

TCNJ FACULTY SENATE NEWSLETTER



As this quote resonates with me and perfectly describes my feelings about my job at the college. TCNJ provides a start for so many people, faculty, staff and students. I take great pride in my ability to share with students the power of chemistry and instill an innate curiosity about society and the world. When I started my faculty position in the chemistry department almost 14 years ago, I did not know that my path would involve a leadership role with the Faculty Senate. I was looking to use my passion and skills in a new way and bringing together the faculty voice on campus was something of great interest to me. As I take a step back to reflect on my first year as president of the Faculty Senate, I have learned a tremendous amount about the campus, working with the administration, and broad faculty concerns in a very short amount of time.

I went from knowing colleagues in my school to the faculty across the campus within a matter of weeks. I want to thank the Senate Executive Board for their work and support and to Matt Bender and Cindy Curtis who have shared a wealth of knowledge to me as I started this journey.

Spring 2024

Greetings from the Faculty Senate President



Abby O'Connor,
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“Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven’t found it yet, keep looking. Don’t settle. As with all matters of the heart, you’ll know when you find it.” —Steve Jobs

We have shared in some great successes this year; one being the negotiation of the best AFT contract we have had since my hire in 2010. Thank you to the leadership in AFT for your work on this. The AFT also worked with academic affairs to create our first MOA (MOA 145) the “New Intellectual Property and Scholarly Works Agreement” which establishes clear, strong, and fair protections for faculty who produce a variety of forms of intellectual property and scholarly works related to their pedagogy and scholarly activities. The Senate brought back and hosted the annual Colloquium for Faculty Research & Creative Activity. This year we heard from Dr. Jarret Crawford, from the Psychology department, about “What’s Wrong with Psychology.” The Senate in collaboration with academic affairs gave out 9 awards to recognize faculty and librarians for their contributions to the first-year seminar program, innovative teaching, mentoring, scholarship, and DEI.

We also hosted for the first time a keynote lecture at the teaching and learning summit given by the inaugural recipient of the Innovation in Teaching award, Dr. Benny Chan, from the Chemistry department. He shared with the campus opportunities to infuse high-structure guided practice into curricula across campus as a strategy to improve student success. We continue to partner with academic affairs to host several Faculty Share events. The short Ted-style talks provide a brief snapshot into the scholarly and creative work of our faculty. The Faculty Shares provide a venue to share ideas and build collaboration.

In July, we welcomed to TCNJ a new president, Dr. Michael Bernstein. The fall semester started with a listening tour hosted by President Bernstein and to gain ideas from the campus; there was a budget shortfall and we would have to come together to find ways to close the budget gap. In December, President Bernstein shared the LIONS plan, focused on creating revenues and additional points for campus discussion on academic restructuring and cost saving measures in efforts to support fiscal sustainability at TCNJ. We also welcomed Dr. Suzanne McCotter to the role of interim Provost. Dr. Linda Mayger was appointed to the role of Interim Dean for the School of Graduate and Continuing Education. And while there has been tremendous change in the senior leadership at college in the past year, I have been and continue to be a partner at the table sharing the voice of the faculty.

In February, the president set up working groups, containing members from stakeholder groups, to address various aspects of the plan. Each working group was given a charge. The Faculty Senate Executive Board (SEB) worked to ensure faculty voice on each working group. President Bernstein asked the SEB for recommendations of faculty to serve on them, in keeping with our principles of shared governance. Thank you to the faculty who are serving on these working groups and everyone contributing to the conversation.

The working groups are:

School of Continuing, Extended and Professional Studies

Charge: Develop a comprehensive business plan for new programs and initiatives to launch in FY25 – FY26 that will achieve targeted revenue growth beginning in FY26. Recommend, as appropriate, online program management (OPM) and marketing strategies. [Target Net Budget Impact: \$550K in FY 26, increasing to \$4M by FY28.]

Membership: Linda Mayger (Team Lead), Benny Chan, Ellen Farr, Megan Gordon, Matt Hall, Carole Kenner, Rich Schweigert/Mark Mehler, Stephen Tomkiel

Three-Year Bachelor's Programs

Charge: Identify the programs that would lend themselves to a three-year model and work with appropriate schools/departments to develop a framework for degree requirements. Plan will include a market analysis, institutional financial impact report, and strategies to address any accreditation and/or state barriers. [Target Net Budget Impact: TBD.]

