

To: Shared Governance Council
From: Dr. John B. Cook, President
Re: Recognition of Non-Policy Feedback
Date: January 15, 2026

As the college continues to engage with our updated shared governance system, at times we have needed to distinguish between formal policy development and the provision of feedback on topics deemed important by stakeholder groups. A cursory review of definitions for what “is” a college/university policy will invariably reference the function of compliance, regulation, mandates, and obligations that otherwise have the effect of a duty or obligation by the institution to uphold. Types of policies are also differentiated including those institutional, those operational, and those based on academic considerations as illustrated by the role provided by the STCC Curriculum Committee, a component part of the All-Unit Congress.

With this context, it is clear that shared governance discussions at STCC can at times shift from policy to the voicing of stakeholder views (feedback) specific to non-policy administrative decisions or topics. A prescriptive guidebook to predetermine what is policy and what is feedback does not exist, and an attempt to establish such a reference would have certain complications because of existing collective bargaining agreements. As a point of reference, the accreditor for STCC, the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE), describes in the 2026 Standards that a given college “establishes and maintains appropriate and productive channels of communication among its members and with the institutional community.” With clear guidance from the STCC Board of Trustees regarding the threshold for formal policy development, the college has used an iterative process when non-policy feedback is provided from stakeholders, particularly when that form of communication is most often directed toward college administration.

This Fall Semester 2025 there were two submissions to the Shared Governance Council which are understood to be non-policy submissions (feedback), but of importance to a governance body. This memo acknowledges the important effort made by employees, and their thoughtful consideration of these subjects. While recognition of this feedback is not a formal part of the shared governance process and system, SGC members are invited to share this memo with their respective memberships in the spirit of institutional communication.

I. Food Services on Campus

Feedback about food service on campus was submitted by All-Unit Congress representatives to the Shared Governance Council during Fall Semester, 2025.

The topic of food on campus has been discussed before; there is certainly frustration in some quarters and a desire for more or different options. The cost considerations for the college itself specific to food have been significant over the years, including reference dating back to a 2007

Tech Times article that provides budget detail. As part of feedback generated by the All-Unit Congress and discussed at two Fall 2025 SGC meetings, the submission noted “it is recommended that the college provide consistent, affordable, quality food during operational hours on campus for students, faculty, and staff.” The college does not have an operationalized definition of what “affordable” or “healthy” in the context of food on campus means.

Further, a discussion of food on campus at times is co-mingled with a discussion of resources available through the Center for Access Services (CAS), including the Ram MiniMart and food lockers. There is also the matter of how changing enrollment (40% online) and the on-campus population in 2025 bears on this topic. Pre-pandemic good-faith attempts to welcome a different approach to campus food included Nadim’s Mediterranean Grill (circa 2019).

As for a specific response to the feedback, the CFO/Vice President of Administration & Sustainability has described how the college continues to work with the Olde Armory Grille (OAG) to enhance Grab & Go options in the Student Learning Commons/Building 19, including an expansion of hours as of Spring Semester 2025. The college has also asked the Olde Armory Grille to develop a process to accept credit card payments, and STCC is exploring a larger variety of fresh food vending options. Given the investment in the relocation of the School of Health and Patient Simulation (SHPS) to Building 2/Scibelli Hall, and thus the elimination of a kitchen facility on campus, future campus master planning will need to consider the difficulty and cost of food preparation as a facet of potential food service on campus.

II. Employee Calendar/Planner

Feedback about the Employee Calendar/Planner was submitted by All-Unit Congress representatives to the Shared Governance Council during Fall Semester, 2025.

Currently the STCC Employee Calendar/Planner accounts for state and federally-designated holidays, but does not indicate the range of religious and cultural observances that may impact faculty and staff, or the potential conflict with college gatherings, meetings, etc. As part of feedback generated by the All-Unit Congress, the submission noted that “the STCC Employee Wellness Standing Committee recommends that the individuals who annually develop the Employee Planner (a group with representatives from the AUC, MCCC, and Academic Affairs) consider the Anti-Defamation League’s (ADL) Calendar of Observances - specifically the holidays marked with an asterisk (*) when creating the STCC Employee Planner.”

To the prompting from this feedback, in an email to AUC leadership on 12.12.2025, in my role as President a number of action steps were initiated, including a directive to Academic Affairs leadership to facilitate next steps for planning the 2026-2027 calendar:

“We too would likely need a working group to consult faith calendars and/or leaders, and otherwise manage the diligence needed if a specific list were to be generated. I don’t want to assume the AUC Committee would be that body, so I am using this email to ask Academic Affairs...to consider this request from a process standpoint. To this point, there are a multitude of observances to potentially capture, and developing a list that is inclusive, but may not be

exhaustive, will take some work. Examples include Eid al-Fit, Ramandan, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Chanukah, Sukkot, Diwali, Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, Palm Sunday, Chinese New Year, Kwanzaa, the Vernal Equinox, etc.”

I also shared that our Interim Chief Equity Officer could utilize AIA@STCC as the working group/forum, and that follow-up will take place Spring Semester 2026.

To be clear, if a supervisor or administrator is asked by an employee to accommodate a specific religious observance, that individual request is managed in partnership with Human Resources. More broadly speaking, if a supervisor or administrator is asked if they can schedule an event, hold a meeting, or convene a group on a date that might conflict with an Employee Planner-indicated religious or cultural observance, the institutional response is that we encourage due consideration.