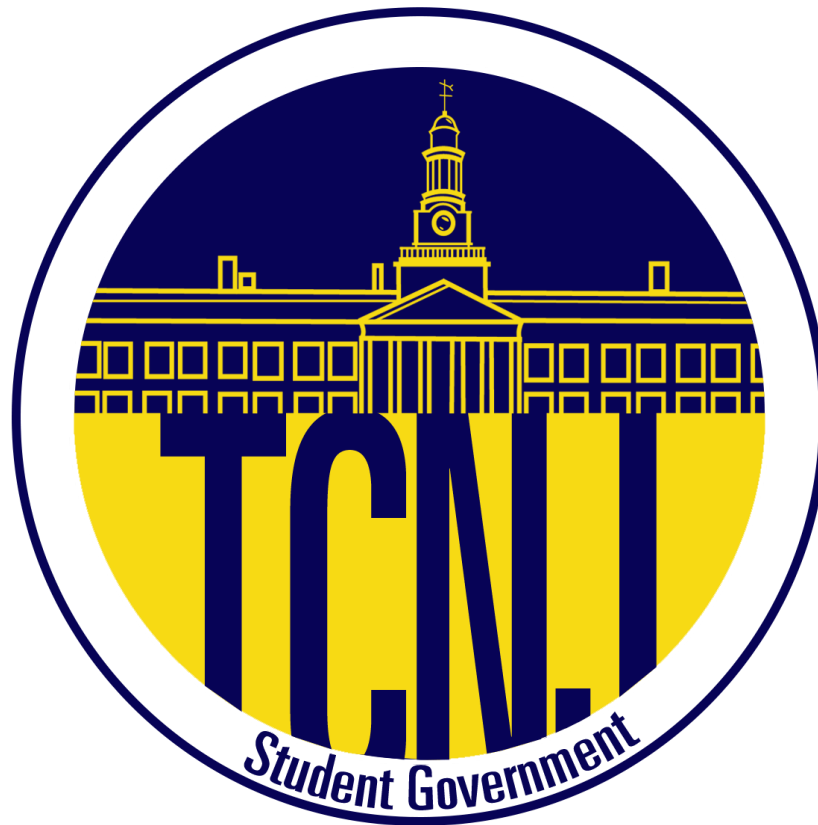


# Spring 2021 Flex and Fall 2020 Semester Preliminary Report

*Analysis of data and input collected from student surveys and town halls*



**The College of New Jersey**  
**Student Government**  
**December 2020**

Prepared By:

Suchir Govindarajan, *Executive President*

Rajbir Toor, *Vice President for Campus and Community Relations*

Roshni Raji, *Vice President for Governmental Affairs*

Student Government Cabinet, 2020-2021

## TABLE of CONTENTS

<b>Background</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Survey Results</b>	<b>4</b>
DEMOGRAPHICS	4
RESOURCES & NEED	5
Racial and Ethnic Disparities	5
Mental Health and Course Workload	5
Study Space Accessibility	6
TCNJ SERVICES	7
ACADEMICS	8
Key Positive Course Elements	8
Key Negative Course Elements	8
ARC Accommodations Guidance	9
Asynchronous vs. Synchronous	9
Exams and Assessments	9
Spring 2020 Ungraded Option Policy	10
SPRING 2021 FLEX	11
Top Three Concerns	11
Flex Classrooms	11
Health and Safety Compliance	12
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>13</b>
Academics and Instruction	13
Services and Resources	14
Health & Safety and Compliance	15
Campus Life and Operations	15
<b>Concluding Remarks</b>	<b>16</b>
Appendix A: List of Survey Questions	17
Appendix B: Figures/Tables	19
Appendix C: RSO Presidents’ Council Membership	23

### *Acknowledgements*

---

<p>Kenu Ogbevre, <i>Senior Class President</i>                  Lakshmi Gurram, <i>Senator of Science</i>                  Namitha Sethuraman, <i>VP for Administration &amp; Finance</i>                  Colleen Rushnak, <i>VP for Advancement</i>                  Alekhya Madiraju, <i>VP for Diversity, Equity, &amp; Inclusion</i>                  Emma Burch, <i>Chief of Staff</i>                  Nicollette Simon, <i>Alternate Student Trustee</i>                  Chris Driscoll, <i>Student Trustee</i></p>	<p>Bryanna O’Keefe, <i>Executive Vice President</i>                  Amy Cmielewski, <i>VP for Academic Affairs</i>                  Cristhofer Moreira, <i>Speaker of the General Assembly</i>                  Senior Class Council                  Junior Class Council                  Sophomore Class Council                  Freshman Class Council</p>
--	--

# Background

---

In order to effectively relay the TCNJ student experience in the Fall 2020 semester and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the academic, social, and personal wellbeing of students, Student Government (SG) provided a series of input and feedback opportunities throughout the year. In the Spring 2020 semester, SG distributed an *Online Learning Feedback and Assessment* survey to undergraduate students to receive input on the transition to remote learning. The Qualtrics survey consisted of 17 questions and received 516 responses.

Since then, SG has been working closely with students and student organizations to provide robust student feedback to administration, faculty, and staff, as the campus prepares for reopening protocol. Over the summer and throughout the fall, members of the Cabinet convened with a Recognized Student Organization (RSO) Presidents' Council, established and led by the SG Executive President, Executive Vice President, and Vice President for Governmental Affairs, to receive critical insights on challenges and concerns from over 25 organizations representing various student stakeholder groups.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, SG assigned liaisons to organizations such as the Commuter Collegiate Union (CCU) and Residence Hall Association (RHA) for continued dialogue regarding reopening and remote operations. This input was relayed by our representatives on the College Readiness Task Forces, governance committees, Expanded Cabinet, Board of Trustees, and various other councils and advisory groups.

Most recently, the SG Cabinet held open Town Hall meetings on November 10th, 11th, and 13th and released a survey to all students on November 13, 2020. The Qualtrics survey was distributed to the entire undergraduate student population on Friday, November 13, 2020 and was active until December 4, 2020. 615 students responded to the survey, yielding a 9.3% response rate. The survey consists of 18 questions designed to provide crucial insight on the student experience during the Fall 2020 semester (including changes in that experience from Spring 2020 to Fall 2020) and to understand questions, concerns, and suggestions for the Spring 2021 semester.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C for the current RSO Presidents' Council membership

# Survey Results

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The survey requested that students self-identify their class year, academic school. Respondents were also given the option to provide their race/ethnicity, gender identity, and affiliation with any specific programs (e.g. Bonner, EOF, etc.).

