

**TCNJ School of Engineering Governance**  
**Supplement to “Governance Structure and Processes (2005)”**  
**Adopted by the School Faculty November 8, 2011**

**Purpose:**

While all authority for decision making is held by the TCNJ Board of Trustees, "collegial governance" rights, especially concerning academic and scholarly issues have been given to the faculty as defined in the College-wide governance document "Governance Structure and Processes (2005)." In 2010 the Faculty Senate realized that some schools and departments were not following shared governance principles which led to schools and departments being asked to consider establishing their own governance documents. The value to faculty is that governance gives faculty, students, and staff an institutional voice, enabling these three stakeholder groups to make recommendations. School level governance also provides processes for making recommendations and resolving questions when recommendations are not supported by the Dean. As in the College-wide document, governance is limited to issues of policy, procedure, and program.

This document augments the existing College-wide document "Governance Structure and Processes (2005)." The College-wide document will supersede any perceived conflicts between the documents. It is vitally important that the School's governance policies follow the College-wide "Basic Principles" that reflect the established shared-governance principles. The system must allow for the participation of stakeholders without being overly burdensome or adding unnecessary layers of bureaucracy that would slow progress within the School.

**Membership and Meetings:**

Faculty members of committees are elected by their respective department; student membership in any committee are the SGA School of Engineering representatives, who have been elected by their peers by simple majority vote, and/or other students recruited by these SGA representatives; and staff is selected by the staff unless specified by job title (expertise) in the committee charge. This representation allows School-wide committees to address issues that span multiple departments and units, fostering dialogue when necessary. All stakeholder groups must have an open election process that reflects appropriate representation and engages as many of the stakeholder members as possible.

The regularly scheduled School meetings are intended to be a forum for information sharing concerning all issues being considered at the College, School, and Department levels. However, certain issues require more in depth discussion on particular topics and/or require broader input from the community than can be afforded at a regular School meeting. Therefore, committees must call one or more open forums to collect testimony on important issues at the preliminary recommendation stage.

**Policy Flow, Testimony, and Reporting:**

Committees are established through appropriate stakeholder groups representing faculty, staff, and students as described in each committee's charge. All committee members have equal rights and responsibilities concerning input, elected service and voting privileges. Routine business which is defined in each committee charge does not need to be directed by the School Steering Committee (SSC). For issues that are not routine, the SSC will prepare a charge and direct the charge to one of the school committees or establish an ad hoc committee to deliberate the issue. Unlike standing committees the output of an ad hoc committee is a report, and not a recommendation.

As with the College-wide process, an explicit three-step process is followed for each issue:

- 45 (1) Identifying and reporting the problem. If necessary the School Steering Committee will prepare a  
46 charge identifying the issue for the appropriate committee.
- 47 (2) Preparing a Preliminary Recommendation, and
- 48 (3) Making a Final Recommendation.

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50 This three step process ensures that all committees seek information through committee membership,  
51 formal testimony, and open comment from affected individuals and all stakeholder groups. It is  
52 expected that committee members bring issues back to their stakeholder group for discussion during  
53 formal meetings. Preliminary recommendations for new policy, procedure, or program must be  
54 presented to the stakeholders at either a regular school meeting or at a scheduled forum. If there are  
55 substantive changes needed after the preliminary recommendation has been presented at an open  
56 forum then the revised recommendation must be sent to all stakeholders and presented again at an  
57 open forum. If any stakeholder has evidence that the process has not been followed then the School  
58 Steering Committee (SSC) will meet with the committee to redress the problem. If at least one  
59 department objects to a preliminary recommendation of a committee as specified in the conflict  
60 resolution section, and if the faculty support the objection then the recommendation must be  
61 reconsidered by the standing committee. The final recommendation is forwarded directly to the Dean  
62 who will respond in writing to the committee. When there is any disagreement the conflict resolution  
63 process will be followed.

64 School Committees serve as governance entities that handle issues that are regular and continuing,  
65 often related to normal operations of the School. School committees are formed each spring for the  
66 following academic year. Each school committee will maintain appropriate action minutes of all official  
67 action and will make an annual report to the faculty and Dean.

68

69 **School Steering Committee (SSC):**

70 The School Steering Committee (SSC) has a limited but important role in School of Engineering  
71 governance. The committee is charged with maintaining a collegial working environment by:

- 72 • Receiving issues from any stakeholder who is uncomfortable presenting the concern directly to a  
73 department committee or chair, school committee, or the Dean
- 74 • Receiving issues that fall outside the normal charge of existing committees
- 75 • Receiving concerns related to governance process
- 76 • Address concerns that an issue is not being resolved in a timely fashion
- 77 • Assisting in the resolution of conflicts concerning the rejection of any recommendation
- 78 • Hold a faculty vote when a petition has been received as part of the conflict resolution process.  
79 When at least one department voting by secret ballot questions the appropriateness of a final  
80 resolution that vote represents a petition to have the issue placed before the faculty. School  
81 votes will be by electronic voting with a majority of the School membership needed to pass the  
82 question.
- 83 • Hold a faculty vote concerning school-wide issues to be limited to (1) school name change, (2)  
84 school governance process, (3) school wide strategic plan. School votes will be by electronic  
85 voting with a majority of the school membership voting in the affirmative needed to pass the  
86 question.

- 87           • Initiating a formal review of this “**TCNJ School of Engineering Governance**” document every  
88           three years

89 For issues that are not covered in a committee charge, the SC will prepare a charge and direct it to one  
90 of the School Committees or establish an ad hoc committee to deliberate the issue.

