

A Proposal Regarding Planning Councils

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In recent months, reports from the Faculty Senate and the Middle States Self-Study committees have pointed to the need for more consistent consultation and input regarding important areas of planning including admissions and finance. These reports recommend the appointment of new advisory councils or committees. Last year, a similar need was recognized in the area of facilities.

In reviewing the self-study reports, it seems clear that the College could benefit from a more formal consultative process to assist senior administrative leaders (particularly cabinet members) who are responsible for developing strategic planning documents in accord with the institutional mission, values, and commitments. It seems appropriate to consider a system in which the cabinet/administrative officer remains responsible for preparing and implementing a strategic planning document, working with an advisory body that would pose probing questions, review evaluative information, and provide informed feedback and recommendations regarding long-term goals as well as annual implementation plans.

The College needs to clarify the elements of its comprehensive strategic plan and provide a means by which this plan is updated regularly. The most straightforward approach to defining and advancing this comprehensive plan is to work loosely from the College's divisional structure, with each cabinet officer responsible for developing and implementing a strategic plan in consultation with an advisory body. Annual updates would be submitted to the Committee on Planning and Priorities, which would be responsible for ensuring that the parts are integrated into a thematic whole – the College's Strategic Plan – and communicated to the campus community.

In some cases, the appropriate advisory bodies already exist. For example:

- Educational programs and opportunities – Committee on Academic Program
- Faculty development and work – Committee on Faculty Affairs
- Residential and campus life – Committee on Student and Campus Community
- College advancement – Foundation Board

However, this approach also suggests a rethinking of the concept of advisory councils. The current governance document defines eleven advisory councils that take “responsibility for specified tasks, which are established in policy ... and typically send recommendations regarding policy, procedure, or programs to specified Standing Committees.” Many of the current councils relate more to educational programs (general education, teacher education, and honors) than to strategic planning.

A revised system could distinguish the work and role of planning and program advisory councils.

Planning Councils

Recommended Councils (with cabinet/administrative officer):

Finance and Budget (Treasurer)

Facilities and Construction (VP for Facilities, Construction, and Campus Safety)

Information Technology (Chief Information Officer)

Enrollment Management (Dean of Admissions / Dean of Academic Services)
Diversity and Human Relations (Dir. of Diversity Initiatives / Asst VP of Human Resources)
Public Relations and External Affairs (Dir. of Campus and Community Relations)

Membership: Approximately seven members appointed by the President (or designee) following consultation between the cabinet/administrative officer and representative campus bodies (Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government Association). Not every strategic advisory council is expected to have equal representation from these bodies.

Term of Appointment: Normally three years (staggered) for faculty and staff members to ensure continuity.

Leadership: Co-chaired by the cabinet officer and a member of the council elected by the others.

Responsibilities:

Assist the cabinet/administrative officer by analyzing, critiquing, and improving strategic planning documents on an annual basis. Policy recommendations are forwarded to appropriate governance committee for review. The Council would also consider the budgetary implications of any recommendations; and provide feedback regarding annual goals for the area.

Councils would also assist the cabinet officer in making annual presentations to interested members of the campus community regarding planning and goals in this area. These presentations would help improve TCNJ's internal communication.

Meeting Schedules:

Arranged as needed in order to become familiar with the evidence in the planning area and to provide an annual report reviewing the status of the strategic plan in this area along with suggestions for assessment activities or action items.

Program Advisory Councils

Recommended Councils (with responsible administrative officer):

Graduate Programs (Dean of Graduate School)
General Education (Director of General Education)
Teacher Education (Dean of School of Education)
Honors and Scholar (Director of Honors and Scholars Office -- *proposed*)
International Education (Director of Global Programs Office)
Athletics (Director of Athletics)
Special Services (Director of Wellness Program)
Career Services and Internships (Director of Career Services)
Student Success (Director of Student Success)

Membership: Approximately seven members to eleven members appointed by the President (or designee) following consultation between the administrative officer and representative campus

bodies (Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and Student Government Association). Not every program advisory council is expected to have equal representation from these bodies.

Note: Some of the current advisory councils are significantly large in size, so this issue will need to be reviewed thoughtfully.

Term of Appointment: Normally three years (staggered) for faculty and staff members to ensure continuity.

Leadership: Co-chaired by the administrative officer and a member of the council elected by the others.

Responsibilities:

Assist the administrative officer in developing recommendations and implementation plans regarding policy, procedure, or programs. Policy recommendations are forwarded to appropriate governance committee for review. Assist administrative officer in annual goal setting, implementation plans, and program review.

Meeting Schedules:

According to College meeting schedule.