Membership: Lisa Grimm (Team Lead), Tim Clydesdale, Cecilia Colbeth, Jason Dahling, Heba Jahama, Erica Kalinowski, and Trevor O'Grady.

Community College Partnerships

Charge: Identify target community colleges and prioritize programs for collaboration. Socialize programs with TCNJ departments and schools. Resulting business plan will include a five-year institutional financial impact statement. [Target Net Budget Impact: TBD.]

Membership: Lisa Angeloni (Team Lead), Brittany Aydelotte, Tabitha Dell'Angelo, Raj Manimaran, Grecia Montero, and Natasha Patterson.

Faculty Responsibilities and the Core Curriculum

Charge: Conduct environmental scan on cutting edge core developments across higher education. Recommend new model(s) for faculty responsibilities aimed at preserving institutional values and priorities while reducing the use of adjuncts and achieving targeted institutional savings. Identify modifications to the undergraduate core curriculum, resulting in a reduction of the overall number of units required, the writing and foreign language requirements. Resulting plan to include phasing that allows for full implementation by the start of the fall 2025 term. [Target Net Budget Impact: \$4.5M to \$5M.]

Membership: Suzanne McCotter, Abby O'Connor, and Matt Wund (Co-Leads) in partnership with the Council of Deans and the Faculty Senate

Library Operations

Charge: Examine national trends in higher education library usage as well as TCNJ student and faculty usage data to identify opportunities to meet evolving student needs, and to realize significant efficiencies in operations. [Target Net Budget Impact: \$2.5M.]

Membership: Taras Pavlovsky (Team Lead), Erin Ackerman, Jackie Anderson, Sharon Blanton, Seung Hee Choi, Jamal Johnson, Dylan Nguyen, Joe O'Brien, Kim Pearson

Student Programming and Auxiliaries

Charge: Research best-practice student affairs programs and housing initiatives across higher education. Develop a business plan that details modifications to programs and structure to address future needs and realize targeted savings and efficiencies. [Target Net Budget Impact: \$1M.]

Membership: Sean Stallings (Team Lead), Jill Bush, Aria Chalileh, Andrew Clifford, Ivonne Cruz, Amanda DeMartino, Annmarie Ekladios, Elizabeth Gallus, Sunita Kramer

The Faculty Senate's fundamental role is to provide voice to the faculty. The Faculty Senate is strategically situated to provide input on the issues central to the LIONS plan. We have already worked together to bring our varying viewpoints together to discuss critical issues. This year the Faculty Senate created the space to have open dialogue, to collect ideas regarding cost savings measures and curricular change with faculty, and to create action for change on campus. We shared our ideas with regards to adjusting the language, writing requirements, and moving from a 32 to 30 unit model.

These items have entered into the governance system. We have just started our work to re-envision the Core curriculum and I look forward to our continued efforts. As with all adjustments to the curriculum we need to keep in mind our goals for student success and maintaining our metrics for graduation rate and degree completion, while providing broader access to students from the region. I am proud to see the work of our faculty from across the campus. We have come together to propose tangible solutions in order to tackle issues of financial sustainability.

And while we face uncertainty due to the changing landscape of higher education and need for fiscal responsibility, we continue to evaluate our educational model and offerings to best support and maintain a changing, diverse workforce, while maintaining our outstanding student outcomes. Access and affordability for our students along with the use of novel technology systems in the classroom remain key topics for discussion. All these themes remain central to our discussion for the future at TCNJ. We value being teacher-scholars and the mentoring we provide to our students. So, as we face several challenges we need to remain true to the identity of our institution. As we sit at a crossroads, asking where do we go from here? I know we will have great outcomes and a bright future because I work with creative, dedicated, and passionate people. I am proud to see your commitment and willingness to share new ideas, work with a collaborative spirit, while keeping in mind the values and teaching model we hold so dear.

"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." —Helen Keller

I hope you have some time to recharge during spring break. I look forward to your continued involvement on these key issues while finding time to smile, have fun, and share in our successes.