**Table 1: Respondents by class year, school**

Class Year	%	Response
First-year	20.3%	125
Sophomore	40.9%	251
Junior	17.4%	107
Senior	18.4%	113
Fifth-year and beyond	3.1%	19
Total	100%	615
Academic School	%	Response
Arts and Communication	12.1%	74
Business	12.9%	79
Education	17.6%	108
Engineering	9.4%	58
Humanities & Social Sciences	19.2%	119
Nursing, Health, & Exercise Science	10.7%	66
Science	18.1%	111
Total	100%	615

**Table 2: Respondents by program affiliation**

\*% indicates percentage of students who answer this question

Program	%	Response
Bonner	5.9%	7
EOF	21%	25
PMP	12.6%	15
Honors	50%	59
WILL	9.2%	11
Cooperman	1.7%	2
Total	100%	119

**Table 3: Respondents by race/ethnicity**

Race/Ethnicity	%	Response
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.88%	6
Asian	13.7%	94
Black or African American	5.3%	36
Hispanic or Latinx	10.4%	71
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.6%	4
White	65%	444
Prefer to self-describe	1%	7
Prefer not to say	3.2%	22
Total	100%	684

**Table 4: Respondents by gender identity**

Gender Identity	%	Response
Transgender man	0.49%	3
Transgender woman	0.16%	1
Cisgender man	21.95%	135
Cisgender woman	68.29%	420
Non-binary	1.14%	7
Agender	0.16%	1
Genderqueer	0.65%	4
Prefer to self-describe	3.41%	21
Prefer not to say	3.74%	23
Total	100%	615

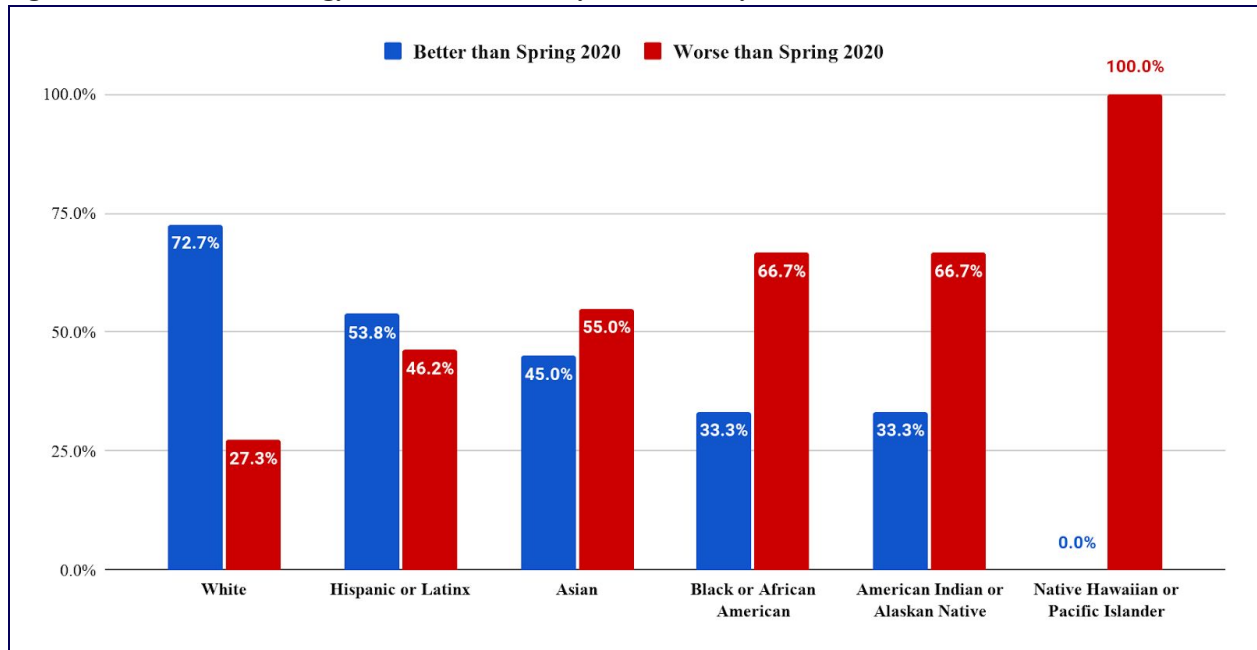
## RESOURCES & NEED

Students were asked to assess their experience in various areas during the Fall 2020 semester, as compared to the Spring 2020 semester.<sup>2</sup> Including those who selected “N/A, not a student last spring,” students generally experienced an improvement this semester in regard to access to technology for virtual classes and their professors' comfortability with Zoom and other platforms.

### Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Though the overall trend suggests students generally had better experience with access to technology, 74.2% of respondents who responded with “Better than Spring 2020” identified as white. Students who identified as American Indian, Alaskan Native, Asian, Black, African American, Hispanic, Latinx, Native Hawaiian, and/or Pacific Islander experienced greater challenges with access to virtual class technology (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Access to technology for virtual classes by race/ethnicity.**



### Mental Health and Course Workload

The other eight areas reflect a significantly more negative experience for the Fall 2020 semester, specifically in mental health (64.4%) and course workload (62.2%).<sup>3</sup> Students overall experienced severe deterioration in mental health due to social isolation, increased course workload, loss of separate fall and Thanksgiving breaks, and health and safety concerns.

