

**To:** Library Steering Committee (LSC)  
**From:** Library Building and Safety Committee (LBSC)  
**Re:** Food and Drink Policy Final Recommendation  
**Date:** March 3, 2017

**Background/Timeline:**

***January 18, 2016***

The Library Steering Committee (LSC) charged the Library Building and Safety Committee (LBSC) with reviewing TCNJ Library Food and Drink Policy (Appendix A – original charge).

***March 18, 2016***

LBSC emailed LSC the preliminary recommendation with a proposed food and drink policy (Appendix B - preliminary recommendation).

***April 27, 2016***

LBSC received an email from LSC with the following message: “The LSC has determined that this charge has been adequately met and the LBSC can proceed to the next step of collecting testimony of stakeholder groups prior to formulating a final recommendation.”

***May 4, 2016***

LBSC received an email from LSC with the following message: “Regarding the Food and Drink Policy preliminary recommendation, the LSC would like some more descriptive details on what is, or is not, considered a "snack" as it pertains to the proposed Food and Drink Policy. Please add this information to the second (2nd) paragraph in the recommendation which discusses the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable food items within the library building. There is no need to revise and resubmit this preliminary proposal to the LSC because (as I mentioned last week) LSC members have agreed that the 3-step process has been followed appropriately and the LBSC can proceed to the next step of collecting testimony of stakeholder groups prior to formulating a final recommendation.”

LBSC revised the policy. Even though it was not required, LBSC did send LSC a revised policy dated 7/7/16 (Appendix C – revised policy).

## **Evidence Collected:**

In creating its final recommendation, LBSC considered: 1) relevant data, 2) best practices from other academic libraries, and 3) input from stakeholders.

### **1. *Relevant Data***

The current TCNJ's current Library Noise Policy was designed to "accommodate multiple learning styles (e.g., quiet spaces for some, collaborative work spaces for others) but also facilitate other functions of the Library" ([TCNJ Library Noise Policy](#)).

According to Bennett, "The strong customary association between food and socially shaped activities will maintain." Bennett adds, "If one acknowledges the social dimensions of learning and knowledge, the provision of food—so often strongly associated with social activities—seems quite appropriate." (2003, p.18)

Today's students are part of the Barnes & Noble "Library." Anyone can purchase food and a beverage at a Starbucks Café in Barnes & Noble or take a book off the shelf to read and relax. "But the change is also a capitulation to students. They eat in the library even when it's prohibited, librarians say, and many colleges have decided to stop fighting (Foster, 2008, p. 2).

In an article published in the International Higher Education, Barclay remarks, "Besides providing some of the last refuges of quiet in a noisy, distraction-filled world, academic libraries have taken such student-friendly steps as relaxing (or eliminating) longstanding prohibitions on food and drink" (2017, p.12).

More academics have banned their entire "No Food or Drink Policy" in favor of allowing patrons to snack while they are in the building.

### **2. *Comparison of academic food/drink policies with TCNJ's current food and drink policy***

As discussed in the preliminary recommendation, LBSC reviewed library food and drink policies from other New Jersey academic libraries, including, but not limited to Princeton University, Rutgers University, Rowan University, Monmouth University, Stockton University and Kean University. LBSC compared its policy to these libraries in addition to academics located outside of New Jersey. LBSC found that TCNJ holds a stricter policy than other libraries. Even larger, very prestige universities (e.g. University of Pennsylvania and Yale University) allow food and drink. The most often mentioned compromise: library users are permitted to eat small snacks and drink beverages in spill-proof containers in all areas of the library, except in restricted areas. Restricted areas include: near computers, printers, media equipment, in library book stacks, etc.

### 3. *Input from Stakeholders*

*LBSC solicited feedback from open forums and electronic feedback.*

On November 8, 2016, LBSC invited the campus community via email to attend one of three open forums. Two forums were held the afternoon of Thursday, November 10, 2016; the other forum was held the morning of Wednesday, November 16, 2016. The campus community was also invited to send feedback directly to [rainey@tcnj.edu](mailto:rainey@tcnj.edu) or via a qualtrics survey link, where they could submit comments anonymously. LBSC received 13 comments via the qualtrics survey link.

