CAP's Preliminary Recommendation on Program Approval Policy

TO: Steering Committee
FROM: Committee on Academic Programs
RE: Preliminary Recommendation on Program Approval Policy
DATE: April 3rd, 2016

Background:

On September 2nd, 2015, CAP received a charge from Steering regarding the College's Program Approval policy.   The charge contained a memo written by Chandru Rajam and Jennifer Palmgren of the Office of Academic Affairs that suggested revisions to TCNJ's current policy to make the "process more efficient" and to "align it with the format and content requirements" necessary for approval from the State of New Jersey.

Testimony:

Steering requested that CAP "should review the memo and determine if it wishes to modify the existing Program Approval Policy." After writing a preliminary recommendation, CAP should gather testimony from Academic Leaders, revise the recommendation as is necessary and then seek testimony "from faculty, students and staff."   An email outlining the proposed revisions was sent to Academic Leaders on October 28th, 2015 and based on CAP's discussion of this testimony, a revised preliminary recommendation is outlined below.

Preliminary Recommendation:

CAP's preliminary recommendation contains two sections. First is a chart specifying the current Program Approval Process placed alongside the suggested revisions in the proposed revised policy. Note that in the revised policy, the current Step 5 is merged into Step 2, the current Step 6 is merged into Step 3, and the current Step 8 is merged into Step 4.   This is followed by the proposed Program Approval Policy written in narrative form.

Program Approval Process Policy

Current Policy	Proposed Policy
Step 1: The program proposal normally begins in an academic unit.	**Step 1:** In all cases, the initiating entity should identify the academic unit that will house the program, which will then be responsible for developing the proposal.
Step 2: preliminary approval by the president and provost	**Step 2:** preliminary approval by the president and provost, who share the preliminary proposal with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees
Step 3: development of proposal including a study of: faculty and support of instruction; library resources; equipment, laboratory support, computer support; facilities; administrative cost including accreditation cost where applicable; and financial impact	**Step 3:** development of proposal following state guidelines, with the following sections: objectives; evaluation and learning outcomes; relationship of the program to the institutional strategic plan and its effect on other institutional programs at the same institution; need; students; resources; and degree requirements. Proposals for undergraduate degree programs should include all requirements (such as liberal learning and School requirements), not just requirements for the major.
Step 4: The provost appoints an outside consultant to review the proposal for its quality and appropriateness of resources. A revised proposal is then sent to the dean, provost, and president for approval.	**Step 4:** The provost appoints a consultant, in accordance with state and College selection criteria, to write a review that follows state guidelines and includes the following sections: objectives; need; educational programs; students; faculty; support personnel; finances; physical facilities; library; computer facilities; administration; and evaluation. A revised proposal is then sent to the dean (or equivalent), provost, and president for approval.
Step 5: initial approval by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees	The Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees reviews the preliminary proposal in step 2.
Step 6: development of full proposal including: curriculum and syllabi; appropriateness to mission; outcomes; and faculty vitae	Development of the full proposal occurs in step 3.
Step 7: review and approval of the full proposal by the school-based curriculum committee; then, if approved, review and approval through governance. Programs involving teacher education are reviewed by TEPC before being sent to Steering to be reviewed by CAP. Graduate programs are reviewed by GPC before being sent to Steering to be reviewed by CAP.	**Step 5:** review and approval of the full proposal by the school-based curriculum committee. If the proposed program is housed outside a school, that unit's curriculum committee or its equivalent reviews the proposal. Then, if approved, the proposal is reviewed and approved through governance. Programs involving teacher education are reviewed by TEPC before being sent to Steering to be reviewed by CAP. Graduate programs are reviewed by GPC before being sent to Steering to be reviewed by CAP.
Step 8: The provost appoints a second outside consultant to review the full proposal for its quality and appropriateness of resources.	A consultant reviews the full proposal in step 4.
Step 9: If recommended by governance, the proposal is submitted by the president and provost	**Step 6:** If recommended by governance, the proposal is submitted by the president and provost to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees.

to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees.	
Step 10: The Academic Affairs Committee recommends the proposal to the Board of Trustees for approval.	**Step 7:** The Academic Affairs Committee recommends the proposal to the Board of Trustees for approval.
Step 11: The College sends a program announcement to the New Jersey higher education community.	**Step 8:** The College sends a program announcement to the New Jersey higher education community. There is a 30 day review period.
Step 12: Notification of the new program is sent to the New Jersey Presidents' Council.	**Step 9:** Following this 30 day review period, the College sends the following to the Academic Issues Committee (AIC) of the New Jersey Presidents' Council (NJPC) for its review: The program announcement; consultant CV; consultant report; institutional response to consultant report; Board of Trustees' resolution; and responses from other institutions to our program announcement. AIC submission deadlines and meeting dates may be found in the AIC manual.
	Step 10: The AIC recommends the new program to the NJPC. If the NJPC agrees with this recommendation, it will send the institution a resolution regarding the new program. If there is a concern, the proposal may be sent to the Secretary of Higher Education for further review.