Take care,
Abby O'Connor



Sabbatical Awards 2024–2025

One-Semester

Marissa Bellino Educational Administration and Secondary Education Associate Professor

Christopher Fisher History School of Humanities & Social Sciences Associate Professor

Tracy Kress Biology Professor

Andrew Leynes Psychology Professor

John Ruscio Psychology Professor

Full Year

Dina Boero History School of Humanities & Social Sciences Associate Professor

Donka Brodersen Economics Associate Professor

Greer Burroughs Elementary and Early Childhood Education Associate Professor

Maureen Connolly Educational Administration and Secondary Education Associate Professor

Jason Dahling Psychology Professor

Leigh Ann Francis Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Associate Professor

Deborah Hutton Art and Art History Professor

Jean Kirnan Psychology Professor

Matthew Mizuhara Mathematics and Statistics Associate Professor

Michele Tarter English Professor

Meet the Interim Provost

Suzanne McCotter



Entering the Office of Academic Affairs as Interim Provost at this point in TCNJ's journey brings a set of challenges and opportunities common to the higher education landscape in these times, but unusual for our institution. The combination of our unsettled financial future and the demographic changes we have all been warned about have led us to a point where we all need to come together and work toward innovative solutions.

After a month in this role, I have found the greatest rewards in working collaboratively with other campus leaders. Without fail, I have sat at tables where people are willing to roll up their sleeves, acknowledge the problems that lie ahead, and creatively work toward solutions. Time after time I have heard colleagues let go of past practices to brainstorm and move forward with the goals of sustaining and improving The College of New Jersey. This has held true at multiple tables, including the President's Cabinet meetings, the Council of Deans, and the LIONS working group that I co-chair with Faculty Senate President Abby O'Connor and AFT President Matt Wund. Our common priority is to maintain what makes TCNJ special in ways that are financially sustainable.

For me, there is creativity in facing a crisis. It allows us to experiment with new ideas, try things we might not otherwise have taken on, and work across boundaries to solve problems. It also forces us to focus on what is most important to our identity. We ask ourselves the question, "What can we give to preserve the heart of who we are?" The endgame of this crisis may be that instead of being a lesser version of TCNJ, we are a stronger, more interesting, more responsive version.

Like many new leaders, colleagues are not always sure whether to offer me congratulations or condolences. I wasn't sure at the beginning either. But now, I will wholeheartedly accept your congratulations, if you're inclined to offer them. I have met new people (or interacted with them in new ways), offered ideas to streamline or create processes, and gained a much bigger and brighter picture of what makes TCNJ special. My priorities as interim provost are to sustain our foundation, value our people, and imagine the future - all in partnership with the faculty, staff, and students I serve.



Faculty/Library Recognition Awards 2024

Excellence in Campus Leadership and Service

Terrence Bennett,
Business/Economics Librarian, Library

Innovation in Teaching Award

George Leader, Department of
Sociology and Anthropology, School of
Humanities and Social Sciences

Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activity

Joseph Baker, Chemistry, School of
Science

Excellence in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Christopher Fisher, History, School of
Humanities and Social Sciences

Excellence in Student Mentoring and Advising

John McCarty, Marketing and
Interdisciplinary Business, School of
Business

Early Career Faculty Excellence Award

Mahrukh Khan, Electrical and
Computer Engineering, School of
Engineering

Adjunct/Part-Time Faculty Teaching Award

Karen Gordon, Public Health, School of
Nursing and Health Sciences

First-Year Seminar Awards

The Robert Anderson First-Year
Seminar Instructor of the Year Award:
Nelson Rodriguez, Women's, Gender &
Sexuality Studies, School of
Humanities and Social Sciences
The Outstanding FYS Course of the
Year Award:
Tiffany Youngblood, Collegewide
Academics and Assessment

TCNJ AFT is working on a variety of initiatives. In late November of 2023, we worked with our partners in our statewide bargaining unit, the Council of New Jersey State College Locals, to secure 2023-2027 full-time and adjunct contract agreements. These contracts are unquestionably the strongest we have been able to secure in the past 4-5 contract cycles. For the full-time employees, some of the gains we secured include:

- 3.5% across the board increases in each of the four contract years
- A new 13th step to the salary guideA
- Substantial increases to overload and session (winter/summer) rates
- More contract provisions applied to Lecturers and Clinical Specialists
- New Bereavement Leave language
- An alignment of the Librarian range adjustments with those of the faculty
- More timely pay increases to Professional Staff who are eligible for reclassification



Some gains for the adjunct faculty include:

- A pay increase of over 30% over the four years of the contract
- Increased course cancellation compensation
- The right to have access to email at least two weeks prior to the start of the semester
- A requirement that a tuition waiver program be locally negotiated for adjunct faculty and their family members

Locally, TCNJ AFT negotiated MOA 145, Intellectual Property and Scholarly Works. This MOA defines rights and protections for AFT bargaining unit members who produce intellectual property and scholarly works, such as patentable products, books and manuscripts, course materials, computer software, works of art and music, engineering designs, and much more. Perhaps most notable is the strong language protecting faculty against having their course materials disseminated for use by other instructors without their express permission.

