**MINUTES**

**February 19, 2020 – 12:00-1:20pm – SCP 117**

**In attendance:** Abourahma, Adler, Baker, Bellino, Bender, Boero, Borders, Bowen, Bruno, Bush, Bwire, Curtis, Dahling, Dempf, Gevertz, Grega, Haikes, Knox, Lasher, Leonard, Li, Lovett, Meixner, Morin, Norvell, O’Connor, Pearlstein, Salgian, Schwarz, Tang, Toloudis, Tucci, Warner-Ault.

**Excused:** Bechtel, Becker, Prensky, Singer, Sorokina, Steele.

**Absent:** Burroughs, Fazio, Fienberg.

**Minutes**

* The minutes of the February 5, 2020, meeting were approved as submitted.

**CFA Testimony on Modification of Teaching Duties (Andy Leynes)**

* Andy took testimony on CFA’s proposed revised modification of teaching duties policy.
* Discussion.
* If you have additional feedback, please send it to Andy by 2/21.

**Enrollment Management (Lisa Angeloni)**

* Nationally there are a declining number of traditional-age students. This has just started to affect TCNJ.
* We are down 4.9%. HSS & the School of Science are down due to issues with the open options/undeclared status.
* The college has installed a new CRM system which will allow better tracking of applicants.
* Discussion.
* The college will be accepting 30 students out of a pool of over 800 who applied as undeclared majors.
* Discussion.

**Discussion of President Foster’s Presentation to the Senate**

* Matt opened up the floor for comments/impressions of President Foster’s visit at the last Senate meeting.
* Discussion.

**Draft of Document for Finalist Candidates for Provost and VP of Academic Affairs**

* Matt led a discussion of the SEB’s draft of the letter to the provost/VP search candidates.
* The letter is similar to the one given to President Foster, but there are an additional 2 sections covering the role of the Senate and equity and inclusion.
* Discussion.
* Please send additional comments to Matt.
* Motion made to approve the letter with the provision that SEB has permission to make changes based on additional feedback. Seconded.
* Motion passed unanimously.
* **Final Version is attached (Attachment 1)**

Meeting adjourned at 1:25 pm.

Upcoming Events

* Spring Faculty Senate Research Colloquium, Gerry Altmiller, February 26, 2020, 12:00, Business Lounge
* Gitenstein-Hart Lecture, Deborah Hutton, April 28, 12:30, Library Auditorium

**ATTACHMENT 1**

To: Candidate for the Position of Provost and Vice-President of Academic Affairs From: The Faculty Senate

Date: February 25, 2020

Subject: An Introduction to the Faculty of The College of New Jersey

The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) is a primarily undergraduate and residential institution with targeted graduate programs. We are proud to offer an unparalleled education, most notably doing so with a public mandate at an affordable price. We have found substantial success in this endeavor because of the culture of our campus community: we have a strong sense of shared purpose, we are open to self-reflection, we are willing to make significant changes to improve, and our system of shared governance promotes meaningful collaboration among all constituent groups on campus.

The faculty is aware of the considerable challenges facing higher education today, and we understand that TCNJ is not protected from these forces. We believe, however, that the strength of our community and consistent and steady leadership have held us in good stead. We look forward to welcoming a new Provost and Vice-President of Academic Affairs, who will help us to navigate the challenges and opportunities facing us.

The purpose of this document is to introduce the Faculty and the Faculty Senate, and to share the perspective of the faculty on the current state of the College and our future direction. Below we identify four areas – Academics and Curriculum, Role and Structure of the Faculty, Shared Governance and Decision-Making, and Equity and Inclusion – that we feel deserve focus. Part of this document is excerpted from a similar one given to President Foster in May 2018.

**THE FACULTY AND THE FACULTY SENATE**

TCNJ has nearly 350 full-time faculty members, organized into seven academic schools (School of Arts and Communication, School of Business, School of Education, School of Engineering, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Nursing, Health and Exercise Science, and School of Science) and the Library. We are complemented in our work by professional staff, as well as part-time, non-tenure track, and adjunct faculty.

The Faculty Senate is the representative body of the Faculty. It consists of 40 faculty, elected proportionately from the seven schools and the library, as well as the two faculty representatives to the Board of Trustees and the President of the AFT local. Senators serve terms of three years in length. The Senate is led by an Executive Board (SEB), which consists of a President, Vice- President, Parliamentarian, at-large members, and the two board representatives. These individuals are elected by the Senators and serve one-year terms (except for the board representatives, who serve on SEB for the whole of their board terms).

