R. Barbara Gitenstein 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 then-current 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 or other group.
(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 before both steps #2 and #3 of the process. Committees should also provide clear explanations and background information regarding the issues, so that informed decisions about these issues can be made. 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, from formally consulting librarians or staff, or solicitation from targeted constituent groups. Preliminary recommendations for a new policy, procedure, or program must be presented to the stakeholders, for instance either at a regular library general staff meeting or at a scheduled forum, or disseminated electronically. 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 paying careful attention to the rapidly changing nature of certain issues. Extensions on deadline may be granted in order to complete charges which are more labor intensive. When necessary, committees may seek assistance from appropriate non-committee members in completing a charge. The Dean may accept, accept with revisions, or reject final recommendations. Communication from the Dean must be developed and presented in a timely manner.

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 LSC shall determine how significant the suggested modification is: If LSC considers the modification to be minor, they shall return the recommendation to the recommending group to consider the suggested modification. The group then develops a new final recommendation considering the suggested modification, with or without additional testimony, as it sees fit. If the LSC considers the modification to be considerable, it shall request that the Dean meet with the group to reconcile the differences, so that the group can prepare a new final recommendation, to forward to LSC. In cases where the Dean rejects the final recommendation, the reasons for rejecting the final recommendation must be conveyed in writing to the recommending group. The Dean or the group 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 Governance Committees

Standing committees described in this document are formed each spring for the following academic year (starting on July 1). Librarian/staff committee members will serve two-year, staggered terms; student members will serve one-year terms. Each standing committee will maintain appropriate action minutes of all official business and will make an annual report either in writing or given orally during a general staff meeting 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 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 appointed by TCNJ Student Government. Typically they are from the SG membership, but SG may, at its discretion, appoint other students, including current library student employees. 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.

- Assists the Dean with setting the agenda for Library General Staff Meetings.

- Maintains a website for library governance business similar to the one described in the College governance document. Also directly communicates any change of status of a charge to the committee working on that charge.

- 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.

- Sets parameters for, and conducts, elections for all governance committees, with support from staff in the Dean's office.

- Initiates a formal review of the *TCNJ Library Governance* structure and process every five years. The LSC may enact minor revisions of the document 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 comprises two librarians, two staff members, two student representatives (one primary, one alternate) and the Dean (or designee) who serves ex officio without vote. The alternate student representative may vote only in the absence of the primary representative. The committee is co-chaired by the Dean (or designee) and an elected member (librarian or staff). The LSC will meet monthly unless there is no business to discuss.

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; safety 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 comprises one librarian, one staff member, two student representatives (one primary, one alternate), the Assistant Dean for Technical Services, the Professional Services Specialist, and the Dean (or designee) who serves ex officio without vote. The alternate student representative may vote only in the absence of the primary representative. 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 establishes the library's planning process; periodically reviews and prioritizes the existing strategic plan and initiatives; and considers new strategic initiatives that may be proposed by librarians, staff, or other stakeholders.

The LSPC comprises two librarians, one staff member, two student representatives (one primary, one alternate), and the Dean (or designee). The alternate student representative may vote only in the absence of the primary representative. 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 at least quarterly, but more frequently if necessary (see the AFT Agreement Article XVII paragraph 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.