On these issues, two students commented:

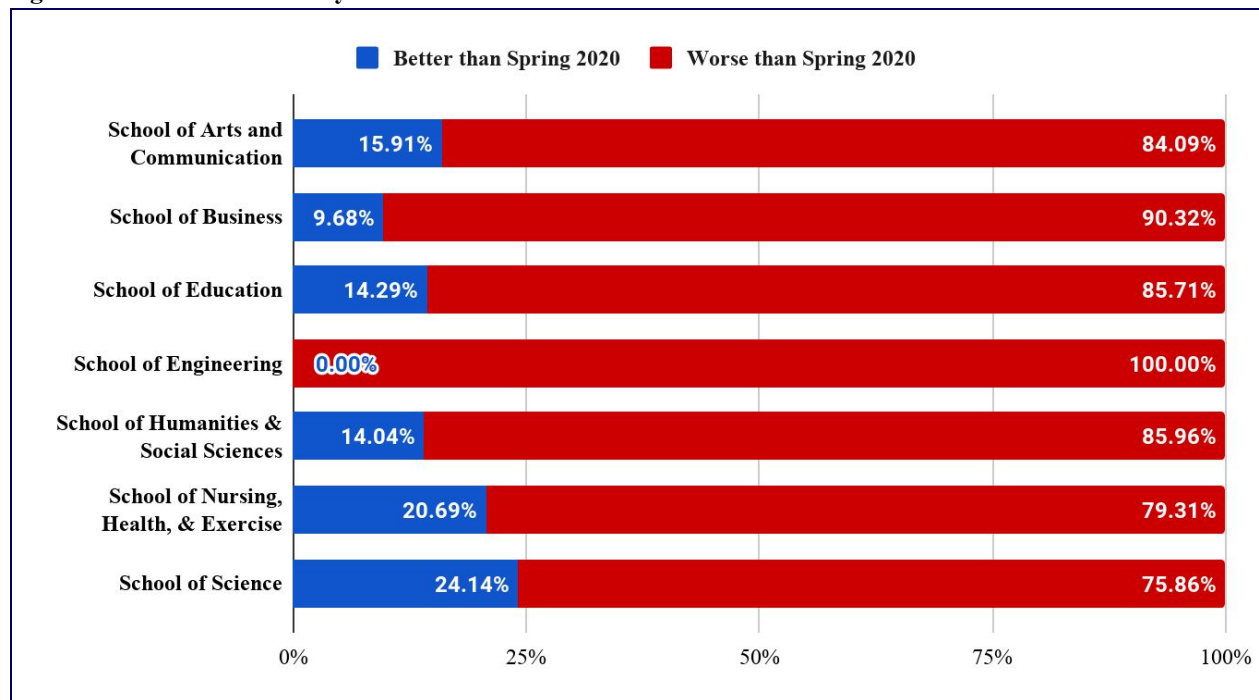
<sup>2</sup> See Table 8 in Appendix B

<sup>3</sup> See Table 8

<p>“My mental health has never been more terrible. Professors need to just give us a break and be understanding that their class is not the most important thing in our lives during a pandemic.”</p>	<p>“This semester has been difficult for many people. I constantly hear about students whose workload has increased since going online. Having no fall break has had an extremely negative impact on students' mental health.”</p>
---	--

Sorting by academic school, 100% of respondents within the School of Engineering said workload was worse in the Fall 2020 semester, followed by 90.3% within the School of Business (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Course workload by academic school.**



### Study Space Accessibility

45.2% of respondents selected “worse in Fall 2020” in regard to study space accessibility.<sup>4</sup> Currently, the TCNJ Gitenstein Library restricts occupancy to 25% of building capacity with only the first floor and lower level available.<sup>5</sup> The 26 group study rooms are currently limited to one person per room. One student commented that “compared to other universities, TCNJ is not doing much to further our education. We are still paying full tuition and have no access to any of the resources (that we are paying for) on campus. I have been studying in the library for the past 2 years and this year only the 1st floor is open and there are about 10 seats.”

<sup>4</sup> Table 8

<sup>5</sup> The College of New Jersey. (2020). *Facilities*. Fall 2020: Lion Strong. <https://fall2020.tcnj.edu/facilities/>

Prior to the pandemic, the Library’s “Extended Study Area” remained open until 2:00am while regular classes were in session and would stay open 24 hours a day during the final exam period.<sup>6</sup> For the Fall semester, the Library is open no later than 8:00pm. Similarly, the Brower Student Center (BSC) operates at reduced capacity and adjusted hours of operation. During finals in the fall semester, the BSC was open Monday to Friday from 10:00am–4:00pm and on Saturday and Sunday from 12:00pm–4:00pm.<sup>7</sup>

Inadequate access to study spaces was a pressing issue during the Spring 2020 semester, as well. In the *Online Learning Feedback and Assessment* survey from the spring, 68.6% of students indicated that inadequate study spaces were challenges they faced as a result of the transition to remote learning.<sup>8</sup>

## TCNJ SERVICES

In respect to services and resources offered by TCNJ, respondents were asked to rate how helpful these services/resources were (or whether they utilized the service at all) on a scale of 5 (most helpful) to 1 (not helpful at all). Over 80% of respondents did not utilize the following: Tutoring Center, Center for Student Success, Dean of Students, Mental Health Services, Technology Help Desk, Career Center, and Student Health Services.<sup>9</sup> Of the 43% that said they utilized Student Accounts, Financial Aid, and/or Records and Registration, the services were assessed as follows:

**Table 5: Choice percentages for assessment of student interaction with Student Accounts, Financial Aid, and/or Records and Registration on a scale of 1-5**

Question	5	4	3	2	1
% Total	18.3%	23.6%	35.6%	13.1%	9.4%

<sup>6</sup> R. Barbara Gitenstein Library. (n.d.) *Extended Study Area*. The College of New Jersey. <https://library.tcnj.edu/about-the-library/extended-study-area/>

<sup>7</sup> Brower Student Center. *Hours of Operation*. The College of New Jersey. <https://bsc.tcnj.edu/hours/>

<sup>8</sup> See Figure 4 in Appendix B

<sup>9</sup> See Table 9 in Appendix B

## ACADEMICS

To capture the “highs and lows” of remote learning, survey respondents were asked to identify both the positive and negative course aspects and changes implemented by their professors.

### Key Positive Course Elements

- Beginning the course with an anonymous survey to students in order to better understand students’ home environment, living situation, resources, etc.
- Demonstrating empathy towards students’ situation and understanding of the potential challenges students may be facing
- Demonstrating increased flexibility with deadlines and class attendance, and making accommodations for students without requiring documentation from the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) and Dean of Students Office
- Implementing a combination of asynchronous and synchronous class time in order to decrease Zoom fatigue and increase productivity
- Eliminating extra quizzes and tests throughout the semester, and limiting course exams/assessments to the midterm and final
- Offering open-book and “take home” assessments

Testimony: “One of my professors decided to use a mix of asynchronous and synchronous assignments for Fall 2020. Our class runs M/Th. On Mondays, we were asked to complete a discussion board based on assigned readings. We were also asked to reply to another classmate. We then met on Thursday’s and had deep and meaningful class discussions. Her canvas modules were set up beautifully and were so organized and really helped.”