<b>Attendance at Forums</b>	
<b>First Forum:</b>	5 library employees, 1 Instructional Technology Services employee
<b>Second Forum:</b>	4 students (2 of which currently serve on library governance committees, 3 library employees
<b>Third Forum:</b>	1 student, 6 library employees

#### **Discussion and Concerns from LBSC and Stakeholders:**

##### **1. General Comments**

The written comments mirrored some of the remarks discussed at the open forums:

- **In favor of the policy:** While there were at least three individuals who commented that the Library should keep its current “No Food or Drink Policy,” the majority felt the revised policy was fair. For instance, five people wrote that they were in favor of the proposed policy and felt it was realistic, fair or reasonable.
- **Snack:** Some people were concerned about the definition of a “snack.” As one person wrote, “Bagels may be dry, but they often tend to come with messy things such as cream cheese, butter or jelly.” In addition, people said that “fresh fruit” should be allowed in the library. During the forum, people concurred that the food policy is allowing food that is high in sugar and carbohydrates.
- **Library Café:** A few people asked if the entire first floor could be an open space to allow food and drinks sold in the library café. Students commented that the Library Café is too small. According to the students, there are few places to eat on campus. During exam and reading days, they do not want to lose their study space by going to another building to eat.
- **Trash:** Another said, “I hope the library will have a lot more trash bins with lids to accommodate the new proposed policy.”

## **2. Wording of the Policy**

- Water bottles should be permitted in the labs.
- If water bottles are permitted in the auditorium, this should be noted in the policy.
- Covered drinks is not specific enough. Does this mean any covered drink (for example, an iced latte with a wide open lid)?
- Are library users really responsible for any damage caused by food and/or drink? Students may not want to report accidental spills to the Library staff.
- What about the “approved” library cup being the only approved cup in the building (as it is today)?
- Policy needs to be even more student centered.
- If rodents and bugs are an issue, it should be mentioned in the policy to help encourage students to clean up.
- What are stacks? What are Special Collections? The general library user does not know what this means.

## **3. Enforcing Challenges**

How will the library enforce this policy? This question came up from most stakeholders. This policy is going to be a very large challenge to enforce for several reasons:

- Not enough people are aware that there is a current “No Food or Drink Policy”.
- Students are oblivious to the “No Food or Drink” signs because the current policy is not regularly enforced by library personnel.
- For whatever the reason, many library personnel do not feel comfortable enforcing this current policy.
- There is a misconception that the library café is an extension of the library and not a separate dining area, much like Starbucks exists in Barnes & Noble. Therefore, students are bringing the food in the library.
- Students want to eat and study. There is not an obvious incentive for them to adhere to the policy. For example, with the revised noise policy, students advocated for less noise for their own benefit.

### **Final Recommendation:**

Based on all the evidence collected, LBSC has attached the final Food and Drink Policy, revised 2/8/17. Please see Appendix D. The revised policy is student-friendly and communicates the message that the Library is a study place. LBSC additionally recommends the following methods to better enforce, advertise and facilitate the policy.

## **Ways to Advertise and Enforce the Policy**

### **Enforcement**

- Place signage in appropriate places differentiating eating and noneating zones.
- Place folded papers on every table in the library saying something short about the food and drink policy, like "No messy foods or open drinks allowed".
- Place signs on the digital display boards.
- Place the new policy on the Library Website.
- Create reminder cards to give out to library users (much like "quiet car" reminder cards).
- Ask student workers or library staff to go around once every 30 minutes or one-hour reminding people to take the food and drinks to permitted areas (or throw the items away). This should be done for at least a few weeks. As the semester goes on, the student worker/staff could go around less frequently (like every 2 hours). Time frequency will again continue to decrease as the semester goes on.
- Create a "no eating/drinking" script for employees to practice and use when confronted with non-compliant patrons. Employees need to feel comfortable with their role in enforcing the policy.

### **Facilitate**

- Add more clearly identified trash and recycled bins throughout the floors, so that library users properly discard trash and recyclables.
- The policy should be implemented at the beginning of the Fall 2017 semester.
- The first week of the semester, an email should be sent to the campus community regarding the new policy.

### **Advertising**

- Ask *The Signal* to write a news article about the future change in policy which will be effective Fall 2017. Then, ask *The Signal* to write another article about the policy change when the semester begins.
- Ask Sodexo's assistance with communicating this policy with appropriate signs located near the cash registers.
- Reach out via social TCNJ's social media (twitter, facebook, Instagram, snapchat) with help communicating the new policy change.

