

MEMORANDUM

TO: Graduate Programs Council

FROM: Steering Committee

RE: Policies concerning double counting graduate courses

DATE: March 1, 2017

Background:

On February 27, 2017, Steering received the attached memo from Ieva Zake, Vice Provost, requesting a review of the College's policies disallowing double counting of courses towards both an undergraduate and a graduate TCNJ degree. The relevant policies are listed in Zake's memo.

Charge:

The Steering committee charges GPC to review existing policy on this matter and to determine whether changes to policy should be recommended. If GPC determines that policy should be changed, then GPC should proceed to prepare a preliminary recommendation for consideration by CAP. Steering suggests that at step 1, GPC should explore existing practice at peer institutions and should seek testimony from department chairs and graduate coordinators in departments with graduate programs as well as any other stakeholders deemed appropriate by GPC. Once a preliminary recommendation is prepared, this recommendation should be forwarded to Steering so that Steering may charge CAP to consider adoption of this policy.

Timeline:

GPC 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/>

To: Cindy Curtis, Steering Committee

From: Ieva Zake, Vice-Provost

Re: Double-counting graduate credits in accelerated 5-year master's programs

Date: February 27, 2017

Current policy and practice permit a student in a five-year program to enroll in up to 3 graduate courses within their undergraduate career. However, the student may use those credits toward either the undergraduate degree or the graduate degree only, but not toward satisfying requirements of both degree programs. Discussion related to the development of this policy can be found here: <http://academicaffairs.tcnj.edu/college-governance/status-of-issues-in-governance-2012-2013-2/>.

This policy restricts College's ability to offer accelerated 5-year master's programs, in which qualifying students double-count graduate credits for both degrees. Reputable institutions such as George Mason University, Georgetown University, Fordham University, Temple University and others offer numerous 5-year master's programs in which students apply from 6 to 12 graduate credits taken during senior year toward both undergraduate and graduate degrees.

We request the Steering Committee to charge the Graduate Programs Council to review the existing policy and to consider making a recommendation to the Committee on Academic Programs for revisions that would allow academic departments to develop programs in which 9 or 12 credits could count toward satisfying requirements for both undergraduate and graduate degrees. We suggest that the work on a preliminary recommendation of this revised policy is completed by spring 2017.

Relevant policies to be reviewed are "Undergraduates Taking Graduate Courses" (<http://policies.tcnj.edu/policies/digest.php?docId=8567>), "Undergraduate Enrollment in Graduate Course," "Transfer of Credit," and "Transfer of Prior Coursework" (<https://graduate.tcnj.edu/files/2011/05/Registration-Procedures-and-Degree-Requirements-1.pdf>), and the Enrollment in a Graduate Course form at <https://recreg.tcnj.edu/files/2016/12/undergraduate-enrollment-in-grad-course>.