### Key Negative Course Elements

- Increased workload and assignments
- Excessive assignments, or “busy work,” that fail to contribute to a student’s overall learning experience in a class
- Requiring students to turn cameras and microphones on created additional distractions for students in the class and placed some students in a compromised position (i.e. if they live in an environment that is not conducive to such expectations)
- Proctoring expectations for exams placed additional stress on students while taking the exam
- Instructors not providing a visual aid or presentation to accompany lectures is not accessible for all students and decreases class engagement in the material

Testimony: “I still feel like there was a lot more busy work this semester than last fall semester. Granted, I understand that the circumstances aren't ideal but I definitely noticed a hefty increase in my workload with random miscellaneous assignments that wouldn't help [my understanding] of my classes. It just took away from time I could have been applying to larger, more important work.”

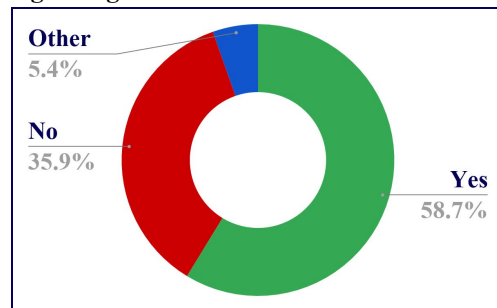


Students in schools and programs that require work conducted in labs and access to certain facilities, such as Engineering and Interactive Multimedia, expressed concerns with the lack of “hands on” experience. For some Engineering students, online labs are disengaging and do not deliver the type of learning outcomes that are needed to succeed in a course.

### ARC Accommodations Guidance

When asked if the instructor provided students information on how to request accommodations for disabilities, learning differences, or accessibility barriers via the TCNJ Accessibility Resource Center, 58.7% said “yes” and 35.9% said “no.” Some said the information was referenced in the syllabus, but not covered in class.

**Figure 3: Instructor-student communication regarding ARC accommodations.**



### Asynchronous vs. Synchronous

In regard to preference in the instructional mode of courses (asynchronous vs. synchronous), 51% of students preferred a combination of both asynchronous and synchronous learning (see Table 6). Those relaying discontent with asynchronous learning felt, for the most part, that it disrupted consistency in learning and failed to engage them. For these students, video lectures were not a sufficient alternative for synchronous learning.

**Table 6: Preferences in instructional mode(s) for remote courses.**

Answer	%	Response
Synchronous	35.91%	167
Asynchronous	8.6%	40
<b>A mixture of both</b>	<b>50.97%</b>	<b>237</b>
Do not feel strongly about either	4.52%	21
Total	100%	465

### Exams and Assessments

On exams and assessments, student feedback reflected a general sentiment that exams were an inappropriate means of assessment, given the circumstances. When exams were administered, students favored open-book exams or “take-home” exams. Of those who were assigned the former, 51.8% of students said open book exams positively impacted their exam experience and 46.3% said the same for asynchronous and/or “take-home” exams.<sup>10</sup>

“I have only had open-book exams but with deadlines and they have positively affected my experience this semester. It was up to me to focus and choose to take my exam on time.”

<sup>10</sup> See Table 10 in Appendix B

On the other hand, for exams during which the instructor utilized a lockdown browser and required students to keep their camera on, 39.5% of students said this method of proctoring negatively impacted their exam experience and 23.9% said it somewhat negatively impacted their exam experience.<sup>11</sup> Students said requiring cameras and microphones to remain turned on distracted them during exams.

A challenge referenced repeatedly in the feedback pertained to instructors requiring students to electronically scan written work after completing the exam and send it to the instructor. Some even lost points for delayed submissions of scanned work; a delay usually resulting from a student unable to access a printer-scanner or a mobile scanning app. One particular piece of testimony reflected how this proctoring method placed students at an disadvantage:

“I was required to have my computer screen tilted down so that the professor could see our hands at all times. This was not ideal because we still had to look at the questions on the screen and it was difficult. There was a time when I was so rushed and I copied down the problem wrong, resulting in a wrong answer. The testing format was difficult throughout the semester in my calculus course since we were limited on time and required to complete the problems, scan, and upload before Canvas closed the assignment. There was no time to go back and check for small algebra mistakes.”

Many of the concerns raised this semester echo the concerns from the Spring 2020 semester. In the spring, students also faced challenges with increased workload and assignments and access to resources that would ensure academic success (i.e. study spaces and affordable textbooks).

### Spring 2020 Ungraded Option Policy

In the spring, the College issued an interim [Ungraded Option for Spring 2020 Semester policy](#) that provided undergraduate and graduate students the option to request an ungraded, credit/no-credit designation for any spring semester course. In the *Online Learning Feedback and Assessment* survey, respondents were asked to evaluate the interim ungraded option policy on a scale of 1 (*very dissatisfied*) to 7 (*very satisfied*). Out of 505 respondents, 70.5% expressed some degree of satisfaction with the policy (see Table 7).

**Table 7: Student evaluation of the interim Spring 2020 Ungraded Option policy.**

Question	1 (very dissatisfied)	2 (dissatisfied)	3 (somewhat dissatisfied)	4 (neither satisfied nor dissatisfied)	5 (somewhat satisfied)	6 (satisfied)	7 (very satisfied)
% Total	1.8%	5.7%	7.5%	14.5%	22%	<b>28.7%</b>	19.8%

In the open feedback sections, around 20 respondents requested that the spring Ungraded Option policy be implemented for the fall semester, as well.

<sup>11</sup> See Table 10

Testimony: “I would like to see the return of the [Ungraded] option as offered in the Spring 2020 semester. I know it was likely offered then due to the sudden change to online learning, whereas Fall 2020 was completely virtual, but I think [the fall] still presented far more challenges... Being unable to turn to the people around me during or after class to socialize or discuss course material has negatively impacted my learning experience... During labs, helping other people reinforced everything that I was learning, and getting help from others helped me understand anything I wasn't already understanding. Not having that available has made this semester especially difficult”

## SPRING 2021 FLEX

### Top Three Concerns

When asked to provide students’ concerns about the Spring 2021 Flex semester, the top three selected concerns were course workload (19.6%), mental health (18.7%), and a sudden change in instructional/operational mode for the semester (11.6%).<sup>12</sup> This is consistent with the aforementioned feedback on the Fall 2020 semester and the increase in mental health challenges and course workload. Further, students expressed concerns regarding Flex courses, specifically regarding scheduling of individual in-person vs. online learning days for those who opt to take hybrid courses in-person.