Sincerely,  
Paula Rainey and Andrew D'Apice  
Co-Chairs, LBSC

## References

Barclay, D. A. (2017). The Use of Academic Libraries in the Digital Age: What the Numbers Say. *International Higher Education*, (88), 11- 13.  
<http://www.researchcghe.org/perch/resources/88-winter-2017-final.pdf>.

Bennett, S. (2003). *Libraries designed for learning*. Washington, DC: Council on Library and Information Resources.  
<https://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub122/pub122web.pdf>.

Foster, A. L. (2008). Snacks in the Stacks: Libraries Welcome Food amid the Books. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 54(32). Retrieved online: [Chronicle of Higher Education: Snacks in the library](#)

## Appendix A

**To:** Library Building and Safety Committee (LBSC)

**From:** Library Steering Committee (LSC)

**Re:** Food and Drink Policy

**Date:** January 18, 2016

### **Background:**

For years, concerted efforts were made to enforce TCNJ Library's food and drink policy. Recently, by tacit agreement, this policy is seldom being enforced. Although the current policy remains posted on the library's website and on standing bulletin boards throughout the building, it has not been revised nor revoked. Occasionally the policy is enforced by a library employee when there is a particularly egregious violation, but this situation puts both library staff and library users in an awkward position as each person's perception of "over the line" is different. The sentiment among LSC members is that the food and drink policy has been largely disregarded with increasing amounts of food and drink being brought into the building. This has resulted in deteriorating conditions throughout the building, as well as vermin which pose threats to the collections.

### **Charge:**

The Library Steering Committee charges the Library Building and Safety Committee to:

- Review and assess the suitability of the "TCNJ Library Food and Drink Policy" (<http://library.pages.tcnj.edu/files/2013/03/BeverageandFoodPoliciesExplanation.pdf>)
- Develop and propose recommendations, if modifications to the current policy regarding food and drink are warranted.
- Propose a method(s) to better advertise and enforce the library's food and drink policy.
- Consider relevant data, input from stakeholders, and best practices from academic libraries when developing preliminary and final recommendations, as required by Library Governance procedures.
- Send final recommendations to the LSC, together with a discussion of how the recommendations were developed and how testimony/input was solicited and used.

### **Timeline:**

The Library Steering Committee requests that the LBSC submit a preliminary recommendation by March 18th 2016 (spring break), and have a final recommendation submitted by June 30th, 2016.

### **TCNJ Library Governance:**

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.



## Appendix B

**To:** Library Steering Committee (LSC)  
**From:** Library Building and Safety Committee (LBSC)  
**Re:** Food and Drink Policy  
**Date:** March 18, 2016

### **Background:**

On January 18, 2016, the Library Steering Committee charged the Library Building and Safety Committee with reviewing TCNJ Library Food and Drink Policy. Please see attached document for the full charge. SC requested a preliminary recommendation by March 18, 2016. Attached please find LBSC's proposed food and drink policy.

### **LBSC's Preliminary Recommendation**

LBSC recommends that TCNJ Library revises its current food and drink policy to the attached proposed food and drink policy. The summary below explains how LBSC came up with its preliminary recommendation.

First, LBSC reviewed and assessed the suitability of the "TCNJ Library Food and Drink Policy." Second, LBSC considered the Library environment. The presence of an open café on the first floor invites users to eat and drink. While this may not have been intentional when the Library was designed years back, some patrons see the Library as a Barnes & Noble, where one takes food and drink anywhere in the building. TCNJ is not alone in this predicament. After Kean University Library opened a Starbucks, its original no food and drink policy went out the window. Even without a café, students want to eat and drink while they study.

Third, LBSC reviewed library food and drink policies from other academic libraries, including, but not limited to Princeton University, Rutgers University, Rowan University, Monmouth University, Stockton University and Kean University. LBSC compared its policy to these libraries and found that TCNJ holds a stricter policy than other libraries. For instance, in other NJ academic libraries, patrons are permitted to eat small snacks and drink beverages in spill-proof containers in all areas of the library, except in restricted areas. Restricted areas include: near computers, printers, media equipment, in library book stacks, etc. LBSC recommends that all Library faculty and staff participate in consistently enforcing this proposed policy by speaking to patrons are in violation of the policy. The Non-Compliance section of the policy clear states what is expected of patrons who are in violation of the policy.

