

CAP's Preliminary Recommendation on Learning Assistants Policy

TO: Steering Committee

From: Committee on Academic Programs

RE: Preliminary Recommendation on Learning Assistants

Date: May 15, 2017

Background:

In February 2017 CAP received a charge from the Steering Committee to consider the need for a new policy on the use of learning assistants. CAP was asked to consider the extent to which the existing policy on internships applies or whether additional guidelines are needed. If CAP determined that a new policy was needed, then CAP was charged with soliciting testimony once a Preliminary Recommendation was prepared.

Preliminary Recommendation:

CAP consulted with Jeanine Vinona, chair of the Psychology Department, and AJ Richards, learning assistant coordinator in the Physics department to gather input on existing learning assistant courses in these departments. After discussion, CAP determined that a new policy on Learning Assistants was warranted, and developed a Preliminary Recommendation. CAP approved the attached Preliminary Recommendation on the Learning Assistants Policy, however CAP was unable to solicit further testimony from the campus community before the end of the Spring 2017 semester. Therefore this is not a Final Recommendation.

Learning Assistants Policy

I. INTRODUCTION

This policy defines and outlines the parameters for student “learning assistants” in TCNJ courses taught by fulltime faculty.

II. DEFINITIONS

Learning Assistants - help professors enhance the learning of TCNJ students in formal learning contexts and receive course units/credits.

I. POLICY

This policy addresses the roles and responsibilities for TCNJ learning assistants.

A hallmark of instruction at TCNJ is small class size that provides students the opportunity to directly interact with faculty in meaningful ways. Therefore, there are no traditional Teaching Assistants at TCNJ. Learning Assistants are not traditional Teaching Assistants. The primary purpose of Learning Assistants is to enhance learning outcomes for students by providing support and assistance in formal learning contexts (classrooms, labs, studios etc.) in tandem with the professor.

1. To support students in TCNJ courses, Learning Assistants can complete a variety of tasks that might include: giving feedback on student work, providing assistance in the classroom, leading recitation sessions/review sessions that happen during an unscheduled 4th hour, providing peer mentoring or tutoring, and updating course materials with oversight from the professor.
2. To preserve high quality faculty/student interactions, Learning Assistants may not assign grades or lead class sessions without the professor present.
3. Learning Assistants earn course credit. A course proposal with accompanying syllabus will be created and approved through the governance process (i.e. Department and School Curriculum Committee etc...). Appropriate prerequisite courses must be identified and be completed successfully prior to the learning assistantship experience. Additional requirements may be established by the department.

II. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Internship Policy