Students were also given open space to provide any other major concerns for the spring. Prevailing answers demonstrated student concerns with the lack of sufficient breaks during the Spring 2021 semester, lack of flexibility and understanding from professors, access to study spaces, and a lack of accountability for students not complying with health and safety protocol. One student wrote, “The college should seriously consider either giving us more days off. Deciding to replace an entire week of school with two random days in the semester will definitely lead to burnout and a drop in grades. Instead of 2 days off in the spring, there should be an extra 1-2 days added onto that. While I understand an entire spring break is not realistic, a lot of students use the time to recharge their batteries instead of travelling.” This sentiment was reiterated in an overwhelming majority of the comments about the Spring Flex plan.

### Flex Classrooms

Preliminary survey data assessing student experience with the select pilot flex classes that operated in the Fall 2020 semester shows that Flex courses were more engaging and productive than fully remote courses. However, this only applies to students attending a Flex course in-person. From a respondent pool of 250 students, with 78 (31.2%) attending in-person and 172 (68.8%) attending remotely, 76.9% of in-person attendees cited the experience as “better” than their experience in fully remote courses. 58.1% of students attending flex classes fully remote said the experience was similar to that of previous remote courses, and 34.9% said it was worse. Student testimony revealed issues with audio and the inability for remote students to hear the instructor.<sup>13</sup> Similar testimony was relayed to College administration and Media & Technology Support Services in July 2020 by the SG Cabinet, when they received a combined

<sup>12</sup> See Table 11

<sup>13</sup> Cook, J. P. (2020). *Preliminary Data from Student Survey*. [Unpublished report]

in-person/remote flex classroom demonstration and found issues with the classroom microphone filtering out voices in the classroom. Additionally, closed captioning services are not currently available for TCNJ Zoom users and must be purchased via a third party vendor.

### Health and Safety Compliance

When asked how the College should respond to off-campus incidents of non-compliance to health and safety rules/regulations, an overwhelming majority of students expressed concern and strong support for TCNJ students being held accountable. One student wrote, “The College needs to make it clear that off-campus incidents of non-compliance will have consequences for the students involved in them and need to deal with them right away so that they do not continue and students continue to be cautious. It is careless to ignore any incidents of students putting others (even on the campus!) at risk for their own personal enjoyment/benefit during a pandemic that has affected the lives of and killed so many.” Another student expressed similar concerns after living in Campus Town for the fall semester, where “...they are not mandating any kind of Covid tracking for their residents. This means never know if any of the staff, custodians, or residents have been or currently have been exposed, and that makes me uncomfortable not knowing if I am at risk within my own building. If TCNJ makes it mandatory for off-campus students, regardless of where they live, to report any instances of exposure or non-compliance in order for them to continue taking classes then I think tracking and containment might be better handled.”

One student expressed concerns about offering hybrid classes in the spring:

“I think having classes in person is dangerous for everyone. Some [professors] and programs are going entirely remote for everyone's safety. There needs to be a consideration of how the virus will spread if everyone is on campus while there's still no way to contain it nor do we have a vaccine. Students are partying and then having them go to class will spread it to everyone. There's also the concern of students not wearing masks in class or around campus. There has to be enforcement of rules but I don't think that'll happen based on what we've seen with the off-campus cases and nothing has been done to fix that. Sending students to classes in person will just cause the school to have to close after the first week - there needs to be consideration about paying for rent because not all students can afford that right now either.”

In several feedback sessions, students expressed willingness to attend flex classes in person, but relayed uneasiness attending class with students living in off-campus Ewing houses. This is largely due to the consistent number of off-campus parties and large social gatherings hosted by TCNJ students. Additionally, students seek more information on how individuals visiting campus will be screened and the travel restrictions for those residing on campus.

# Recommendations

---

After reviewing the data, input, and feedback from students on the Fall 2020 semester and upcoming Spring 2021 Flex semester, the Student Government Cabinet makes the following recommendations that will ensure student safety and success during these precarious and unprecedented times.

## Academics and Instruction

1. Implement an interim grading policy that provides sufficient support and options for students while also addressing the concerns raised by faculty and academic leaders regarding the [Interim Spring 2020 Ungraded Option Policy](#).
2. Establish protocol and guidance for students who have tested positive for COVID-19 and/or have family members diagnosed with COVID-19 in regard to class attendance and assignments. Students experiencing said situations should be given clear instructions on expectations for courses, as well as resources from the Dean of Students Office and/or Accessibility Resource Center (ARC).
  - a. It is further recommended that Student Health Services notify the Dean of Students Office on behalf of any student diagnosed with COVID-19, or for any student with family members diagnosed with COVID-19. The Dean of Students Office should then contact the student's professors, notifying them that the student will need appropriate accommodations.
  - b. This information should be communicated to students at the beginning of the semester, during class time, and should be incorporated into the syllabus.
3. Provide guidance to instructors on how to implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in their courses. This would include sample syllabi, lesson plans, and methods for assessing student need in courses.
  - a. Recognizing that a single template will not work for every course, this guidance should be tailored for varying academic schools, departments, and programs.
4. Provide in-depth guidance to instructors on effective and inclusive teaching methods in virtual settings and platforms, specifically as they pertain to class on Zoom and Google Hangouts.<sup>14</sup>
  - a. For Flex courses, require instructors to certify and demonstrate, prior to the start of the semester, the ways in which their course will be equitable and accessible for students attending in-person and for students attending remotely.
  - b. Develop and encourage increased uniformity in the organization and usage of Canvas pages for courses.
5. Revise the [Interim Remote Classroom Camera/Microphone Use and Recording policy](#) to prohibit instructors from requiring students to keep their microphone and/or camera on during class.
6. Revise the [Online Proctoring of Exams policy](#) to clearly define the permitted practices for online proctoring and prohibit the implementation of proctoring procedures that are not

