



The College of New Jersey

Section:	II.1.33
Title:	Program closure - procedure
Effective Date:	June 2006
Approved By:	Board of Trustees
Responsible Unit:	Academic Affairs (academic@tcnj.edu , 609-771-3080)
History:	Approved by Board of Trustees: December, 2005; Recommended by Committee on Planning and Priorities and Committee on Academic Programs
Related Documents:	

I. INTRODUCTION

This policy includes the criteria for the Closure of Academic Programs, Academic Centers and Non-Academic Programs.

II. DEFINITIONS

N/A

III. POLICY

Because of the potentially serious impact of closing an academic program, academic center or a nonacademic program on employees of The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) as well as on students, the decision to take any such actions must be done in a deliberate manner. This document is intended to insure that all critical factors are considered when the process of closing a program is initiated. Librarians are considered to be faculty in this document.

A. Academic Programs

For the purpose of this document, academic programs are defined as majors, minors, course sets, interdisciplinary or disciplinary concentrations, certificate programs or college services whose expressed primary function is to deliver instruction or directly enhance or mentor student academic growth. The latter

would include library services aimed at student learning and specific academic enhancement programs such as EOF or the Honors program.

1. Closure Criteria: The following should be taken into consideration before initiating the process of closing an academic program:
 - a. Level of conformity with the mission, goals and character of the college.
 - b. Level of demand for services.
 - c. Degree to which services are being provided as efficiently as possible.
 - d. Level of ability to attract qualified personnel to staff the program.
 - e. Changes in external accreditation or credentialing requirements.
 - f. Impact of closure on tenured faculty and long-time employees.
 - g. Ramifications for external constituents (alumni, state decision-makers, etc.) of program closure.
 - h. Impact of closure on the stature of the college.
2. Guidelines for Academic Program Discontinuation: The process for academic program discontinuation should roughly parallel that which was followed for approval. To this end:
 - a. Those programs that were approved at the department or program level would be dissolved at that level. However, the closure should be communicated and justified to the campus community.
 - b. Those programs that needed initial dean's and/or school-wide approval should be discontinued with dean's or school-wide committee approval.
 - c. Those programs that initially needed central administration approval at the outset should only be discontinued with central administration approval.
 - d. For those programs that initially needed trustee approval at the outset, the procedure outlined in part I.C of this document should be followed.
 - e. In the event of a program closure the College must ensure that those students already enrolled in the program are able to complete the program in a timely fashion.
 - f. Before making an official recommendation to discontinue a board approved program, the dean or provost will meet with that department as a whole to discuss recommendation. Prior to such a meeting, the dean will identify all faculty and American Federation of Teachers (AFT) professional staff who would be affected if the academic program is closed. Only after such a meeting is held will the program closure process begin.
3. Process for Discontinuing Board Approved Programs: In what follows, it is assumed that a dean initiates the process for closure. This process might also be initiated by the provost or president.

- a. The dean makes a recommendation to the department to discontinue a program. Department responds to the dean.
- b. The department's response will include a detailed plan for the future role of all faculty or other employees currently considered to be part of that department. In addition, the department notifies these employees of the possibility that the program might be closed. The Administration recognizes the critical importance of this for all faculty/AFT professional staff and the significance of insuring that they will have the opportunity to continue contributing to the mission of TCNJ after any formal action takes place.
- c. Any faculty member or professional staff member in such a situation will have the opportunity, in accordance with relevant collective bargaining agreements, either to move to another department or academic unit with a similar function to the one being phased out or to another available position at TCNJ for which they are qualified at the same level as their current position.
- d. The dean's recommendation for discontinuation and the response of the department is sent to the Committee on Academic Programs (CAP) for review and concurrence or non-concurrence. The dean will provide CAP with a summary of the factors leading to the recommendation to discontinue the program. The dean will be present at the CAP meeting when the final recommendation is discussed. The chair of the affected department and all members of the program being reviewed for discontinuation will be invited to CAP to provide information and answer questions about the recommendation.
- e. Once CAP has responded to the recommendation, the dean will make a final recommendation. This will be sent to the provost along with the response from CAP and the departmental response.
- f. The provost will review the dean's recommendation along with the departmental response and the response from CAP. The provost then makes a recommendation to the president.
- g. Should the dean and provost recommend the discontinuation of any program, the president will review this recommendation. If the president concurs, s/he will inform the Board of Trustees of his/her intention to recommend that the program be discontinued.
- h. The provost identifies those campus constituents, such as records and registration, admissions, etc., who need to be informed in the event of program closure.
- i. Within a specified period of time, the president makes a recommendation to discontinue the program to the Board of Trustees for action. Since decisions to discontinue any program may involve personnel evaluations, the administration has a responsibility to maintain confidentiality of those aspects of its discussions.
- j. The Board of Trustees acts on the recommendation to discontinue.
- k. Subsequent to Board action, the NJ Commission on Higher Education is notified of the program discontinuation action.

1. The provost informs those campus constituents identified in step eight.

B. Academic Centers

For the purpose of this document, centers are defined as academic entities that may enhance the quality of the TCNJ educational experience through research or service, but that are not central to the delivery of the graduate or undergraduate programs of study. Examples of this would be research centers, think tanks and clinic outreach centers.

