**To: Steering Committee**

**From: Faculty Senate**

**Subject: Promotions Process**

**Date:  March 16, 2011**

The promotions process, as a whole, has not been fully reviewed for a number of years, and the Provost supports a review of the entire process by TCNJ governance. Data provided by the AFT shows that the percentage of faculty with the rank of professor at TCNJ is one of the two lowest among public institutions in the state. And the percentage of the faculty at the rank of Professor also is significantly lower now than it was in the early 1990’s, when there was a cap to the number of individuals who could be promoted in a given year. Additionally, in the past few years, each department has developed its own Disciplinary Standards, and these have been reviewed at the school and college level. The departmental PRCs and the dean of each school vet each candidate for promotion using criteria and standards outlined in the Promotions Document and the department’s Disciplinary Standards. They are the ones who are most familiar with a candidate’s scholarship, teaching, and service and would be most appropriate to evaluate a candidate.

Therefore the Faculty Senate asks that Steering directs an appropriate governance committee to initiate a thorough review of the promotions process. We further offer the following points for consideration:

**Promotions Process implementation:**

* The process calls for three separate evaluations of the candidate, in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service; no holistic evaluation of the candidate is made.
* The mechanism for judging the appropriateness of venues for disseminating scholarly work, such as journals and conferences, is not clear.
* There may not be sufficient understanding by external reviewers of the “TCNJ context”, especially regarding substantial assignments, such as departmental Chair service and FSP coordination.

**College Promotions Committee:**

* The role of the CPC and the implementation of the process as practiced by the CPC over the past several years should be reviewed. Such a review should examine the mission of the CPC in a collegial context and framework.
* Historically, the CPC served the function of rank-ordering candidates when only a limited number of slots for promotion were available each year, but such a limit no longer exists.
* Some colleagues have suggested that the CPC should focus more on candidates that go through the CPC without a recommendation from the departmental PRC or the dean, to ensure that the lack of support is well founded.
* Grant and methodology activities do not seem to be given appropriate weight by the CPC, even when the disciplinary standards in some disciplines do describe how weight should be given to grant applications and awards.
* Even though the CPC is to consider the recommendations of the department and the dean, the assessment of scholarship and teaching done by peers in the departmental PRC and by the dean do not seem to carry appropriate weight.
* For evaluation of teaching, the CPC has publicly stated that scores of 4 or greater are required on the student feedback forms. Clarity is needed as to why this number is being used, what is being measured by the SFF, and how that information is being used in the promotion process.
* There typically are 25-30 candidates for promotion each year, many from different departments.  It is difficult for the CPC to study and analyze both the Disciplinary Standards and the application for each candidate in the short time allotted for the CPC review process. The basic charge to CPC appears to call for a full, independent evaluation of the candidate’s record, including the scholarly record. In light of this should the scope of the work of CPC be reduced?
* The success rate of candidates at the CPC level is not an accurate measure of how well the promotion process screens out unqualified individuals, since unqualified individuals typically do not get past the PRC and the dean, but rather they withdraw their application before it reaches the CPC.

**Promotions Document:**

* The notion of “sustained” scholarship is not well defined, and the CPC does not appear to accommodate for extraordinary service in the same manner that the department PRCs and the dean do.
* The Promotions Document does not provide a mechanism by which the CPC can request missing information or additional clarification of the candidate’s record other than rejection of the candidate followed by an appeal before the CPC. This may explain in part why many appeals result in the CPC’s reversal of its earlier rejection.
* Although the Promotions Document only discusses the Disciplinary Standards in terms of scholarship, there appears to be no agreement whether standards for teaching or service should be (or can be) included in the departmental Disciplinary Standards.