---

<sup>14</sup> **Recommended resources to consult:** [Teaching Effectively in Times of Disruption](#) (Stanford University); [Zoom: Teach Online Class Sessions](#) (University of Minnesota); [Tips & Tricks for Teachers Educating on Zoom](#) (Zoom); [Teaching with Zoom](#) (University of Nevada, Reno)

- explicitly stated in the policy. If this is not possible to state within the policy, the Academic Affairs division should provide relevant guidance to students and faculty.
7. Provide clear guidance for students on how to identify and report policy violations in regard to ARC accommodations and proctoring.
  8. Ensure that mandatory faculty/instructor training for virtual courses covers:
    - a. The principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and how best to incorporate UDL in a course.
    - b. Best practices for accessible virtual learning environments (i.e. using a shared whiteboard software, providing a class agenda for each session, etc.).<sup>15</sup>
    - c. Demonstrating cultural intelligence when assessing student engagement in a course, as academic performance is greatly impacted by domestic environments.
  9. Establish expectations and processes to provide accommodations for students who lose internet connection or power during and prior to a class session, as well as for an extended period of time.
  10. Require instructors to distribute a survey, during class hours, to students as an opportunity for students to request any resources and communicate any challenges and unexpected circumstances they may be facing.
  11. Encourage faculty to utilize a combination of asynchronous and synchronous learning, especially in courses that exceed the standard 1 hour and 20 minute time slot.
    - a. This dual mode of learning should have some established structure and consistency. Asynchronous class periods should be allotted for a specific purpose, such as time for students to work on group projects.
  12. For course assignments, reduce the number of discussion posts and assessments and focus on project-based work.
  13. Wherever possible, provide appropriate resources and access to facilities to those instructors teaching courses with experiential learning requirements for the purpose of live demonstrations of labs for remote learning. Live recordings could be posted and redistributed to other students within the discipline, providing a beneficial resource for current and future students.

### Services and Resources

1. Advertise the Lions Lifting Lions Fund as a resource for students and clarify that the fund is available to students facing unexpected hardship due to the pandemic.
2. Extend operational hours for the Library.
3. Designate select classroom spaces across campus as additional study spaces and allow students to book a limited number of spaces ahead of time.
4. Work with the Office of Admissions to provide first-year students with the opportunity to receive a tour of the campus as a means of increasing first-year connection to TCNJ.
5. Work with a third-party vendor to provide closed captioning services for Zoom, particularly for remote and flex classes.
6. Distribute comprehensive guidance, with consultation with the Accessibility Resource Center, to all campus groups on accessible virtual meeting practices.

---

<sup>15</sup> Zoom. (2020, April). *Tips and Tricks: Teachers Educating on Zoom*. <https://zoom.us/docs/doc/Tips%20and%20Tricks%20for%20Teachers%20Educating%20on%20Zoom.pdf>



## Health & Safety and Compliance

1. Establish health and safety measures, and provide appropriate resources, to ensure that high-risk/at-risk populations are safe, when/if interacting in-person, on campus. This is especially critical for high-risk students utilizing housing and/or dining facilities and services.
2. Provide the campus community and Campus Police Services clear guidance on how best to report suspected incidents of non-compliance in the Ewing area.
3. Adopt an interim policy that would allow students to report non-compliance while retaining anonymity to the individual(s) they report. This is keeping in mind that the anonymity of reporters only extends to whomever they report; reporter identities will not be anonymous to Student Conduct.

## Campus Life and Operations

1. Announce a concrete deadline by which the College will communicate any changes to the operational and instructional status of TCNJ (i.e. moving from a hybrid to fully remote semester).
2. Identify a date up until which housing and dining costs will be refunded, if a sudden need to remove students from campus arises (i.e. five weeks from the semester start).
3. Create an alternative plan to provide students with more “breaks” to compensate for the loss of Spring Break. Some suggestions for alternatives include:
  - a. Distributing 2-3 week-long “breaks” during which faculty limit the level of assignments and assessments.
  - b. Establish “campus courtesy days” during which staff, students, faculty, organizations, and committees/groups are encouraged to avoid scheduling any meetings and/or classes.
4. Frequent communication to students regarding available services, resources, and opportunities for campus engagement.

## Concluding Remarks

---

In order to prepare for the Spring 2021 semester, it is essential that the TCNJ community take into consideration the input and experiences of the student body. It is especially important that the decision-making process prioritizes meeting the needs of those most disproportionately affected by the pandemic and by remote learning.

As demonstrated in the disparities in access to technology for virtual classes, students from underrepresented groups experienced considerably more challenges during the fall semester. On a larger scale, students are experiencing significant mental health challenges, exacerbated by increased academic stressors, social isolation, and concerns regarding the health and safety of their friends, family, and community. Further, the resources and services offered by the College are not effectively reaching the student population.

Ultimately, students do not see many benefits in engaging with the TCNJ Flex model and many express uncertainties about what will make this upcoming semester worth attending, either in-person or virtually. A large portion of students believe that the Spring 2021 semester will be an extension of their fall experience, with similar challenges and inadequate support. The SG Cabinet recommends campus-wide communication to students and their families, highlighting what TCNJ is planning in order to create a lively and engaging student experience, while being mindful of health and safety precautions. This messaging should also aim to address some of the outstanding student concerns outlined in this report.

No single solution will be equitable for all students, nor will it meet every student concern, but, as demonstrated in the results of this survey, increased flexibility and targeted resources will greatly mitigate the additional stress on students. The student body and its elected leadership has presented candid input and recommendations to the College for the Spring 2021 semester. From this point, the degree to which TCNJ leadership and administration take direct action to respond and address student concerns and needs during this tumultuous time will serve as reflection of the College's commitment to student success. It is critical that the student perspective on this matter, as reflected in this report, informs the direction of campus operations and decisions for the Spring 2021 semester.