We are beginning to negotiate locally over two more issues: developing a promotion process for Clinical and Specialists and Lecturers, as well as creating a tuition waiver program for adjunct faculty. Through these negotiations, we hope to secure important and well-deserved gains for our non-tenure track faculty colleagues.

TCNJ AFT is deeply engaged in efforts to help TCNJ achieve fiscal sustainability while minimizing the negative impacts to our students, our bargaining unit members, and the institution. These efforts are proceeding on two fronts. With respect to cutting costs, we are collaborating with the Faculty Senate to devise plans that will modify the curriculum and current faculty workload model. We are also consulting with our librarian colleagues and the Dean of the Library to determine how we can help minimize negative impacts to the Library. Our second front involves a comprehensive lobbying campaign with the goal of securing more state funding to support TCNJ. TCNJ AFT is collaborating with TCNJ Administration on these efforts.

mode of course delivery, and the compensation faculty earn for teaching them. Another example includes addressing inequities experienced by faculty who observe student teachers.

Finally, on a near daily basis, the AFT works with individual bargaining unit members who seek our support with potential work-related grievances and/or disciplinary issues.

Steering Committee

Suzanne McCotter, Co-Chair

Cathy Liebars, Co-Chair

Felicia Steele, Vice Chair

During the Fall 2023 semester, in addition to the regular business of issuing charges to the standing committees and councils, Steering internally reviewed and approved the following policies: Undergraduate Bulletin Year of Record, Withdrawing from a Course, and Service Indicators (Hold). Additionally, Steering sent a memo to Enrollment Management regarding concerns about the student deregistration process. We also discussed committee transition procedures and sent a memo to the Senate and SGA presidents requesting that committee appointments be done earlier. We are currently working on reviewing and distributing the AI Task Force report. We will be examining the Syllabus and Academic Integrity policies in light of the report to see if changes need to be made.

Committee on Strategic Planning and Priorities

Suzanne McCotter, Co-Chair

Seung Hee Choi, Co-Chair

In September 2023, Steering charged the Committee on Strategic Planning and Priorities (CSPP) with the task of developing a policy on the opening of centers and institutes. Recognizing the significance of these entities in fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, research, and community engagement, CSPP formed a subcommittee and drafted a policy that not only adheres to TCNJ's governance process but also draws upon best practices from peer institutions. Transparency emerged as a guiding principle. The policy aims to clarify and standardize the process of establishing centers and institutes. It ensures equal opportunities for all stakeholders and supports sustainable success. CSPP is undergoing an internal review to ensure alignment with TCNJ's strategic goals.

Simultaneously, CSPP engaged in a 5-year review of the Program Closure policy. A separate subcommittee has been established and revisited the existing policy, seeking areas for improvement. The subcommittee had specific objectives in mind when revising the policy. They aimed to improve clarity, increase transparency, and ensure that the process is consultative. The review process involved evaluating the policy to streamline procedures, enhance clarity, and promote inclusivity. After careful review, the subcommittee has implemented several changes to the policy, and CSPP is undergoing an internal review to ensure alignment with TCNJ's strategic goals.

CSPP extended invitations to four cabinet officers, each tasked with presenting their respective units' activities: College Advancement, Enrollment Management (scheduled in April), Office of Treasurer (scheduled in April), and the Office of the President shared insights.

CSPP recognizes that strategic planning and policy development play pivotal roles in shaping an institution's trajectory. Within this context, the LIONS Plan, which continually evolves, takes center stage. CSPP engaged in meaningful discussions with Interim President Michael Bernstein and the LIONS Plan Working Group.

Among its other business items, CSPP reviewed a preliminary proposal to create a Film and Television major and was informed of a preliminary proposal for a Graduate Certificate in History.

