

TCNJ Library Governance

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Introduction

The College of New Jersey operates under a system of shared governance. At TCNJ, the standard model of shared governance, which acknowledges the faculty's expertise in and responsibility for the academic enterprise of the College, is augmented by the inclusion of all stakeholder groups in a process of making recommendations toward the policy and planning decisions of the administration. Shared governance creates an environment in which faculty, staff, and students work together to make recommendations to administrators to promote collegial and transparent decision making. This document extends these principles of transparency and inclusiveness to the library by creating an organized structure through which stakeholder groups may become informed about issues and planning, and influence the decision-making process.

The library's governance policies follow the model described in the College's governance document, *Governance Structure and Processes (2011)*. The value of shared governance to the library is that it gives library employees and other stakeholders an institutional voice, enabling them to make thoughtful, appropriate, and timely recommendations. The system of shared governance must allow for the participation of stakeholders without being overly burdensome or adding unnecessary layers of bureaucracy that would impede progress within the library. This document provides processes for making recommendations and for resolving conflicts related to library governance issues. As in the College-wide document, governance is limited to issues of policy, procedure, or program. The College-wide document will supersede this document if there are any perceived conflicts between the documents.

The formal library governance structure consists of the Library Steering Committee, the Library Building and Safety Committee, the Library Strategic Planning Committee, and library ad hoc committees as described later in this document. The principles of shared governance should permeate decision making in all existing library units, committees, task forces, etc. Any member of the library community can bring an issue of concern related to library policy, procedure, or program to the Steering Committee.

The Three-Step Process

As with the College-wide process, an explicit three-step process is followed for each substantive issue of policy, procedure, or program in the library. Policies establish fundamental principles as a basis and guide for the organization, administration, and development of the library.

Procedures help to define the nature of these policies by explaining rules, protocols, directives,

and guidelines that are required for their implementation. Programs include both academic and non-academic activities and services that the library provides to the College community. Academic programs, such as information literacy, support teaching and learning or academic enhancement. Non-academic programs, such as building safety and security, support the functions of the library that are not involved directly in teaching and learning or academic enhancement. The formal three-step process described below must be followed to give stakeholder groups opportunities to work cooperatively to make thoughtful, appropriate, and timely recommendations to the library administration on issues related to policy, procedure, or program. Although not all library business requires the formality of the three-step process, the principles of shared governance, including input from appropriate stakeholders and transparent processes, should permeate all decision making.

The following steps must be followed in preparing recommendations:

- (1) Identifying and reporting the problem. If necessary, the Library Steering Committee (LSC) will prepare a charge identifying the issue for the appropriate committee.
- (2) Preparing a preliminary recommendation.
- (3) Making a final recommendation.

The presenting of testimony, prior to both the preliminary and final recommendations, is central to the concept of shared governance. The three-step process ensures that there are opportunities for formal testimony and open comment from affected individuals and all stakeholder groups. Committees are expected to be proactive in inviting stakeholder groups to provide testimony at both steps # 2 and #3 of the process. It is expected that committee members will bring issues back to their stakeholder groups for discussion. For some issues, sufficient initial testimony may come from input through committee membership or solicitation from targeted constituent groups. Preliminary recommendations for a new policy, procedure, or program must be presented to the stakeholders, either at a regular library general staff meeting or at a scheduled forum. The period for open input and comment must also be communicated to all stakeholder groups. If the committee determines that substantive changes are needed after the preliminary recommendation has been presented at an open forum, then the revised recommendation must be sent to all stakeholders and presented again at an open forum.

Committees shall send final recommendations to the LSC. Once the LSC determines that the three-step process was followed conscientiously, it forwards final recommendations to the Dean, who will consider the recommendation and respond in writing to the recommending committee and the LSC. Recommendations and responses must be developed and presented in a timely manner. The Dean may accept, accept with revisions, or reject final recommendations.

Ideally, the representatives on library committees of stakeholder groups, including the library administration, will be able to communicate regularly as policies, procedures, and programs are being developed. Continuing communication by all groups should minimize the number of instances where the Dean does not accept final recommendations that come out of the governance structure.

When the Dean suggests a modification to a final recommendation, the committee that had prepared the recommendation shall determine the significance of the suggested modification. If the committee deems the modification to be minor, then the committee shall develop a new final recommendation that reflects the suggested modification, after deciding whether it is necessary to solicit additional testimony. If the committee deems the modification to be substantial, but not irreconcilable with the final recommendation, then the committee shall determine whether the issue is at step #2 or step #3 of the process. In cases where the committee deems the suggested modification to be irreconcilable with the final recommendation, the committee will consider the final recommendation to have been rejected. In cases where the Dean rejects the final recommendation, the reasons for rejecting the final recommendation must be conveyed in writing to the committee. The Dean or the committee may request a follow-up meeting to discuss the reasons for rejection.

When disagreements persist, the Dean or the LSC may request that the Provost call for an informal meeting of affected stakeholder groups for the purpose of resolving the disagreements.

Resolution of Concerns Relating to Process and Recommendations

Stakeholders have an opportunity, through the LSC, to express concerns about the three-step process not being followed during the development of any recommendation. If the LSC determines that the three-step process was not followed conscientiously, then the LSC shall return the recommendation to the recommending committee for further consideration and meet with the committee to redress the problem.