The Faculty Senate serves several important functions. It serves as the representative body of the faculty and provides a faculty voice on issues facing the institution. Working in conjunction with College governance, it ensures a faculty perspective on college-wide issues; promotes diversity through its appointments to college-wide committees and councils; encourages and supports excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service; and fosters community and collegiality.

The role of the Faculty Senate, and its place within TCNJ’s system of Shared Governance, are outlined in the Senate Constitution as well as the Governance Structure and Process document:

https://facultysenate.tcnj.edu/constitution/

https://governance.tcnj.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/147/2017/08/Governance-2017.pdf

**ACADEMICS AND CURRICULUM**

We are proud of the collaborative, personalized, and rigorous education that we offer our students. We want to ensure that all our students are able to fully realize their potential and that our curriculum and academic support structures foster maximum growth for all our students. We believe that we need to refocus our attention on the academic mission and programs of the College. In 2004, we completed a workload transformation that put us at the cutting edge of curriculum development. This was a local effort that built on our strengths and we are eager to reengage with the spirit of that moment. We see a number of opportunities and challenges:

* We would like an opportunity to be innovative and, once again, to chart new directions in terms of course and curriculum design. While we should not ignore national trends and best practices, we want to develop our academic programs to reflect our own expertise as faculty and our own unique position as a public institution with many of the characteristics and advantages of a private liberal arts college. We look forward to working with Academic Leadership to develop pioneering curricula across all aspects of the student educational experience, including the major and Liberal Learning.
* At this moment, the Liberal Learning Program, our general education program, is an area that is ripe for such innovation. Liberal Learning is an integral component of the undergraduate educational experience and while in general, faculty enthusiastically espouse its centrality, students are not always as convinced of the benefits of a strong liberal education. We believe that we should not only continue the ongoing work to revise the current Liberal Learning Program, but that we should also consider how Liberal Learning and coursework in the major are integrated to provide a seamless and relevant learning experience for our students. In addition, it is also critical that as we revise Liberal Learning, we find a way to communicate clearly to students the benefits of such an integrated education.
* Other academic programs, such as our First Year Experience, the First Seminar Program, and the Honors Program, would also benefit from additional attention, which we realize may require significant faculty time and resources.
* We recognize the importance of offering more high-quality, relevant graduate programs. We would like to do so in an innovative, thoughtful way that reinforces our existing strengths while opening the door to new ideas.
* We would like to prepare for the changing demographics of future college students in New Jersey. Our student body will change over the next decade or two, becoming more ethnically and racially diverse and including more non-traditional students. We are excited to see this

diverse group of students come to campus, and we want to make sure we are prepared and have the academic, social and cultural resources to support them.

* We also want to ensure that we have the necessary resources and services to help our students with differing abilities and mental health concerns. In the past several years, an increasing number of students have made use of these resources, and we want to ensure that we can continue to support all in need.
* At the same time, we do not want the costs of curricular innovation and student support to impact the affordability of the education that we offer. We want to have the difficult conversations about how to balance our competing desires here.
* We would like to combat the tendency on our campus for students to become siloed within their major. Because our students, for the most part, are admitted to the College within a particular major, students sometimes become too focused on their major’s program of study, missing opportunities for growth and for optimal learning experiences outside that program. We would like to explore whether or not our current admissions policies introduce barriers that inhibit intellectual curiosity and student exploration. However, we seek to balance this with not increasing time-to-degree, avoiding a negative impact on retention/graduation rates, and developing best practices on campus for advising students that are less certain about their specific interests as they begin their college experience.

**ROLE AND STRUCTURE OF THE FACULTY**

The teacher-scholar model is central to our institutional identity and to the richness of the academic experience of our students. We want to preserve this important part of our campus culture, which fuels our award-winning opportunities for undergraduate research. This enlivens the intellectual life of our faculty and, by extension, of our students. We understand the financial challenges associated with supporting research activities, but we look forward to working together to make our teacher-scholar model thrive in spite of challenges:

* Funding to support research remains a challenge. We are pleased that President Foster has recently increased financial support for faculty scholarship by funding a program that guarantees course release to newly hired faculty. This relieves some of the stress on our Support of Scholarly Activity Program, which provides course release or research funds to faculty on a competitive basis. In recent years, this program has no longer been able to meet our needs in support of faculty research, as the faculty have become more research active as a whole. We look forward to working with the new provost to continue to identify new funding sources to better support faculty scholarly programs for faculty at all career stages, including both assigned time for scholarship and travel.
* We are deeply committed to teaching our students. The curricular experience provided to our students by our full-time faculty is not readily replicated by adjunct faculty. As we seek to find new ways to support faculty scholarly work, we should retain our commitment to a system in which full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty provide the bulk of instruction.
* In addition to work as teacher-scholars, many faculty members serve in faculty administrative roles for a portion of their careers, leading campus-wide academic programs, chairing governance committees, and chairing departments. We see this work as vital for the institution. In the coming years we hope to work with the administration to better support faculty in substantial service and administrator roles, including improved training opportunities, appropriate financial support, and the staff support necessary to allow faculty members in such roles to focus on academic leadership.

