

CAP's Preliminary Recommendation on Undergraduate Certificate Programs

Background

One of the major strategic initiatives announced by the President is the coordination of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs in support of an “Integrated Transformation”. To that end, a proposal to create a Leadership Development Certificate has been developed by an ad hoc committee composed of faculty, academic administrators and student affairs administrators. Because Undergraduate Certificate Programs are likely to be ones that go beyond the normal academic purview, we are asking that these questions be addressed jointly by CAP and CSCC and recommend that they do so by forming a subcommittee with representatives from both committees. This proposed Undergraduate Certificate Program contains both academic and experiential components and it raises the following questions that the Steering Committee believes need to be addressed through governance.

1. What is an appropriate definition of an Undergraduate Certificate Program? In developing a definition, Steering believes it could be helpful to CAP and CSCC to look at existing definitions of Academic Programs (majors, minors, etc.) <http://www.tcnj.edu/%7Eacademic/policy/Majors-typesof.htm>. Also helpful might be the example of the WILL program <http://will.pages.tcnj.edu/about/aboutwill/>. The definition should address these questions:
Should there be a maximum and minimum number of courses? Should there be a maximum and minimum of other learning experiences? What are the components of an Undergraduate Certificate? Should it always be a combination of coursework and experiential learning; or could it be wholly experiential or wholly academic?
2. What should the approval process for an Undergraduate Certificate Program be? In developing an approval process, Steering suggests that CAP and CSCC consider the existing procedure for approving a minor <http://www.tcnj.edu/%7Eacademic/policy/minors.html>. However, CAP and CSCC should also make sure that the approval process includes all elements of the college whose resources and expertise would be involved in a proposed Undergraduate Certificate Program.
3. What structure(s) should be involved in overseeing both development and administration of the Certificate? Should a certificate be housed in a specified administrative unit (e.g., a specific school), and how should this be determined?

The above referenced proposed Leadership Program/Certificate developed by the ad hoc committee could serve as a prototype for other Undergraduate Certificate Programs, and it is likely the first of many such integrated Programs to be developed. The Steering Committee therefore encourages CAP and CSCC to both look at the Proposed Leadership Program and any issues it may raise as they carry out this charge. Steering imagines that if the concept of an Undergraduate Certificate is approved and defined, this would be the first Undergraduate Certificate Program for which approval would be sought.

Charge

On November 21, 2011, Steering charged CAP and CSCC to consider various issues related to the creation of certificate programs at the College. Specifically, Steering asked CAP and CSCC to consider the following. First, how should a “certificate” program be defined in terms of coursework and learning experiences that distinguishes it from other academic programs (such as a minor) offered at the College? Second, what would the approval process for a certificate program be? Third, who should oversee the administration of a proposed certificate and where could a certificate program be housed? For example, could a certificate be housed in a department, a school, or across departments and schools?

Testimony

CAP and CSCC worked independently and jointly on this charge. A preliminary recommendation approved by both committees was developed and then sent to the campus community for testimony. An open forum was held on May 2, 2013 to hear input on the preliminary recommendation. The main issue raised at the open forum was that the faculty felt strongly that any certificate requiring transcribed coursework must be approved by the faculty through CAP. Meetings between CAP and CSCC indicated that there could be no single policy for certificate programs and that different approval processes were required depending on the nature of the certificate and the specific components contained within it (for example, a certificate could be proposed consisting entirely of academic coursework, or a certificate could have no coursework and consist solely of outside learning experiences).

In November 2013, the Provost hosted a meeting with representatives from CAP, CSCC and the Office of Student Life to address types of certificate programs and approval processes for each type identified. A new preliminary recommendation was written which addressed the concerns raised in May 2013 and the recommendations made by those at the meeting hosted by the Provost.

Preliminary Recommendation

The College of New Jersey offers transcribed undergraduate certificate programs consisting of a minimum of 3 courses (3 course units). Certificate programs may also require co-curricular experiences in addition to credit bearing coursework.

The approval process for a certificate program that appears on the academic transcript is the same as for undergraduate minors (see <http://academicaffairs.pages.tcnj.edu/college-governance/policies/minors-approval-process/>).

- 1) For certificate programs that are housed in a single program, department, or school,(referred to here as an "academic unit"),the proposal is initially reviewed and approved by the academic unit in which the program is housed. Then following the governance process it goes to the Dean’s office of the academic unit proposing the certificate, to the unit's curriculum committee, and then to the Committee for Academic Programs (CAP) for final approval. The proposal for any certificate

program that appears on the academic transcript must specify the academic unit in which the proposed program will be housed. That academic unit might be a program, department, or school. The leader of the academic unit designated as the sponsor of the proposed program must sign off on the proposal and must agree to monitor student participation and assess student learning outcomes. In addition, the academic unit sponsoring the proposed program must agree to coordinate and track any required co-curricular experiences to determine student fulfillment of certificate requirements.

