

# Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

## September 12, 2016

### Recorded Attendees

**Senate Members:** Randall Gooden (Chair), Kathryn Pratt-Russell (Vice-Chair), Seth Shaw (Secretary), W. Gail Barnes, Marcy Butler, Debra J. Cody, Laura Herndon, Keith Miller, Eugene Ngzem, Junfeng Qu, Kendolyn Smith, Meri Beth Stegall, J. Celeste Walley-Jean, David Williams

**Guests:** Tim Hynes, Kevin Demmitt, Melody Carter, Michelle Furlong, Mark May, Susan Tusing, Brian Amsden, Kara Mullen, Mary Lamb.

### Minutes

1. Reading and Approval of the Minutes for the August 22 meeting was deferred due to insufficient time given for review.
2. Reports of President, Provost and Standing Committees
  - a. President's report provided commentary on
    - i. Drafting the Strategic Plan
    - ii. Budget discussions
    - iii. An open question: "what does education look like in a post-internet page?"
  - b. Provost's report

Began a discussion on the "Proposed Process for Reviewing Area B Core Curriculum Outcomes" document (see appendix A) and noted that a Task Force will be lead by Jill Lane and a faculty chair. The General Education Council will approve related outcomes and the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee will decide, based on objectives, which courses will be included in Area B.

Several questions were asked by the Senate and participating guests regarding the nature of the proposed process and the intended outcomes.

Drs. Alex Hall and Ron Jackson gave statements in support of the existing Critical Theory course. (See appendix B for a summary provided by Dr. Hall.)

General questions and commentary continued.

The chair brought the question and answer session period to a close for the sake of time to address other business.
3. Motion to Request the Faculty Affairs Committee to Draft a Recommendation to the Faculty Senate for Faculty Attendance at Commencements. Dr. Miller so motioned and Dr. Walley-Jean seconded.

General discussion arose around the need to address the issue. Mr. Shaw, former chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee, which addressed the issue during the previous academic year, reported on the FAC's efforts. Various Senate members weighed in on the conversation as did President Hynes and Provost Demmitt.

During the discussion Dr. Pratt-Russell made a statement objecting to the Senate chair's running of the meeting and the resulting silencing of voices during the discussion on Area B. Dr. Gooden ruled the statement out of order and discussion on the commencement issue resumed.

Vote: 4 for the motion, 5 against, and 4 abstentions.

President Hynes will ask the Commencement Advisory Group to take up the issue.

4. Guest Speakers on the "Strategic Initiative for Targeted Grants" with Melody Carter and Michelle Furlong.

Two concerns being addressed:

- i. Faculty support. We don't want the faculty to feel compelled to write grants but we want them to feel encouraged to do so.
- ii. Encourage campus-wide projects: large amounts of money to support a large number of students in inter-disciplinary projects.

Training for writing grants is being offered and they are looking at promotion and tenure to see how pursuing grants is being rewarded. Emphasis is on external grants. What is university cut (indirect costs) of external grants. Depends on the granting agency. Desire to provide recognition. Number of grants has declined over time.

5. Dr. Butler motioned to adjourn; Dr. Walley-Jean seconds. The meeting adjourned.

## Appendix A

### Proposed Process for Reviewing Area B Core Curriculum Outcomes

As stated in our strategic plan, the mission of Clayton State includes preparing *an increasing number of students from all walks of life to succeed in a diverse society*. In today's world, that means graduates must have a broad range of knowledge, skills and abilities as they adapt to changes in their workplaces and communities.

Within our curriculum, the General Education Core Curriculum is one of the ways we ensure that students are afforded a broad based education. As a member of the University System of Georgia, Clayton State University follows the General Education Core Curriculum guidelines contained in the Academic Affairs Handbook. The outcomes of Areas A and C, D, E and are fairly clearly defined around traditional general education outcomes. Area B: Institutional Options, however, has some flexibility and allows institutions to include "courses that address general education learning outcomes of the institution's choosing."

Clayton State's Area B has two learning outcomes:

- Critical Thinking: Students will effectively evaluate arguments, considering opposing points of view when appropriate
- Communication: Students will effectively articulate ideas and knowledge in spoken communication

There is widespread agreement among our faculty that critical thinking and communication are essential outcomes that need to be included in every program of study. Not only do we value these qualities, critical thinking and communication are two of the most stated outcomes that employers and community leaders say they are looking for in our graduates.

