MEMORANDUM

TO: Committee on Faculty Affairs

FROM: Steering Committee

RE: Tenure & Promotion Policies – Alignment with New NJ Statute

DATE: February 19, 2014

Background:
In January, 2014, Governor Christie signed into law a statute changing the tenure process at New Jersey state colleges. According to the statute, the review of candidates for tenure at TCNJ now must take place in the candidate's fifth year, rather than in the fourth year, as is our current practice.

In a February 14, 2014 memo to the faculty, the Provost noted her intention to put into governance a charge asking the College to consider whether, given the new statute, the processes for tenure and for promotion to associate professor should be linked.

Charge:
Steering asks CFA to consider whether the processes for tenure and promotion to associate professor should be joined into a single process and decision, except in cases when a faculty member chooses to apply for promotion to associate professor before he or she is eligible for tenure.

If CFA's recommendation is to join the two processes, then the committee will, as a second step, need to make recommendations on two closely allied issues:
1. Should the College Promotions Committee become a College Tenure and Promotions Committee?
2. What should be the timeline for the joint tenure/promotion process?

If CFA does not recommend joining the two processes, then the second step will be to recommend a new timeline for the tenure process.

Timeline:
The new statute takes effect for faculty hired this year who begin their employment after July 20, 2014. In her February 14 memo, the Provost noted that departments and programs hiring new faculty members this year need to revise their disciplinary standards and send them to their deans on or before May 1. These standards will then come to CFA, Deans Council, and the Provost for review. She also noted that we do not have to complete the decision about whether to join tenure and promotion on an equally tight deadline.

However, it is important that a preliminary recommendation on whether the two processes should be joined be completed this semester. This will enable CFA to gather testimony and complete its final recommendations next fall.

Steering asks that CFA complete its preliminary recommendation on whether the two processes should be joined by May 2.

In preparing its preliminary recommendation, CFA should work with the Faculty Senate to determine the best ways to gather testimony from faculty.

At the same time as it prepares its preliminary recommendation on whether the two processes should be joined, CFA should begin gathering information and testimony on the two allied issues:

1. Should the College Promotions Committee become a College Tenure and Promotions Committee?
2. What should be the timeline for the joint tenure/promotion process?

Steering recommends that for issue #1, in addition to gathering testimony from TCNJ faculty, CFA should investigate best practices in peer institutions, including the membership of joint tenure and promotions committees and their role in the process of tenure and concurrent promotion to associate professor. For issue #2, CFA should work with Academic Affairs to devise a timeline that considers the needs of candidates, departmental committees, deans, and Academic Affairs.

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/