NEW POLICY: Program Approval Process

Step 1: Initial Program Proposal

Normally new program proposals begin in an academic unit of the campus, defined as a department, office, institute, or center within the division of Academic Affairs. A program initiative may come from a department, a dean, or a vice president. In some circumstances, suggestions for new programs may arise from campus constituencies not connected with a department, from outside the campus, or may be dictated by student demand or need. In all cases, the initiating entity should identify the academic unit that will house the program, which will then be responsible for developing the proposal. The academic unit proposing a new program should develop a rationale and obtain pertinent statistics substantiating the need and demand for the program as part of the initial program proposal.

Step 2: Review

The President and the Provost/VPAA review the initial proposal and consider whether it is consistent with the College's mission and strategic plan. Preliminary approval by the President and the VPAA signals the academic unit to begin a more thorough development of the proposal. As the program proposal is developed, the President and Provost/VPAA will share information on its development with the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees.

Step 3: Program Development

The unit develops a proposal that includes the philosophy and concept of the program, with emphasis on indicating how the program is consonant with the mission of the College. An outline of the curriculum will be developed, which will include indicators of quality. Proposals for undergraduate degree programs should include all requirements (such as Liberal Learning and School requirements). The proposal also will include a thorough study of needed resources and consultation with the units responsible for these resources. The unit developing the proposal will follow the guidelines found in the Academic Issues Committee Manual of the New Jersey Presidents' Council, and include the following sections: objectives; evaluation and learning outcomes; relationship of the program to the institutional strategic plan and its effect on other institutional programs at the same institution; need; students; program resources; and degree requirements.

Step 4: Outside Consultation

An outside consultant will be appointed by the Provost/VPAA, in consultation with the proposing unit, and in accordance with TCNJ and Academic Issues Committee consultant selection criteria, to review the proposal for its quality and the appropriateness of resources for supporting a nationally-recognized quality program. The consultant will visit the campus. The consultant review will include detailed and substantive information, and be written according to the guidelines found in the Academic Issues Committee Manual of the New Jersey Presidents' Council, with the following sections: objectives; need; educational programs; students; faculty; support personnel; finances; physical facilities; library; computer facilities; administration; and evaluation. Following receipt of the consultant report, the proposing unit will revise the proposal as needed and prepare an institutional response to the consultant report. The revised proposal, the consultant report, and the institutional response to the consultant report are sent to the President, the Provost/VPAA and the Dean of the school (or equivalent) for review and approval.

Step 5: School Curriculum Committee and College Governance

The revised proposal is submitted to the appropriate school-based curriculum committee for approval. If a degree program should be proposed that would be housed outside a school, that unit's curriculum committee or its equivalent will review the proposal. If recommended by the committee, the program is submitted by the Dean of the school (or equivalent) for recommendation through the College's governance process. All programs involving teacher education and preparation should be reviewed by the Teacher Education Program Council (TEPC). All graduate programs should be reviewed by the Graduate Programs Council (GPC). The recommendations of the Program Councils should be forwarded to the Steering Committee, which will then charge the Committee on Academic Programs (CAP) to review and recommend. The final recommendation should indicate concurrence or non-concurrence with the proposal.

Step 6: Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees

If the program is recommended by the College's governance structure, the President or Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs submits it to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees. This committee is provided with the full program proposal, the consultant report, and the institutional response to the consultant report.

Step 7: Board of Trustees' Approval

The Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees recommends the program proposal to the full Board of Trustees for final approval.

Step 8: Program Announcement

A program announcement is circulated to the New Jersey higher education community. There is a 30-day comment period. If objections are raised, efforts may be made to resolve them.

Step 9: Academic Issues Committee of the New Jersey Presidents' Council

The College sends the following to the Academic Issues Committee (AIC) of the New Jersey Presidents' Council (NJPC) for its review: the program announcement; responses to the program announcement from other New Jersey institutions; consultant CV; consultant report; TCNJ's response to the consultant report; and the Board of Trustees' resolution. AIC submission deadlines and meeting dates may be found in the AIC manual.

Step 10: New Jersey Presidents' Council

The Academic Issues Committee (AIC) recommends the new program to the New Jersey Presidents' Council (NJPC). If the NJPC agrees with this recommendation, it will send the institution a resolution regarding the new program. If there is a concern, the proposal may be sent to the Secretary of Higher Education for further review.

In any and every instance of non-approval or non-concurrence there should be reasons provided in writing for such decisions.