

MEMORANDUM

TO: Committee on Academic Programs
FROM: Steering Committee
RE: Transfer Credit Policy
DATE: September 21, 2016

Background:

The attached memo from Deirdre Jackson, writing on behalf of the Department of Nursing, proposes a change in the transfer credit policy for students in the RN to BSN program.

Charge:

CAP should review the memo and determine if it wishes to modify the existing Transfer Credit Policy. If it decides that revisions are needed, it should proceed to develop a revised policy. Steering suggests that at step 1, CAP should consider whether there are any units that might be affected by the proposal that have not been consulted. Once a preliminary recommendation is prepared, testimony should be solicited in the form of written feedback (through a survey and or e-mail), including from the Faculty Senate.

Timeline:

CAP should complete its work on this charge by the end of October, 2016.

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/>

MEMORANDUM

TO: Steering Committee

FROM: Deirdre Jackson, Nursing Outreach Coordinator, Department of Nursing

RE: Change in Transfer Credit Policy-Increase Credits Accepted

DATE: August 17, 2016

Background:

A primary goal of the off-site RN to BSN program is to support the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Initiative on the Future of Nursing mandate to increase the number of RNs with a BSN to 80% by 2020. The Department of Nursing is working on a collaborative agreement with Mercer County Community College and St. Francis School of Nursing to support seamless academic progression for RN students to attain their BSN. This collaboration has the potential to increase the number of students in our off-site RN to BSN program. The off-site RN to BSN program is also open to nurses who work for our regional healthcare partners (St. Peter's University Hospital, Hunterdon Medical Center, Capital Health Medical System, University Medical Center of Princeton, and Robert Wood Johnson-Hamilton Hospital) and other nurses in the community.

Many nurses who complete associate degree programs in nursing graduate with greater than 64 credit hours completed. For example, students in the St. Francis School of Nursing/Mercer County Community College collaborative nursing program are required to complete 70-71 credit hours for graduation. Nurses who complete their initial nursing training at a hospital school of nursing complete coursework that is similar to graduates of associate degree programs in nursing. However, they graduate with a diploma in nursing and often do not earn college credit. This places them at a disadvantage when returning to school.

TCNJ's current Transfer Credit policy:

- Allows for a maximum of 64 credits (16 course units) transferred in from schools designated as a community college or junior college;
- Allows for transfer of all credits to complete AA/AS degree but no more than one half credits required to complete TCNJ corresponding degree program (e.g. for BSN 64 credits out of required 128 credits).
- Allows for a maximum of 80 credits (20 course units) transferred in from all sources;
- Does not accept transfer credit from diploma schools unless credits have gone through ACE review or a review from a foreign credential review agency.

The RN to BSN program performed an initial review of New Jersey colleges and universities to determine their transfer credit practices. The review included the number of credits needed to graduate, residency requirements, and number of transfer credits accepted from associate and diploma schools of nursing. This review revealed that competing RN to BSN programs accept between 65 and 80 credits from two year institutions and may accept up to 90 credits from a combination of two-year and four-year college coursework. Many of these competitors also accept transfer credit from diploma schools of nursing. The Office of Records and Registration followed up this initial review with their own review of several New Jersey college and university RN to BSN programs focusing on diploma school transfer credits. They found that other RN to BSN programs accept credit from diploma schools that are accredited by the

National League for Nursing Accreditation Committee. The average number of credits accepted is thirty (30). These assessment and findings revealed that TCNJ's current Transfer Credit policy places TCNJ at a distinct disadvantage with regard to recruiting students for its off-site RN to BSN program.

Recommendation:

The Department of Nursing asks CAP to consider revisions to the Transfer Credit policy to allow RN to BSN students to transfer in:

- up to a maximum of 30 credits from diploma schools of nursing provided the school is accredited by a national nursing accreditation body
- up to a maximum of 70 credits from schools designated as community or junior colleges
- up to a maximum of 80 credits from all sources

If RN to BSN students change majors once matriculated at TCNJ, transfer credit will revert to the typical acceptance levels. We request that this policy change extend to all current and future students in the RN to BSN program in continued support of the IOM mandate to increase the number of RNs with a BSN to 80% by 2020.