Committee on Faculty Affairs

Bethany Sewell, Co-Chair

Nelson Rodriguez, Co-Chair

Mahrukh Khan and Melissa Zrada, Co-Vice Chairs

Last fall, 2023, CFA formally reviewed and approved revisions to four Disciplinary Standards and is awaiting a response to our feedback on one more. Since then, we have received Disciplinary Standards from two additional departments and are beginning the review process for those. We received two charges from Steering. The first is a review of the Faculty Emeritus Policy as part of the standard 5-year policy review cycle. This spring, we have been discussing, seeking feedback, and preparing a preliminary recommendation on our suggested updates to that policy. The newest charge from Steering is to review the RPD and consider recommending updates to better recognize faculty work in community engagement per the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement.

Committee on Student and Campus Community

Michelle Bunagan, Co-Chair

Katie Kahn, Co-Chair

The Committee on Student and Campus Community (CSCC) has been meeting throughout the Fall and Spring semesters to review several critical policies for our campus. During the Fall semester, we initiated review of the Student Travel policy, with members looking at ways to streamline the policy by reducing its length and to make form management less cumbersome. In the Fall, the committee also began review of the Emeritus Status - Staff policy, with the goal of ensuring that the policy is consistent with current practice. The committee continues their work on these charges and aims to conclude and finalize feedback on these shortly. This Spring semester, CSCC has provided a final recommendation on the Communication with the News Media policy. We also have a new charge to review the college's Interim Flag policy, and in particular, the committee will focus on increased clarity and inclusivity for groups making flag flying requests. CSCC members are eager to continue the critical role of reviewing, gathering testimony, and providing feedback and recommendations for all of these policies.

Committee on Academic Programs

Monisha Pulimood, Chair

David Mazeika, Vice Chair

So far this academic year, CAP has reviewed, and recommended approval of a revised RFP for MUSE, initiated by the Mentored Research and Internships Council (MRIC), and a proposal from the Honors and Scholars Council to update course requirements for students in the Honors program. CAP also reviewed, and recommended approval of proposals for a new minor in Astrophysics from the Department of Physics, a Master's in Professional Studies degree program from the Office of Graduate and Continuing Education, World Languages and Cultures Undergraduate Certificate programs from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and a new BA in Mathematics degree program from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics. CAP additionally completed five-year reviews of the following policies: Undergraduate Bulletin Year of Record policy, Withdrawing from a Course, Hold Flags policy, Mid-semester Evaluation policy, and the Learning Assistant policy. CAP worked with the Graduate Students Council to replace the Graduate Student Full-time Definition policy with a broader policy that addresses the definition of "graduate student" and graduate student load.

In Spring 2024, CAP is reviewing the Internships (Undergraduate) policy, and a proposal from the Writing program to remove the FYW 102 requirement for undergraduates. Steering has charged CAP with looking deeper into the three structural changes suggested by the Faculty Senate to support financial sustainability, in response to the LIONS plan presented by President Bernstein in December 2023. CAP will be soliciting feedback from the campus community in the coming weeks, with the goal of making recommendations within the timeline set by President Bernstein.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Faculty Representatives:

Cindy Curtis

Deborah Hutton

Thus far this academic year, TCNJ Board of Trustees has held two retreats (October 4th and February 27th), and four public meetings (October 17th, December 5th, December, 11th, and February 27th). Additionally, the BOT's Business and Infrastructure Committee has met three times (September 18th, November 30th, and February 12th), the Inclusive Excellence Committee has met twice (September 28th and February 12th, and the Mission Fulfillment Committee has met twice (September 26th and February 13th).

The two retreats primarily focused on issues related to TCNJ's budget. At the fall retreat, Richard Schweigert and Mark Mehler from the Office of the Treasurer presented the budget numbers to the BOT (the same information that President Bernstein later shared with the campus community). At the spring retreat, the President provided the BOT with updates on the working groups tasked with looking at ways to find savings and revenue opportunities.

The Business and Infrastructure Committee discussed housing options as we decommission Travers and Wolfe Hall, investment oversight, and graduate tuition. Updates from Advancement include: we will not conduct a capital campaign under an interim president. We have adopted a new advertising campaign: Higher Education, Elevated, which includes materials focusing on the strong student-faculty interaction and 4-credit courses at the heart of our curriculum. The Inclusive Excellent Committee discussed initiatives related to creating a first generation affinity group and an AAPI group on campus. The committee also heard from VP James Felton regarding the complexities around developing a land acknowledgement for TCNJ as well as the steps taken. The Mission Fulfillment Committee heard updates from each of the three main areas: Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Admissions.

OFFICERS OF THE FACULTY SENATE OF THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

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[Senate Roster](#)

