more forms of structured and deliberate reflection contained within learning agendas and objectives." Collaboration of Internship Listserv members (Pittsburgh Technology Council & Messiah College), NACE, NSEE (http://career.tcnj.edu/students/jobs-and-internships/internships/)

INTERNSHIPS AT TCNJ - CURRENT PRACTICES:

During the first task force meeting, members quickly identified broad variation of mentored internship activity across TCNJ – different processes, requirements, credit vs. not-for-credit policies, paid vs. unpaid opportunities, etc. As the task force members represent seven areas of TCNJ, a Qualtrics survey was developed to solicit current practices from all undergraduate departments and establish a baseline dataset.

SURVEY FINDINGS

TCNJ Department Chairs received the survey via email, with follow up from the task force members. The survey sought to establish baseline information about internships at TCNJ as this

does not exist. Survey questions asked about current internship requirements, processes, supervision, and mentorship.

The following data points summarize the survey results, reflecting the 20 undergraduate departments (out of 36 total) who submitted a complete survey. A copy of the survey and the full set of responses are enclosed at the end of this report.

- ➢ 35% of departments require an internship, with an additional 35% responding "not required, but highly encouraged."
- ➢ In 70% of departments, students may complete credit and non-credit internships, with 20% reporting only credit internships are offered. The School of Engineering reported that summer internships are strongly encouraged but there is no credit offered.
- ➢ The process for enrolling in an internship varies across departments with regards to formality, approval, paper and online forms.
- ➢ 81% of departments indicated on-site supervisors are required, with one comment indicating that their department believed this to be college policy.
- ➢ On-site supervisors provide mentorship in addition to basic supervision, as indicated by 83% of responses, with the remaining 17% indicating supervision-only.
- ➢ Faculty visit students at their internship sites in 29% of the departments.
- ➢ While no departments offer training for faculty supervisors, 29% offer at least some amount of student training in preparation for internships.
- ➢ The number of times a faculty member meets with a student during an internship ranges from once a semester to once a week, or more on a need basis.
- ➢ 76% of departments survey students or require a report at the completion of an internship.
- ➢ Most departments require a minimum class level and 2.5 GPA or higher, with a majority also requiring pre-requisite coursework. Students must work 50 hours to earn one credit in most cases, however there is some confusion regarding college policy dictating these criteria (class level, GPA, credits).
- ➢ The extent to which evaluations and reflective assignments are required of students varies greatly among departments. Some internships require no evaluations or assignments, while others require one or more of the following: student's assessment of their employer, on-site supervisor's assessment of the student, written reflection pieces on their learning, journal of weekly reflections, detailed activity logs, presentation at the Celebration of Student Achievement, and/or a research paper related to their internship.
- ➢ Internship-specific webpages are maintained by half of the departments.

BEST PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Several national and regional organizations in career development and experiential education provide guidelines and best practices for internships in higher education. In consultation with the Career Center, the task force reviewed current guides and best practice documents

published by these leading organizations, including: the United States Department of Labor, National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), National Society of Experiential Education (NSEE), NJ Cooperative Education & Internship Association (NJCEIA), Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), Messiah College and the Greater Delaware Valley area (whose internship guide is regarded as a national model). The task force also sought best practices within TCNJ, reviewing Career Center resources and discussing internships with faculty and staff.

The following list summarizes the most common findings regarding best practices, where two or more organizations enforced this practice:

- **Student training or orientation:** Provide student interns with training to help them understand expectations of the work environment from dress code to professional ethics.
- **Learning outcomes***: Articulate expected student learning outcomes for internships through internship syllabi.
- **Employer training**: Determine criteria for effective, inclusive internship sites and train appropriate internship personnel to ensure productive and appropriate learning opportunities for students.
- **Faculty training**: Faculty qualifications should include development of assessment skills, proper communication with students, enhancement of student learning, and management skills.
- **Faculty-led assessment**: Faculty should conduct regular assessments to determine to what degree the stated mission, goals, and student learning outcomes are being met.
- **On-site supervision and evaluation**: All internship employers should assign a supervisor to supervise and mentor the intern, provide periodic progress evaluations to the intern as well as a final evaluation to the intern and to the academic institution supervisor.
- **Student evaluation of employer**: Students should complete a standardized evaluation of their employer and submit it to their faculty supervisor for review. Colleges may use these evaluations to determine if an internship should be continued and/or strengthened.
- **Student handbook**: Student interns should be provided with a handbook (paper or electronic) to help navigate internship processes and questions.
- **Flexible schedules:** Encourage employers to offer flexible schedules to accommodate students' varied academic schedules.
- **Site visits:** College faculty and staff should be able to visit the internship sites, learn about the experiences students will have as interns, and build ongoing relationships.
- **Internship manager**: Have a college-wide or school-wide internship manager.

It is important to note the TCNJ Community Enhancement Internship Program (CEI) and its respective Program Manual exemplifies many of the national recommendations. The CEI

Program is an on campus, paid internship program that exposes students to the business of higher education, has training components, reflection materials and evaluations.

In addition to best practices, some national career development resources, such as the National Career Development Association (NCDA) share their research on career development, which could be helpful in informing learning outcomes related to mentored internships. Per the NCDA, there are three important facets to career development: personal social development, educational achievement and lifelong learning, and career management. They also identify three stages of career learning, including knowledge acquisition, application, and reflection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mentored Internships Task Force recommends the following actions and other considerations to strengthen mentored internships and integrate best practices.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Update the TCNJ policy on internships and communicate policy to all faculty and staff. Currently, some confusion exists about minimum requirements, credit weight, and if an active policy is in writing.
2. Explore the use of one central database to manage internships. This will allow for future tracking of internship activity as well as uniform processes and communication among participants. Lionslink, Collegiate Link, Canvas, PAWS, and Qualtrics are potential tools that can assist internships.
3. Conduct student focus groups to seek improvements to the student experience. This will also provide an opportunity to verify if expectations of the students were realistic, if they learned significant knowledge, and their experience of the mentorship.
4. Develop and require training for students prior to internships. Topics should include expectations of the workplace, the internship process, and maximizing the internship as a learning experience.
5. Require all internships to have documented learning objectives.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Should faculty supervisors be required to have at least one meeting or contact with the on-site supervisor during the internship?
2. Should internships require final evaluations from the faculty supervisor, the on-site supervisor, and the student?
3. Explore mentored internship opportunities in areas that currently offer few internships. In some disciplines, such as STEM majors, research programs are more common. Are there opportunities to expand internships in these fields?
4. Periodic feedback is valuable to the student's learning experience, and can facilitate mentoring conversations. Should all internships require the student to have both a faculty and on-site supervisor? What minimum feedback should be provided to the student during the internship experience?

5. As reinforcement of the learning experience, should all internships require at least one reflective assignment?

Submitted 12/18/14