CAP’s Final Recommendation on Academic Load Policy

TO: Steering Committee

FROM: Committee on Academic Programs

RE: Final Recommendation on Academic Load Policy

DATE: April 20th, 2015

**Background:**

On February 4th, 2015 CAP received a charge from the Steering Committee regarding a memo sent by Frank Cooper of the Office of Records and Registration. The memo noted that while the current academic load policy contained limits on the number of courses students could take during a “regular” summer session (“four course units with no more than two units in a single session”) it did not address the Winter or Maymester (soon to be renamed Summer 1) terms. The memo recommended that students be limited to one course unit during these sessions. Steering directed CAP to seek testimony on this matter from Faculty and Staff Senate, Student Government and Academic Leaders. It noted that the recommendation made by Frank Cooper should be considered as an interim policy “until the policy can be reviewed through the governance process” and that this policy could serve as a preliminary recommendation to be distributed to the stakeholders noted above.

**Testimony:**

CAP solicited testimony via email from the members of the Faculty and Staff Senates and through its Student Government representatives. An email was also sent to Academic leaders requesting their feedback. Concerns raised in this testimony were addressed at CAP’s April 8th meeting.

**Final Recommendation:**

CAP supports the recommendation made by the Office of Records and Registration regarding Academic Load. Note that this policy applies to undergraduate students only. Policies governing graduate students can be found at the appropriate section of the Graduate Bulletin, located at [http://graduate.tcnj.edu/files/2011/05/pg15-18\_Registration-Procedures-and-Degree-Requirements.pdf:](http://graduate.tcnj.edu/files/2011/05/pg15-18_Registration-Procedures-and-Degree-Requirements.pdf%3A)

The revised policy should read as follows:

Students taking a minimum of three full course units per semester are considered to be full-time students for financial aid and billing purposes. This definition of full-time study applies to the fall and spring semesters and to the regular summer sessions. The standard academic load is four course units per semester; however, programmatic exceptions do exist and students should check with their major department. A student in a degree program with a standard academic load who wishes to take more than 4.5 course units must receive permission from the dean’s office to do so. This includes additional credits taken simultaneously at another institution. In order to be eligible to request permission to take more than 4.5 course units, a student must have completed 8 course units at TCNJ (4 course units for transfer students) and have at least a 3.3 GPA. Some of the criteria that may be considered when making decisions to grant permission for more than 4.5 course units are: 1) evidence of the student’s ability to continue to maintain at least a 3.3 GPA; 2) whether the additional course or credit is a prerequisite for a subsequent required course; 3) whether there are extenuating curricular circumstances, such as completing a double major.

The TCNJ academic year is divided into four terms (Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer).  The Summer term is further divided into three sessions (Maymester, Summer 1, and Summer 2). Students may take a maximum of four course units during the summer term, with no more than two units in a single session. Students may only take one course unit during the Maymester session or Winter term.  This policy applies to the total number of courses taken in any given term whether those classes are taken at TCNJ or at another institution during a TCNJ term. Any exception to these requirements would require Dean's approval.