

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Committee on Academic Programs

**FROM:** Steering Committee

**RE:** Academic Integrity Procedural Standards

**DATE:** March 1, 2017

### **Background:**

On February 21, 2017, Steering received the attached letter from 22 faculty members in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences raising a concern about the clarity of the language in the Academic Integrity Procedural Standards. This letter is attached; however the illustrative example referred to in the letter has been removed to protect the identity of the student involved. The authors of the letter are questioning the clarity of the language in the first paragraph of Section III of the Procedural Standards.

### **Charge:**

The Steering committee charges CAP to review the relevant language in Section III of the Academic Integrity Procedural Standards to determine whether the language should be changed to improve clarity. If CAP determines that the language should be changed, then CAP should proceed to develop a recommendation concerning new language. If the edits are minor and do not change the intended content of the procedural standards in any way, then CAP may treat this recommendation as final without obtaining testimony. If CAP believes the proposed changes to language may affect the content of the procedural standards, then CAP should view its recommendation as preliminary and seek testimony from the campus community at open fora and via electronic testimony.

### **Timeline:**

CAP should complete its work on this charge by the end of Spring 2017.

### **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/>

February 21, 2017

Dear Cynthia,

The faculty signing below would like to request a small but important change in our Academic Integrity Policy. This request has also the support of the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Currently, the Policy's Procedural Standards state that, after a complaint is filed, the "AIO will . . .conduct an investigation including but not limited to discussion with the individual(s) who submitted the complaint, discussion with witnesses, and review of relevant documents as appropriate" (III. Investigation and Hearing, lines 3-6).

We are requesting that the AIO (and/or the CAIO) *be required to invite* the individual(s) who submitted the complaint and give them the opportunity to present their case in person. The complainant might then decide whether the relevant documents speak for themselves or if additional explanations are needed to ensure a full understanding of the case.

Although, under the current language, a discussion with the complainant seems to be expected, the words "as appropriate" leave it entirely to the AIO's own judgment.

Included with this letter is a report written on a case that was brought up to the AIA and AIO last semester. We believe that the case handling and its outcome fully justify this request. This is not, by any means, an isolated case, but we believe it illustrates quite well the problem.

Sincerely,

In alphabetical order:

Aleksey Berg, World Languages and Cultures  
Winnifred Brown-Glaude, Chair, African American Studies  
Deborah Compte, World Languages and Cultures  
Holly HK Didi-Ogren, World Languages and Cultures; Sociology/Anthropology  
Karen A. Fenner, World Languages and Cultures  
Alvin Joaquín Figueroa, World Languages and Cultures  
Ellen Friedman, English  
Luis Gabriel-Stheeman, World Languages and Cultures  
Joseph J. Goebel Jr., Chair, World Languages and Cultures  
Jean E. Graham, Associate Chair, English  
Marimar Huguet-Jerez, World Languages and Cultures  
Isabel Kentengian, World Languages and Cultures  
Celia Liu, World Languages and Cultures  
Jiayan Mi, World Languages and Cultures  
Regina Morin, World Languages and Cultures  
Agustín Otero, World Languages and Cultures  
Adriana Rosman-Askot, World Languages and Cultures  
Glenn A. Steinberg, Chair, English  
David M. Stillman, World Languages and Cultures  
Bruce D. Stout, Chair, Department of Criminology  
Diane Vanner Steinberg, English  
Simona Wright, World Languages and Cultures