## Appendix A: List of Survey Questions

1. Please select your school year:
  - First-year
  - Sophomore
  - Junior
  - Senior
  - Fifth-year and beyond
2. Please select your primary academic school:
  - School of Arts and Communication
  - School of Business
  - School of Education
  - School of Engineering
  - School of Humanities and Social Sciences
  - School of Nursing, Health, and Exercise Science
  - School of Science
3. Are you a student in any of the following programs (select all that apply)?
  - Bonner Community Scholars
  - Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF)
  - PRIDE Mentoring Program (PMP)
  - Honors Program
  - Women in Learning and Leadership (WILL)
  - Cooperman Scholars
4. Race/ethnicity (select all that apply)
  - American Indian or Alaskan Native
  - Asian
  - Black or African American
  - Hispanic or Latinx
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - White
  - Prefer to self-describe:
  - Prefer not to say
5. Gender
  - Transgender man
  - Transgender woman
  - Cisgender man
  - Cisgender woman
  - Non-binary
  - Agender
  - Genderqueer
  - Prefer to self-describe:
  - Prefer not to say
6. How would you assess the following areas for the Fall 2020 semester, compared to the Spring 2020 semester? Please select N/A if you are a first-year student or were not enrolled at the College last spring. [Access to study spaces; Access to technology for virtual classes; Access to stable internet, Professor’s comfortability with Zoom or other online platform; Workload for classes; Surroundings/environment during virtual class meetings; Mental health; Disability/accessibility accommodations; Financial security (for example: financial aid, income from a job, ability to pay for rent/utilities/ groceries); Housing security (access to stable housing conditions)]
  - Better than Spring 2020
  - Worse than Spring 2020
  - No change from Spring 2020
7. Please select your experience with the following exam types: [Lockdown browser; Camera on during exam; Lockdown browser and camera on during exam; Asynchronous exams (“take-home” exams); No proctoring, but closed book exams; No proctoring, but open book exams; No change from previous exams; Other]
  - Negatively impacted my exam experience
  - Somewhat negatively impacted my exam experience
  - No impact on my exam experience
  - Somewhat positively impacted my exam experience
  - Positively impacted my exam experience
  - N/A - Did not have this semester
8. Please provide any additional information about your exam experience.\* [open-ended]
9. How accessible were your professors outside of class hours?
  - All held open office hours
  - Some held open office hours
  - Only by appointment

- Only contact by email or other similar methods
  - Other:
10. Did your professor provide you information on how to request accommodations for disabilities, learning differences, or accessibility barriers via the TCNJ Accessibility Resource Center?
- Yes
  - No
11. Which instructional mode do you prefer: asynchronous or synchronous?
- Asynchronous (learning on your own time using materials provided by your professor)
  - Synchronous (learning during a scheduled class period every week)
  - Both
  - Other:
12. What worked in the fall 2020 semester in regard to academic classes?\* [open-ended]
13. What did not work in the fall 2020 semester in regard to academic classes?\* [open-ended]
14. Which of the following are your top THREE concerns for the Spring 2021 semester? Feel free to use the "open option" answer to add any concerns not listed below.
- Sudden change in instructional/operational mode for the semester (for example: switching from Flex to fully online mid-semester)
  - Academic and/or work accommodations due to personal/family COVID-19 case
  - For Flex/hybrid classes: scheduling of in-person class days vs. virtual
  - Time management
  - Virtual class attendance
  - Course workload
  - Disability/accessibility accommodations
  - Mental health
  - Extracurricular involvement
  - Employment
  - Personal health
  - Health of family members
  - Access to meals/access to TCNJ dining
  - Open option 1:
  - Open option 2:
  - Open option 3:
15. How do you think the College should respond to off-campus incidents of non-compliance to health and safety rules/regulations?\* [open-ended]
16. Which TCNJ services/resources were most helpful for you during the Fall 2020 semester? Please rate each service on a scale of 1-5, 5 being Most helpful. [Tutoring Center; Center for Student Success; Dean of Students; Mental Health Services; Technology Help Desk; Career Center; Student Accounts, Financial Aid, and/or Records and Registration; Student Health Services; Other]
- 5 (most helpful)
  - 4
  - 3
  - 2
  - 1 (not helpful at all)
  - N/A, Did not use
17. Please use this space to provide any additional thoughts or comments about the fall 2020 semester:\* [open-ended]
18. Please use this space to provide any additional thoughts or comments about the spring 2021 semester:\* [open-ended]