91 (6 members) The School Steering committee will be made up of two faculty members from two different  
92 departments (one chair and one non-chair), a staff member, two students, and Dean (or designee) who  
93 serves ex officio without vote. The committee is co-chaired by the Dean (or designee) and an elected  
94 member.

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96 **Curriculum Committee (CC)**

97 The Curriculum Committee (CC) is charged with making recommendations concerning curricular issues  
98 related to improving the quality of the academic mission of the School. The Committee is responsible  
99 for reviewing recommendations from Departmental Curriculum Committees and other sources  
100 concerning new programs, nature of degrees, program structure, new or revised course proposals,  
101 prerequisites, or other issues deemed appropriate.

102 (8 members) One faculty member from each department (BME, CIV, ECE, ME, and TS), two students,  
103 and the assistant Dean who will serve as an ex officio member without vote.

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105 **Program Standards Committee (PSC)**

106 The Program Standards Committee (PSC) is charged to establish and maintain appropriate protocols for  
107 hearing the appeals of students who have been dismissed from the School. These protocols should be  
108 published and include: the format of a student appeal, minimum criteria needed from the student to  
109 support the appeal, criteria for evidence and witness interviews, and other pertinent items. The  
110 committee must maintain confidentiality of all cases that are reviewed.

111 (6 members) One faculty member from each department (BME, CIV, ECE, ME, and TS), and the assistant  
112 Dean who will serve as an ex officio member without vote.

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114 **Safety Committee (SC)**

115 The Safety Committee (SC) is charged with making recommendations on safety issues within Armstrong  
116 Hall related to the delivery of the curriculum, including establishing safety guidelines, rules for student  
117 access, training for students and faculty/staff, reviewing safety incidents and recommending corrective  
118 actions, and housekeeping. The committee must periodically review safety guidelines for each  
119 laboratory and classroom in Armstrong Hall, understanding that each instructional/research space has  
120 unique needs. This review should include all potential hazards including chemical, mechanical,  
121 electrical, and occupational. The committee shall report the corrective action for any safety incident to  
122 the Dean and faculty within one week of the reported occurrence. The committee must work closely  
123 with the College’s Occupational Safety & Environmental Services Department.

124 (9 members) One faculty member from each department (BME, CIV, ECE, ME, and TS), the machine  
125 shops supervisor, and the instrumentation technician, and two students. At least one member of the  
126 committee must serve as a liaison to the College-wide safety committee

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128 **Strategic Plan Implementation Committee (SPIC)**

129 The Strategic Plan Implementation Committee (SPIC) is charged with making recommendations  
130 concerning strategic initiatives that support the School’s strategic goals. The committee will periodically

131 review and prioritize the existing strategic initiatives and consider new initiatives that may be proposed  
132 by faculty, programs, students, or other constituents.

133 (7 members) One faculty member from each department (BME, CIV, ECE, ME, and TS), and two students

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135 **School Ad Hoc Committees (SAHC)**

136 School ad hoc committees are established to discuss timely issues that fall outside the purview of one of  
137 the school committees. The Dean or School Steering Committee may form ad hoc committees that will  
138 exist only for the duration necessary to complete the charge. Ad hoc committees may not recommend  
139 new policy, procedure, or program.

140

141 **Conflict Resolution**

142 Stakeholder groups have an opportunity, through the SSC, to express concerns about the three-step  
143 process not being followed during the development of any recommendation. If the SSC determines that  
144 the three-step process was not followed conscientiously, the SSC shall return the recommendation to  
145 the school committee for further consideration.

146 Additionally, faculty can also petition the SSC to return a recommendation to a standing committee. A  
147 secret ballot with a simple majority vote by at least one department is required to petition the SSC to  
148 take a school wide vote of the faculty. When the petition concerns an issue of policy, procedure, or  
149 program and is being considered by a standing committee, the SSC will conduct a vote by electronic  
150 voting with a majority of the school membership needed to pass the question. If the question passes  
151 then the petition is upheld and the recommendation must be returned to the recommending committee  
152 for reconsideration

153 Once a final recommendation has been considered by the Dean, the decision regarding the final  
154 recommendation should be communicated in writing to the school committee or the SSC when the  
155 charge was developed by that committee. Final recommendations may be accepted, accepted with  
156 minor revisions, accepted following major revisions, or rejected.

157 Ideally, the representatives of the stakeholder groups and the administration on the school governance  
158 committees will be able to communicate during the on-going work of the committee as policies and  
159 procedures are being developed. Continuing communication by all groups, including the administration,  
160 should limit the number of instances where the administration does not accept final recommendations  
161 that come out of the governance structure.

162 In the case of revision, the proposed changes to the final recommendation must be agreed to by the  
163 committee. The committee should then develop a new final recommendation considering the suggested  
164 modification with or without additional testimony as it sees fit. If the modification is considerable, then  
165 the committee must first determine whether it should be considered to be at step #2 or step #3 of the  
166 process.

167 In the case of rejection when the issue appears to be irreconcilable, the reasons for rejecting the final  
168 recommendation must be conveyed in writing to the SSC.

169 Where disagreements persist, the Provost can call for an informal meeting of affected stakeholder  
170 groups for the purpose of resolving the disagreements. If a resolution cannot be achieved, the Provost  
171 shall make a final recommendation with a statement of the dissenting objections.