Once LBSC hears from Steering, the next step will be for LBSC to consider ways to advertise the new policy as well as ways to train faculty and staff on how to enforce the policy before it is implemented.

Sincerely,

Paula Rainey and Andrew D'Apice

Co-Chairs, LBSC

## **Appendix C**

### **Food and Drink Policy (revised)**

TCNJ Library is committed to creating a clean, comfortable environment conducive to study and intellectual pursuit. With this in mind, reasonable limits are in effect in regards to food and drink. Food and drink are permitted in the Library according to the following guidelines:

Only small snacks are permitted in the library except the restricted areas (see Exceptions below). *Snack food* is defined as: packaged foods which can easily be eaten dry and with the hands. Examples of snack foods include: candy, chips, nuts, dried cereal or fruit, granola bars, bagels, and cookies.

*Foods not considered as snack foods* are those that are hot, messy and/or aromatic, noisy or intended for consumption by more than one person. Examples of such prohibited foods include: pizza, sandwiches, salads, yogurt, soups, fresh fruit, ice cream, foods with dipping sauces, fries, etc.

Covered drinks are permitted, except in the restricted areas.

#### **EXCEPTIONS:**

No food or drink is permitted in the following areas of the library:

- Special Collection and Archives
- Library Auditorium
- Near TCNJ Library Computers or Media equipment
- Near photocopiers, printers, and microfilm reader/printers
- Media workstations
- Instructional classrooms with computers
- In the Library Book Stacks

**Please Note:** Full Meals (open plates of food), group meals, and food deliveries are only permitted in the Library Café.

#### **LEAVE NO TRACE:**

Please help keep TCNJ Library clean for all library users by disposing of waste in the trash and recycling receptacles located throughout the library and reporting accidental spills to library staff. Make a clean and pleasant library environment your responsibility. We appreciate your cooperation.

#### **NON-COMPLIANCE**

Determination of what food is appropriate for consumption in the Library is at the discretion of the Library staff. When in doubt, please ask the Library staff. Library users are liable for any damage to library collections, books and equipment caused by food or drinks. Library staff will ask any user who is in violation of the policy to take the items to the appropriate areas or discard the items. Library staff will ask any patron who refuses to comply with the policy to leave the Library.

## **Appendix D**

### **Food and Drink Policy (revised) 2/8/17**

TCNJ Library is committed to creating a clean, comfortable environment conducive to study and intellectual pursuit. This policy achieves a balance between Library users' social needs and the need to preserve and protect the Library's collections, furnishings and equipment. With this in mind, reasonable limits are in effect in regards to food and drink. Food and drink are permitted in the Library according to the following guidelines:

Only small snacks are permitted in the library except the restricted areas (see Exceptions below). *Snack food* is defined as: packaged foods which can easily be eaten dry and with the hands. Some examples of snack foods include: candy, chips, nuts, dried cereal or fruit, granola bars, and cookies.

*Foods not considered as snack foods* are those that are hot, potentially messy and/or aromatic, noisy or intended for consumption by more than one person.

Drinks in containers with secured lids are permitted, except in the restricted areas.

**Please Note:** The Library Café is the only dining area in the building. This policy prohibits all non-snack items and non-secured covered drinks sold in the Library Café to be consumed in any other area of the Library.

#### **EXCEPTIONS**

No food or drink is permitted in the following areas of the library:

- Near TCNJ Library Computers, including computer labs
- Near photocopiers, printers, and microform readers/printers
- Media workstations and equipment
- Near the Library print collections

#### **LEAVE NO TRACE**

Please help keep TCNJ Library clean and free of unwanted pests for all Library users by disposing of waste in the trash and recycling receptacles located throughout the Library. Make a clean and pleasant library environment your responsibility. Please clean up immediately with paper towels available in all restrooms. Please report significant spills or messes to the library staff immediately.

#### **NON-COMPLIANCE**

Determination of what food is appropriate for consumption in the Library is at the discretion of the Library staff. When in doubt, please ask the Library staff. Library staff will ask any user who is in violation of the policy to take the items to the appropriate areas to consume or discard them. Library staff will ask any patron who refuses to comply with the policy to leave the Library.

Thank you for your assistance with keeping the library a clean, comfortable environment.

Revised 2/8/17