Additionally, continuing, non-student library employees can petition the LSC to return a preliminary recommendation to the recommending committee if they object to the proposed resolution of the issue. If a petition signed by a minimum of ten continuing, non-student library employees is received, the LSC will conduct a library-wide vote, with a majority of the continuing, non-student library employees needed to pass the question. If the question passes, then the petition is upheld and the recommendation must be returned to the recommending committee for reconsideration. A petition appealing a preliminary recommendation must be submitted no later than three working days after the open comment period is closed. As with preliminary recommendations, if there is disagreement with a final recommendation, then the resolution process above will be followed. A petition appealing a final recommendation must be submitted no later than three working days after the recommendation has been formally accepted by the Dean.

Composition of Standing Committees

Standing committees described in this document are formed each spring for the following academic year (starting on July 1). Generally, committee members will serve two-year, staggered terms. Each standing committee will maintain appropriate action minutes of all official business and will make an annual report to the library staff and Dean. Committees are established through appropriate stakeholder groups representing librarians, staff, and students as described in each committee's charge. All committee members have equal rights and responsibilities concerning input.

Committees may consist of both elected and ex officio members. While there may be instances in which elections are library-wide, generally, elected librarian members of committees are elected by all librarians (i.e., those in librarian titles); elected staff committee members are elected by the staff as a whole; student members of any committee are the Library Student Advisory Council representatives, and/or other students recruited by TCNJ Student Government (current library student employees are eligible). Student members are not eligible to serve as committee chairs. This representation allows library-wide committees to foster dialogue and address issues that span multiple departments and units. All stakeholder groups with elected representation must have an open election process that reflects appropriate representation and engages as many of the stakeholder members as possible.

Library Steering Committee (LSC)

The Library Steering Committee (LSC) is responsible for coordinating the library governance system and maintaining a collegial environment so that all members of the library community are informed about issues that are important to their role in the community. Any member of the library community can bring an issue of concern related to library policy, procedure, or program to the LSC. The LSC:

- Receives all requests for consideration of issues having to do with library policy, procedure, or program, deciding which issues are subject to the formal three-step process, and referring each issue to an appropriate body. Routine business of the standing committees or other library committees, which is defined in each committee charge, does not need to be directed by the LSC.
- For issues that are not covered by an existing committee charge, prepares a charge and directs it to an appropriate existing body or establishes an ad hoc committee to address the issue.
- Sets the agenda for library general staff meetings in cooperation with the Dean.
- Maintains a web site for library governance business similar to the one described in the College governance document.

- Addresses concerns that an issue is not being resolved in a timely manner.
- Oversees the resolution of concerns within the governance process, including the formal resolution process described above.
- Initiates a formal review of this *TCNJ Library Governance* document every five years. The LSC may enact minor revisions as needed. Any major change, whether or not arising from a formal review, is subject to consideration through the regular three-step process described above.

The LSC will have six members: two librarians, two staff members, one student, and the Dean (or designee) who serves ex officio without vote. The committee is co-chaired by the Dean (or designee) and an elected member (librarian or staff). The LSC will meet monthly.

Library Building and Safety Committee (LBSC)

The Library Building and Safety Committee (LBSC) is charged with overseeing and making recommendations on all building-related and safety issues within or around the library. This includes establishing safety guidelines, disaster plans, and rules for building access and use; training for librarians, staff, and students; reviewing safety incidents and recommending corrective actions; and maintaining oversight of housekeeping issues. The committee must periodically review safety guidelines, understanding that each work area has unique issues and needs. This review should include all potential hazards including occupational and environmental. The Assistant Dean for Technical Services will bring all relevant library incident reports to the attention of the committee chair (after ensuring that any privacy issues are addressed), and the committee will determine if any corrective action or follow-up is needed for any incident. Where appropriate, the committee must work with the College's Office of Occupational Safety & Environmental Services in developing recommendations for corrective or follow-up actions.

The LBSC will have six members: one librarian, one staff member, one student, the Assistant Dean for Technical Services, the Program Assistant, and the Dean (or designee) who serves ex officio without vote. If the library has a liaison to any College-wide committee related to campus safety, the liaison should be a member of the LBSC. The LBSC will meet as needed but at least quarterly.

Library Strategic Planning Committee (LSPC)

The Library Strategic Planning Committee (LSPC) is charged with promoting the library's mission and core values as the primary guides in library planning, decision-making, and resource allocation. The LSPC advises and supports the Dean's development of the library's strategic plan and strategic initiatives. The committee will establish the library's planning process; periodically

review and prioritize the existing strategic plan and initiatives; and consider new strategic initiatives that may be proposed by librarians, staff, or other stakeholders.

The LSPC will have five members: two librarians, one staff member, one student, and the Dean (or designee). The LSPC will meet as needed but at least quarterly.

Library Ad Hoc Committees

Substantial issues with library-wide impact that seem to fall outside the purview of an existing committee or other body may warrant the formation of an ad hoc committee. The LSC may form and charge an ad hoc committee that will exist only for the duration necessary to complete the charge. If an ad hoc committee recommends a new policy, procedure, or program, the three-step process described above must be followed.

Staff Meetings

The library general staff will meet monthly (or as needed but at least quarterly; see the AFT Agreement Article XVII section E) at the time designated for school meetings in the College's meeting schedule. These meetings are intended to be a forum for information sharing concerning all issues being considered at the College, library, and department levels. However, certain issues require more in-depth discussion and/or require broader input from the community than can be afforded at a regular library general staff meeting. Therefore, committees may call one or more open forums to collect testimony on important issues according to the three-step process described above.