1. Closure Criteria: The following should be taken into consideration before initiating the process of closing an academic center:
 - a. Degree to which the center conforms to the stated mission of the College.
 - b. Inability to staff a high-quality center with appropriate and interested faculty.
 - c. The degree to which the reputation of the work done by the center affects (either positively or negatively) the stature of the College among its various constituencies.
 - d. The degree to which an appropriate level of external funding is maintained.
 - e. The college's responsibility to external funding sources.
2. Guidelines for Academic Center Discontinuation: As for academic programs, the process for academic center discontinuation should roughly parallel that which was followed for approval. For those centers that needed trustee or central administration approval at the outset, the following procedure should be followed.
3. Process for Discontinuing Board Approved Academic Centers: In what follows, it is assumed that initiation of the closure process begins at the dean's level. This process might also be initiated by the provost or president.
 - a. The dean meets with the faculty/staff involved in the center to discuss the intention of initiating the closure process. (In multi-school centers, all deans involved will meet with the faculty.) Prior to such a meeting, the dean will identify all employees who will be affected if the center is closed. The dean notifies those employees of that possibility.
 - b. The dean(s) recommends to the faculty/staff to close the center.
 - c. The faculty/staff respond to the dean.
 - d. The dean's recommendation for discontinuation is sent to the provost for review and concurrence or non-concurrence. The dean will provide the provost with a summary of the factors leading to the recommendation to close the center.
 - e. Any faculty member or professional staff assigned to an academic center being closed will have the opportunity, in accordance with relevant collective bargaining agreements, to either move to another

department or academic unit with a similar function to the one being phased out or to another position at TCNJ for which they are qualified at the same level as their current position.

- f. Should the dean and provost recommend the discontinuation of any center, the president will review this recommendation. If the president concurs, s/he will inform the Board of Trustees of her/his intention to recommend that the center be discontinued.
- g. In the event of closure, the provost will assure that all parties involved work to assure an orderly and equitable dissolution of activities and center assets.
- h. The provost will assure that the appropriate campus constituents are informed of the closure.

C. Non-Academic Programs

For the purpose of this document, non-academic programs are defined as those which support the functions of the college but that are not involved directly in the delivery of instruction. They might include, but are not limited to, programs involved in student services such as financial services, card and parking services, safety, health and security, campus wellness, campus and community relations, campus planning and construction, etc.

1. Closure Criteria: The following should be taken into consideration before initiating the process of closing a non-academic program:
 - a. Level of conformity with the mission, goals and character of the college.
 - b. Level of demand for services.
 - c. Degree to which services are being provided as efficiently as possible.
 - d. Level of ability to attract qualified personnel to staff the program.\
 - e. Changes in external accreditation or credentialing requirements.
 - f. Impact of closure on tenured faculty and long-time employees.
 - g. Ramifications for external constituents (alumni, state decision-makers, etc.) of program closure.
 - h. Impact of closure on the stature of the college.
2. Guidelines for Non-Academic Program Discontinuation: As for academic programs, the process for non-academic program closure should roughly parallel that which was followed for approval. For those programs that needed trustee or central administration approval at the outset, the following procedure should be followed.
3. Policy for Nonacademic Program Closure
 - a. After preliminary discussion between individual(s) advocating the recommendation and the supervisor, an agreement is reached to move toward program closure. The supervisor of a specific administrative

area, prior to making an official recommendation to the appropriate executive staff member or cabinet member to discontinue a program will meet with those members of the department responsible for promoting/providing the services found within that program to discuss the supervisor's impending recommendation.

- b. The department will be given the opportunity to respond to the supervisor and may meet with the supervisor to discuss alternatives to program closure.
- c. The supervisor's recommendation for program closure is sent to the appropriate executive staff member or cabinet member, providing a summary of factors leading to the recommendation. An executive staff member or cabinet member could make the recommendation directly to the president.
- d. Upon review, the executive staff member or cabinet member will make a final recommendation to the president.
- e. Should the executive staff member/cabinet member recommend the discontinuation of any program, the president will review this recommendation, and if she/he concurs, will inform the Board of Trustees of her/his intention to recommend the program be discontinued. At the next scheduled Board meeting, the president makes a recommendation to discontinue the program. Since decisions to discontinue any program may involve personnel evaluations, the administration has a responsibility to maintain confidentiality of those aspects of its discussions.
- f. The Board of Trustees acts on the recommendation to discontinue as appropriate.
- g. Upon Board action, the executive staff member/cabinet member will submit formal notification of the reversal of funds for the budget under which the program falls to the Office of Budget and Finance.
- h. After a program has been closed or discontinued, any budget requests submitted as an appeal for an eliminated program must be submitted through supplement reallocations with a description and justification for the request submitted to Budget and Finance by the supervisor or executive staff member/cabinet member for that budget.

IV. RELATED DOCUMENTS

N/A

V. HISTORY

Approved by Board of Trustees: December, 2005

Recommended by Committee on Planning and Priorities and Committee on Academic Programs