\*Questions marked with an asterisk (\*) were optional

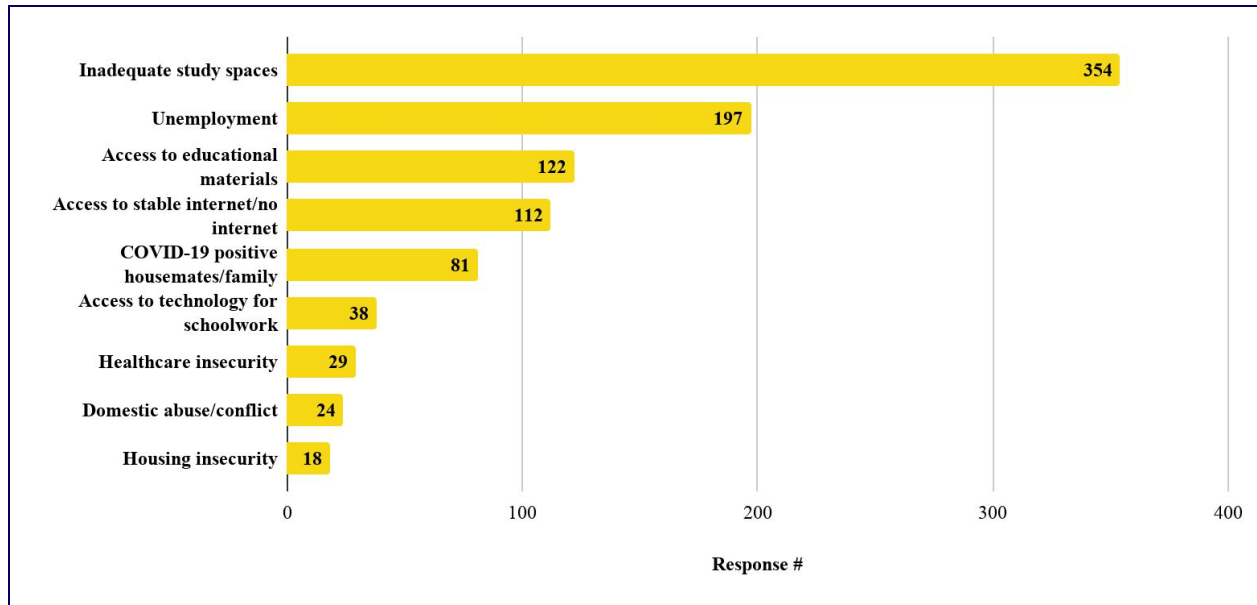
## Appendix B: Figures/Tables

### Fall 2020/Spring 2021 Student Feedback Survey–Data

**Table 8: Comparison of areas of student need and experiences in the Fall 2020 semester vs. the Spring 2020 semester.**

Area	Better in Fall 2020 than in Spring 2020		Worse in Fall 2020 than in Spring 2020		N/A, not a student last spring		Total
	%	Response	%	Response	%	Response	
Access to study spaces	18.27%	55	<b>45.18%</b>	136	36.54%	110	301
Access to technology for virtual classes	<b>37.25%</b>	92	17.81%	44	44.94%	111	247
Access to stable internet	20.17%	47	<b>33.05%</b>	77	46.78%	109	233
Professor's comfortability with Zoom or other platform	<b>58.13%</b>	211	12.12%	44	29.75%	108	363
Workload for classes	11.03%	44	<b>62.16%</b>	248	26.82%	107	399
Surroundings/ environment during virtual class meetings	24.14%	70	<b>38.28%</b>	111	37.59%	109	290
Mental health	8.57%	33	<b>64.42%</b>	248	27.01%	104	385
Disability/accessibility accommodations	13.79%	28	<b>14.29%</b>	29	71.92%	146	203
Financial security (for example: financial aid, income from a job, ability to pay for rent/utilities/groceries)	15.69%	43	<b>43.80%</b>	120	40.51%	111	274
Housing security (access to stable housing conditions)	16.22%	30	<b>20.54%</b>	38	63.24%	117	185

**Figure 4: Issues facing students after the transition to remote learning and operations in Spring 2020.**



**Table 9: Usage and evaluation of various TCNJ student services.**

Question	5 (most helpful)	4	3	2	1 (not helpful at all)	N/A, Did not use
Tutoring Center	5.60%	3.80%	2.30%	1.80%	3.80%	82.70%
Center for Student Success	2.70%	2.70%	2.90%	1.40%	2.90%	87.40%
Dean of Students	2.90%	2.50%	1.80%	1.80%	2.70%	88.30%
Mental Health Services	1.60%	2.50%	2.90%	3.40%	2.90%	86.70%
Technology Help Desk	5.20%	3.40%	4.30%	2.00%	2.90%	82.20%
Career Center	2.00%	4.70%	4.50%	1.80%	2.30%	84.70%
Student Accounts, Financial Aid, and/or Records and Registration	7.90%	10.10%	15.30%	5.60%	4.10%	57.00%
Student Health Services	2.50%	3.20%	3.60%	1.80%	2.30%	86.70%
Other	2.00%	1.10%	1.40%	0.50%	1.40%	93.70%

**Table 10: Evaluation of the impact of virtual testing/proctoring procedures on students' experiences with exams and timed assessments.**

Question	Negatively impacted my exam experience		Somewhat negatively impacted my exam experience		No impact on my exam experience		Somewhat positively impacted my exam experience		Positively impacted my exam experience		N/A - Did not have this semester	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Lockdown browser	13.76%	64	10.97%	51	<b>21.29%</b>	99	0.86%	4	0.43%	2	52.69%	245
Camera on during exam	16.56%	77	17.20%	80	<b>32.26%</b>	150	2.58%	12	0.86%	4	30.54%	142
Lockdown browser and camera on during exam	<b>17.42%</b>	81	10.54%	49	15.48%	72	0.43%	2	0.22%	1	55.91%	260
Asynchronous and/or "take-home" exams	1.94%	9	3.23%	15	13.33%	62	28.17%	131	<b>40.22%</b>	187	13.12%	61
No proctoring, but closed book exams	3.87%	18	6.88%	32	<b>30.11%</b>	140	13.33%	62	12.26%	57	33.55%	156
No proctoring, but open book exams	1.29%	6	1.51%	7	13.55%	63	24.95%	116	<b>44.30%</b>	206	14.41%	67
Other	4.09%	19	0.86%	4	16.56%	77	2.80%	13	1.72%	8	73.98%	344
Total	465											

**Table 11: Top student concerns for the Spring 2021 Flex semester.**

Answer	%	Response
Course workload	<b>19.59%</b>	<b>261</b>
Mental health	<b>18.69%</b>	<b>249</b>
Sudden change in instructional/operational mode for the semester	<b>11.56%</b>	<b>154</b>
Flex/hybrid classes: scheduling of in-person class days vs. virtual	11.19%	149
Time management	8.48%	113

Extracurricular involvement	6.16%	82
Personal health	5.18%	69
Health of family members	4.43%	59
Academic and/or work accommodations due to personal/family COVID-19 case	2.70%	36
Employment	2.55%	34
Virtual class attendance	1.95%	26
Access to meals/access to TCNJ dining	1.35%	18
Disability/accessibility accommodations	0.38%	5
Other (open options)	6%	77
Total	100%	1332

## Appendix C: RSO Presidents' Council Membership

Organization Name	Sector
Student Government (SG)	<i>Governance and Advocacy</i>
College Union Board (CUB)	<i>Programming</i>
Student Finance Board (SFB)	<i>Funding, SAF</i>
Residence Hall Association (RHA)	Residential Students
Commuter Collegiate Union (CCU)	Commuter Students
Sport Club Advisory Council	Club Sports/Athletics
Unified Greek Council (UGC)	Greek Life
Inter Greek Council (IGC)	Greek Life
Alpha Kappa Psi	Greek Life
Pakistani Student Association (PSA)	Cultural & Community
Asian American Association (AAA)	Cultural & Community
Black Student Union (BSU)	Cultural & Community
Indian Student Association (ISA)	Cultural & Community
Breaking Down Barriers <sup>16</sup>	Advocacy & Community
PRISM	Advocacy & Community
The Women's Center	Advocacy & Community
The National Association for The Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)	Advocacy & Community
Catholic Campus Ministry (CCM)	Religious Affiliation & Community
AZ Seven Year Medical Society	Academic Honors
Chi Epsilon Civil Engineering Honor Society	Academic Honors
Anthropology Society	Academics
All College Theatre (ACT)	Performing Arts
Leadership Development Program (LDP)	Leadership
College Democrats	Political Outreach & Affiliation
College Republicans	Political Outreach & Affiliation

<sup>16</sup> Formally known as “Disability PRIDE (Perspective, Respect, Identity, Diversity, Empowerment)”