**MEMORANDUM** 

**TO:**Committee on Academic Programs

**FROM:**Steering Committee

**RE:**Graduate Policies

**DATE:**April 28, 2011 

**Background:**

In reviewing policies and procedures in the Graduate Bulletin, the Graduate Office and GPC found many old policies that had been developed many years ago through the predecessor of the Graduate Programs Committee. At the time, the policies did not go further in the governance process, but were believed by all involved to carry the force of policy, and they  remain in current use.

However, now realizing that these policies are not in the college’s policy manual, GPC has asked about the extent to which these policies (either as stated or with minor revisions) need to go through the complete governance process. Attached is a document from GPC with three categories of policy:  1) “old” policies currently in the Graduate Bulletin; 2) a requested variant on current policy reflecting the  credit structure of graduate courses; and 3) a request for updates to a policy on graduate appeals (which, we understand, was reviewed and submitted to CAP by GPC as part of its charge on Comprehensive Exam policy.)  A copy of GPC’s request is attached.

**Charge:**

The Steering Committee asks CAP to consider the policies in categories 1 and 2.  If  CAP believes that these policies need to go through the current governance process, the Steering Committee asks it to consider ways in which those policies might be expeditiously reviewed for approval.  For example CAP might want to consider the aggregated policies as a single preliminary proposal and seek feedback from the community through methods such as email.   If CAP, does not believe that any additional approval is needed, please inform the Steering Committee.

**Timeline:**

The Steering Committee requests that this work be completed by November  2011.

**TCNJ Governance Processes**

**Step #1 -- Identifying and reporting the problem:**When a Standing Committee receives an issue from the Steering Committee, the first responsibility is to clearly articulate and report the problem to the campus community through regular updates to the campus community and the Governance Web Page ([www.tcnj.edu/~steering](http://www.tcnj.edu/~steering) ).  The problem may have been set out clearly in the charge received from the Steering Committee, or it may be necessary for the Standing Committee to frame a problem statement.  The problem statement should indicate the difficulties or uncertainties that need to be addressed through new or revised policy, procedure, or program.  The problem statement should be broadly stated and should include a context such as existing policy or practice.  Problem statements may include solution parameters but should not suggest any actual solutions.  Clearly stated problems will lead to better recommendations.

**Step #2 -- Preparing a preliminary recommendation:**Once the campus community has received the problem statement, committees can begin to collect data needed to make a recommendation.  Committees typically receive input through committee membership, formal testimony, and open comment from affected individuals and all stakeholder groups.  Committees must be proactive in inviting stakeholder groups (including Student Government Association, Staff Senate and Faculty Senate) to provide formal testimony prior to developing a preliminary recommendation.  When, in the best judgment of the committee, adequate clarity of the principles contributing to the problem are known, a preliminary recommendation should be drafted and disseminated to the campus community through regular updates and the Governance Web Page.

**Step #3 -- Making a Final Recommendation:**Committees must use sound judgment to give the campus adequate time to review the preliminary recommendation before making their final recommendation.  Again, committees are expected to be proactive in receiving feedback on the preliminary recommendation.  If a full calendar year has passed since the formal announcement of the preliminary recommendation, the committee must resubmit a preliminary recommendation to the campus community.  When, in the best judgment of the committee, the campus community has responded to the proposed resolution of the issue, the committee shall send their final recommendation (complete documentation) to the Steering Committee.

**Testimony**

The presenting of testimony is central to the concept of shared governance.  All stakeholder groups will have an opportunity to provide input into governance issues through direct membership as well as invited testimony.  Individuals appointed or elected to the governance system are expected to take a broad institutional perspective relative to issues being considered.  In contrast, invited testimony will reflect the stakeholder perspective on the issue being considered.  Committees are expected to be proactive in inviting stakeholder groups to provide testimony at both step # 2 and #3 of the process.  Committees need to identify stakeholder groups that are interested in each particular issue and invite their testimony at scheduled Committee meetings or hearings.  Committees should report in their minutes which groups were targeted as stakeholders, how testimony was invited, the form of the testimony (written, oral, etc.), and the substantive content of the testimony.