**SHARED GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING**

We are proud of our strong tradition of shared governance and appreciate that the governance structure includes all constituent groups. The faculty at TCNJ are committed to the institution and to every aspect of its operation, and faculty frequently give generously of their time and energy to the College – above and beyond their contractual obligations.

Our current system of shared governance gives a strong role for the faculty in the development of policy, programs, and procedures. However, faculty have a much more limited voice in the planning and implementation processes at the College. We look forward to working with our new provost through the Committee on Strategic Planning and Priorities (CSPP) and the Steering Committee to make our shared governance system more effective.

* Faculty have expertise and interests which could benefit the College's planning in many areas. We hope to work with our new provost and CSPP to find ways for faculty to contribute to campus planning. We are particularly interested in increasing opportunities for faculty voice in decisions currently made at the cabinet level, without governance input; and for improved and earlier consultation and collaboration with faculty who will be asked to implement administrative decisions and plans.
* While faculty input into policy, procedure, and programs is much stronger than in the planning area, we nonetheless look forward to working with the provost and the Steering committee to continue to improve this. In particular, there needs to be an appropriate balance in the work assigned to governance, so that committees are not burdened with minutiae but are involved meaningfully in the development and review of all broad, far-reaching policies, procedures, and programs.

**EQUITY AND INCLUSION**

Over the past two years, the College has become more aware of the need to focus time and resources on building a community that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. Two years ago, the community became aware that the namesake of one of its main buildings, Paul Loser, had actively worked to promote school segregation in the City of Trenton in the 1940s. This incident highlighted the College’s disconnect from its surrounding communities. Last year, a race bias incident on campus that targeted several of our students brought attention to numerous other incidents and showed how the College community has failed to adequately support many members of its community, in particular students of color.

The College has taken steps over the past year and a half that have made some progress in addressing these issues, while working more generally to create a welcoming, equitable, diverse, and inclusive community. Former President Gitenstein developed a Task Force to examine the College’s relationship with Trenton. This led to a number of recommendations, including the renaming of Loser Hall (now Trenton Hall), as well as a broader commitment to re-building relationships with our surrounding communities. Last year, President Foster organized an open forum that allowed members of our community to speak publicly about the challenges our community is facing. She also established an Office of Equity and Inclusion and created a new cabinet-level position of Vice-President of Equity and Inclusion. The School of Science recently received an Inclusive Excellence Grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute to promote the inclusion of students from diverse backgrounds in the STEM fields. Indeed, a number of groups and committees across campus, representing various stakeholders, have initiated discussions related to equity and inclusion.

The Faculty feel passionately that TCNJ needs to be a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive place. We look forward to working with our new Provost and Vice-President of Academic Affairs to help us proactively address these issues on the Academic side of the house. Some of the issues we see include the following.

* We need to redevelop our First-Year Seminar Program and First Year Academic Programming to ensure that we foster a culture of equity and inclusion among our incoming students. We also need to determine how to adapt such programming to meet the needs of transfer and non-traditional students.
* We need to develop stronger partnerships with Student Affairs related to equity and inclusion. The faculty know that a tremendous amount of learning takes place in residence halls, and that Student Affairs is interested in developing more living/learning communities. As the custodians of the curriculum, we look forward to working with Student Affairs to help shape these learning experiences.
* The Faculty look forward to being greater partners in bringing more diversity to our student body as well as to our faculty and professional staff. We are particularly interested in a Provost who is willing to bring new ideas to the table on these issues.
* The faculty recognize the need to address biases within our own ranks, while seeking ways to use our courses to promote issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity. We aim to help faculty better create safe spaces within our courses and help students identify and challenge their own biases and assumptions. Our overall goal is to help students understand their place in our society and the challenges that minority individuals experience, so that we can work to promote a more just and equitable society.

In closing, the Faculty congratulates you on being a finalist for our position of Provost and Vice- President of Academic Affairs. We are enthusiastic about the state of our College, and we look forward to working with new leadership to address the challenges and opportunities facing us.

We welcome the opportunity to think deeply about what we do, and to embrace innovations that fit well with our mission.