**Committee on Faculty Affairs**

**Recommendation on Teacher-Scholar Definition**

**November 17, 2011**

**Charge**

The Steering Committee charges the Committee on Faculty Affairs to propose a definition for the term “teacher-scholar” that will serve to describe the model of faculty work at TCNJ. In making its recommendations, CFA is asked to review the Teacher Scholar Task Force report and reach out to CPP to determine the way that a definition of “teacher-scholar” will be reflected in the mission.

**Background**

The faculty senate executive board noted that while “teacher-scholar” is used ubiquitously on our campus, no definition of this term has gone through governance despite a 2006 report from the Task Force on the Teacher Scholar Model at TCNJ (available on the Office of Academic Affairs website). This term is used in the college’s mission and the promotion and reappointment document. In addition, it served as the cornerstone of the transformation of faculty work on this campus.

**Development of the Recommendation**

In the process of making its recommendations, CFA has consulted with CPP for their view on this particular charge. It was agreed by CPP that despite the use of the term “teacher-scholar” in many of our campus documents, the college community is in need of an explicit and accurate definition on what this term should mean. It is particularly important for individuals applying for reappointment and promotion that this term not be left open to interpretation. CFA has reviewed the Teacher Scholar Task Force report (May 8, 2006), which provides an overview on the notion of teacher-scholar as well as a set of recommendations for how TCNJ may improve its campus infrastructure to support the teacher-scholar model. As indicated in this report, a teacher-scholar strives for excellence in areas of teaching, scholarship, and professional activities. CFA has also reviewed the College document titled “Guiding Principles for Academic Work” (2001) which was the cornerstone and driver of the academic transformation. This document included both “Guiding Principles for Student Learning” and “Guiding Principles for Faculty Work and Development,” which collectively outlined the characteristics that define TCNJ students and faculty. Students and faculty having these characteristics would be educationally and professionally served more powerfully and effectively as result of the academic transformation. In this document, faculty work was divided into 1) Pedagogy, 2) Scholarship, 3) Interdisciplinarity and Diversity, 4) Service and Leadership, 5) General/Liberal Education, and 6) Professional Development, and each category was associated with a guiding principle and suggested ways in which the principle might be realized. CFA feels that these six corresponding principles nicely and concisely describe what constitutes an accomplished and engaged teacher-scholar and, therefore, CFA’s definition incorporates the principles from these documents.

**Testimony**

The preliminary recommendation on teacher-scholar definition was initially drafted in April 2011. CFA gathered testimony on this preliminary recommendation through Qualtrics and an open forum held in conjunction with the Faculty Senate meeting in September 2011. While a majority of faculty members responding thought this recommendation constituted a good definition of a teacher-scholar at TCNJ, there were some questions and concerns raised in the open forum and Qualtrics, especially with regard to engaging students in faculty’s scholarship. In particular, the use of the word “engagement” in the preliminary recommendation raised concern that it might seem to obligate faculty to include students in their research. Some also suggested shortening the definition. Based on the feedback gathered from the open forum and Qualtrics, CFA concluded that the definition should be shortened somewhat and the reference to engaging students needed clarification. Further revisions to the preliminary recommendation were made and feedback was gathered again using Qualtrics in October 2011. Almost all responses were supportive. CFA is satisfied that the final recommendation for a teacher-scholar definition is appropriately flexible and can be applied to all disciplines.

**Final Recommendation**

CFA recommends the following as a defining statement to be used for the term “teacher-scholar”:

The College of New Jersey Teacher-Scholar

The College of New Jersey’s mission statement declares, “TCNJ’s exceptional students, teacher-scholars, staff, alumni, and board members constitute a diverse community of learners, dedicated to free inquiry and open exchange, to excellence in teaching, creativity, scholarship, and citizenship, and to the transformative power of education in a highly competitive institution.” In keeping with that mission, TCNJ faculty members and librarians pride themselves as being a community of teacher-scholars and librarian-scholars that affirms the ideals of liberal education and the importance of preparing the next generation of committed citizens. The development of a vibrant intellectual community depends on teacher-scholars who contribute actively to the enhancement of the College and to their respective disciplines and professions. The teacher-scholar model fosters ~~emphasizes~~ a ~~tangible~~ connection between faculty and librarian scholarly and creative work and student learning. Excellent scholarship benefits the quality of an intellectual community. Teacher-scholars are deeply committed to pursuing their own scholarly and creative work and integrating this with their teaching when possible and/or appropriate. At TCNJ, the accomplished and engaged teacher-scholar or librarian-scholar strives to be a master of pedagogy and a mentor, creating a learning environment that cultivates analytical and creative problem solvers and inspires students to be ~~scholars~~ scholarly themselves. ~~They continue~~ ~~to~~ Teacher-scholars grow as disciplinary or interdisciplinary experts, pursuing productive programs of scholarly research or creative endeavor that may engage students through a variety of activities such as introducing students to controversies within their fields, providing opportunities for participation in faculty scholarship, or creating assignments that expose students to the fundamental tenants of scholarship. ~~that encourage students to be scholars themselves~~. Teacher-scholars and librarian-scholars participate actively in the life of the campus community and seek ways to improve this and other communities in which they live and work. They value interdisciplinary connections and conversations as well as disparate views and voices. Each reflects deeply on his or her own learning path and accepts responsibility for defining a path of intellectual, professional, and personal growth.

Individual faculty and librarian roles and contributions may vary in emphasis and evolve over time, but all contribute to the work of the academic enterprise through teaching, scholarly and creative endeavors, and service. In order to realize this model of teacher-scholar and librarian-scholar, the structure of faculty and librarian work needs to be diverse, flexible, and equitable. The College recognizes the importance of continually investing in the development of its teacher-scholars in order to support and recognize their engagement and accomplishments.