2) For certificate programs which are college-wide, the program proposal is initially reviewed and approved by the Liberal Learning Program Council (LLPC). As appropriate, that council seeks input of programs, departments and schools involved in the certificate offering. LLPC forwards approved certificate programs to CAP for final approval. Sponsors of a college-wide certificate must designate an academic unit to act as the leader of the proposed certificate program. The leader of the academic unit designated as the sponsor of the proposed program must sign off on the proposal and must agree to monitor student participation and assess student learning outcomes. In addition, the academic unit sponsoring the proposed program must agree to coordinate and track any required co-curricular experiences to determine student fulfillment of certificate requirements.

3) For certificate programs that require co-curricular experiences beyond those integrated into courses, the certificate proposal must follow the guidelines outlined in #1 or #2 above and also be reviewed by the Committee for Student and Campus Community (CSCC). Please see the attached document “Certificate Program Co-curricular Competencies” for the approval process required of certificates of this type.

Sponsors of a certificate program which contains co-curricular experiences must designate an academic unit to act as the leader of the proposed program. The leader of the academic unit designated as the sponsor of the proposed program must sign off on the proposal and must agree to monitor student participation and assess student learning outcomes. In addition, the academic unit sponsoring the proposed program must agree to coordinate and track any required co-curricular experiences to determine student fulfillment of certificate requirements , student participation in co-curricular experiences and student learning outcomes of the those experiences.

4) Additionally, the following guidelines apply to all proposed certificates.

-The policy of double counting courses is the same as that for majors and minors. As such, a single course could be double counted toward the major and a certificate.

See <http://academicaffairs.pages.tcnj.edu/college-governance/status-of-issues-in-governance-2007-2008/double-counting-courses-for-minors/>.

-Certificates are awarded after the term in which program requirements were met and validated (after the fall, spring, or summer terms). See existing college policies about the completion of degrees.

-The program or programs proposing a certificate must specify who is eligible to apply to the planned program.

Committee on Student and Campus Community (CSCC)

Certificate Program Co-curricular Competencies

The Committee on Academic Programs (CAP) is ultimately responsible for reviewing proposals for all certification programs. However, for those certificate programs that include a co-curricular element, CAP will review the academic component of the proposal, while CSCC will examine the co-curricular component. The purpose of this document is to enumerate the competencies that participants in the proposed certificate should acquire through the co-curricular element of the program. Procedures for submission, review and approval are explained elsewhere. The co-curricular component will be reviewed using the following criteria:

1. **Minimum requirements for participation.** The proposal must outline any minimum requirements for participation such as student status, grade point average, unit hours, etc.
2. **Learning Outcomes.** The proposal must include specific learning outcomes and address how each co-curricular learning outcome contributes to, or qualifies as one of the following Signature Experiences [<http://strategicplanning.pages.tcnj.edu/files/2014/01/Signature-Experiences-Final-Revised-1.29.14.pdf>]:
 - a. **Personalized, Collaborative, and Rigorous Education.** Students learn in small classes taught by faculty scholars who engage them in an intellectual community by fostering critical thinking and creativity, in a mentored progression, beginning with a living-learning first year experience and culminating in an enriching capstone course.
 - b. **Undergraduate Research, Mentored Internships, and Field Experiences.** Faculty and staff mentor students in intellectual and professional development opportunities through undergraduate research and collaboration, internships, and field experiences.
 - c. **Community Engaged Learning.** Through curricular and co-curricular activities, students extend themselves and learn by service to and engagement with diverse communities on and off campus.
 - d. **Global Engagement.** By studying away, domestically or abroad; through curricula that address global issues and perspectives; and by engaging with people from other cultures on and off campus; students forge international connections and build intercultural skills that prepare them to participate in the global community.
 - e. **Leadership Development.** Guided by faculty members, staff, and peers across campus, students learn to be dynamic and collaborative leaders in both curricular and co-curricular settings.
3. **Learning Activities.** The proposal must include an enumerated list of intended activities, experiences, and/or programs that connect to the specific expressed learning outcomes. In addition, the proposal should specify the time period within which the required learning activities will be completed. Examples may include, but are not limited to community service, guest lectures, involvement within an organization, leadership programs, etc.
4. **Assessment.** The proposal must describe the methods for assessing students' experiences and how the achievement of desired learning outcomes will be determined. Such a plan must include the relevant learning outcomes, assessment methods, timing, and reporting mechanisms.
5. **Management/Oversight.** The proposal must provide the following:

- a. **Coordination of programs, activities, and experiences.** How will the coordination of the program, activities and experiences be supported at the levels of department, school, and/or institution?
 - b. **Verification process.** How will participation in programs, activities or experiences be verified?
 - c. **Tracking mechanism.** How will the responsible office or department track the co-curricular element of the certificate?
6. **Available and/or Needed Resources.** What human, facility, or fiscal resources are available and/or needed to provide the management and oversight of the co-curricular aspect of the certificate as described in the proposal? The proposal should outline a plan to procure any outstanding needed resources.