To: Steering Committee

From: Liberal Learning Program Council

Re: Liberal Learning Mid-Level Writing Requirement

Date: December 17, 2014

The Liberal Learning Program Council requests that Steering assign to appropriate governance committee (perhaps CAP) a proposal to revise the nature of the mid-level writing requirement of Liberal Learning.

Currently, Liberal Learning writing requirements are satisfied by three writing-intensive courses: the First Seminar, a mid-level (second or third year) writing-intensive course in the major or liberal learning; and a capstone or other fourth-year writing-intensive course in the major. Some students are also required to complete WRI 102 if we determine through writing placement that they do not have sufficient writing skills upon matriculation at TCNJ.

The Chemistry Department submitted a proposal to the LLPC to replace their current mid-level writing intensive course with an approach that spreads the writing requirement across a number of courses (a Writing-Enriched Curriculum). The Chemistry Department raised several concerns about their mid-level writing-intensive course that were echoed by several members of the LLPC involved in writing and writing-intensive courses: three discrete courses are not necessarily producing writing competency, students are not always prepared for their capstone writing-intensive courses following a single, mid-level writing-intensive courses, and the emphasis on writing-intensive courses minimizes the attention given to writing in other courses in which writing is an important skill.

For some departments, a Writing-Enriched Curriculum approach might offer several advantages over concentrating the writing in a few writing-intensive courses:

* Allows departments to craft the writing competencies they expect from the students in their discipline;
* Better integrates writing into more courses in the discipline;
* Makes writing a more central element in more courses;
* Affords students the opportunity for feedback on drafts before they are graded;
* Better prepares students for the writing of the senior capstone; and
* Expands the opportunity for training in teaching writing and providing useful feedback.

The LLPC, which includes the Director of the Writing Program, found the proposal from Chemistry compelling but realized that approval of the proposal would represent approval of a change to the structure of the writing requirement in Liberal Learning, and therefore might necessitate a charge from Steering to initiate a proposal for the change.

The programmatic change would be to add WEC as a second option, alongside a single writing-intensive course, by which major programs might satisfy the mid-level writing requirement of Liberal Learning. Departments would be able to choose which of the two options best suits their students. There would be no change to the First Seminar or capstone requirements.

We believe it could be advantageous to revisit the Writing-Intensive guidelines and request a charge from Steering to do so.

Thank you for your consideration.