While the inclusion of critical thinking and communication are essential learning outcomes, how we define these outcomes and integrate them into our curriculum need to be examined from time to time. Several recent events have converged to make this an opportune time for us to have such a discussion:

- The BOR has eliminated the three broad curriculum overlays of U.S. Perspectives, Global Perspectives, and Critical Thinking. While these outcomes are highly valued, institutions now have more flexibility in deciding how they are incorporated into the curriculum.
- The General Education Committee for the USG will now approve First Year Seminar courses in Area B if they meet certain academic standards.
- We are wrapping up our strategic plan process that included extensive discussion of the mission and values of Clayton State University. Thus, it is a good time to consider what outcomes we want to include in the Institutional Options area.

It is essential that our faculty play a lead role in reviewing our Area B outcomes and that the focus be on shared outcomes for all students regardless of their major. I believe it should be the

faculty who propose, define and approve the learning outcomes. With that in mind, the following process is being proposed for this review:

1. A task force consisting of two members from each college and a representative appointed from the UCC will be created. The deans will select the members from their college with the clear charge that the focus is on the University as a whole and not individual departments or colleges. A faculty member and Dr. Jill Lane, Assistant Vice President for Academic Planning and Assessment, will co-chair the committee.
2. The task force will conduct faculty information forums at the beginning of the review.
3. The task force will create a website where faculty may submit proposed outcomes for Area B.
4. The task force will use the submissions to create a survey that reflects the proposed outcomes. This survey will be distributed to all full-time faculty.
5. The task force will create a report that includes:
  - a. Recommended learning outcomes for Area B of the General Education Core Curriculum
    - i. Include recommendation for whether critical thinking and communication should be Area B outcomes or program outcomes embedded in each major.
    - ii. Include recommendations for other general education or program outcomes based on the feedback from faculty.
    - iii. Develop recommended guidelines and examples of the type of course(s) that could meet the proposed learning outcomes.
    - iv. Recommend whether or not First Year Seminars with appropriate academic content should be included in Area
6. The task force will distribute the preliminary report electronically and hold a forum for faculty to provide feedback.
7. The task force will make a recommendation to the University Curriculum Committee. All of the data collected in the previous steps will be included with the proposal.
8. The University Curriculum Committee will make a recommendation to the Faculty Senate.
9. Once Area B outcomes have been approved by the Faculty Senate, they will be submitted to the USG General Education Committee for approval.
10. If the proposed outcomes are approved, they will be formally be adopted for the Fall 2018 catalog.
11. Once the outcomes are approved, courses will be accepted into Area B using current processes for adopting new courses. All courses will require approval from the USG General Education Committee per BOR regulations.

## Appendix B

### Written summary provided by Dr. Alex Hall

[T]he Philosophy faculty agree that the best way that Clayton State can meet the Critical Thinking outcome for Area B is by requiring students to take CRIT 1101. This class is the same Critical Thinking class that has been taught in the West since the invention of the art of logic in Plato's Academy in the fourth century BC (the name 'Critical Thinking' is a later twentieth-century neologism, it is actually just Logic) and required of all university students since the founding of the first university in Paris in 1209. Other classes address one aspect or another of the subject, often as it relates to a particular discipline, but only Critical Thinking presents the entirety of the curriculum, and this in a manner that is non-discipline specific and hence best suited to prepare students to exercise critical thinking skills in a wide variety of situations.

Critical Thinking is a neologism. The course is more properly termed 'logic'. Logic is one of the longest-taught courses in the West. Its roots are in Plato's Academy, where successes in mathematics inspired thinkers to develop rigorous models of discourse that could guarantee the truth of propositions and gauge the level of certainty attending statements whose truth is less than absolute. The result was a series of texts (and sometimes just lecture notes) drafted by Aristotle and subsequently taught throughout the Ancient and then Greco-Roman world, at Plato's Academy, Aristotle's Lyceum, the Stoa, Epicurus's Garden, schools of rhetoric such as Augustine attended and the various Neoplatonic academies in the East and West. Despite political threats to his life, Boethius translated many of Aristotle's texts to Latin near the fall of the Western Roman Empire to prevent the loss of the curriculum. Some of his translations survived into the early middle ages where they remained central to the curriculum of the monasteries and continued to stimulate inquiry. Meanwhile in the Muslim and Eastern Roman empires the works retained their place in the schools as a propaedeutic to any area of study. With the reception of all of Aristotle's texts and the advent of the University at Paris in 1209, logic was placed at the heart of the curriculum and divided into three branches which treated: methods to conduct and evaluate scientific discovery, inductive and deductive arguments and the detection and avoidance of fallacies. Logic has been taught in this format using the same materials ever since. The curriculum is technical, irreplaceable and has persisted unaltered for over two millennia.