

**BSLAS COORDINATING COMMITTEE**  
**February 28, 2020**  
**Meeting Notes**

Morrison Hall 304  
 2:00 p.m.

Attending

Randy Prus, Chair  
 Lei Qian  
 Tristan Eggener  
 Charles Matthews  
 Marlin Blankenship, ex officio  
 Susan Hodson, ex officio  
 Carolyn Fridley, ex officio

Not attending

Maribeth Nottingham  
 John Mischo  
 Tim Sneed

1. Call to order. The meeting was called to order at 2:03 p.m. by Randy Prus.
2. Approval of minutes. Randy Prus made the motion to approve the minutes from November 18, 2019, seconded by Lei Qian. Minutes were approved by acclimation.
3. Sub-committee report. Marlin Blankenship provided an overview of the proposed Native American Culture/Tribal Management option (Group 7) under consideration: Chief Gary Batton (Choctaw Nation) told Brad Ludrick (Associate Vice President for Tribal Relations and Academic Affairs) that there will soon be a need to hire several thousand employees, and that he was hoping for help from SOSU. After meeting with representatives from the Choctaw Nation, Brad Ludrick and Marlin Blankenship noted two specific needs: (1) cultural and (2) organizational/management. Creating a group within the existing framework would allow us to market to our tribal partners and tribal employees. The 36-hour group would be a combination of Native American culture and organizational development. Brad Ludrick and Marlin Blankenship went through the course catalog and chose courses they believed would be appropriate to meet the cultural need and the organizational/leadership need. To satisfy the 36-hour group requires 12-hours from the cultural component and 12-hours the organizational/leadership component – plus – 12-hours from both components (student's choice based on interest).

A concern was expressed about the availability of History courses offered online. It was suggested that students interested in History courses could perhaps be enrolled as hybrid students. The question was asked if the Nation currently permits employees to be enrolled in hybrid courses. Marlin Blankenship reminded the committee of the Choctaw Nation's incentive currently offered to employees to attend college (tuition reimbursement of \$5,000 per year after one year of employment). Right now, shift work allows for possible face-to-face attendance. It has happened that students have been allowed to attend face-to-face classes, noting that it is uncommon to do so, but not unheard of. Randy Prus mentioned the possibility of Zoom courses. Marlin Blankenship suggested that if there was a sizable cohort in, for example, Poteau, Oklahoma, perhaps the Nation would allow courses to be taught on site (at the Nation) or at a Career Tech location.

Carolyn Fridley added that she had met with Kitty Campbell, Chair of Management & Marketing and Accounting & Finance at the committee's suggestion, to inquire whether there would be an issue with including Business courses in the proposed option. Dr. Campbell indicated that there would be no problem including Business courses in the proposed option.

Charles Matthews motioned to make a program modification to include Group 7 as discussed. Tristan Eggener seconded the motion. The motion was approved by acclamation.

There was discussion about the name of the new Group. The name "Native American Culture, Tribal Organizational Development" was proposed, to which there was unanimous agreement.

Randy Prus will begin the requisite program modification paperwork. Charles Matthews noted that Brad Ludrick had volunteered to write the purpose of the Group (for the program modification) which has not been received. When it is received it will be sent to the committee via e-mail. Charles Matthews suggested that the more precisely the purpose of the Group is written, the more convincing it will be for curriculum committee.

4. Program Review (draft). Randy Prus noted that it was the committee's responsibility to propose an outside consultant, and that he was considering our sister institutions, specifically Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) because it is the only university (other than SOSU) that is experiencing enrollment growth. Randy Prus explained that SWOSU's program is called General Studies, East Central University's (ECU) program is called Interdisciplinary Studies and has four required courses – we have one required course (LAS 4991 – Capstone). Charles Matthews asked about Texas A & M - Commerce. Randy Prus said the comparison was confusing because Commerce has *two* similar programs, plus Texas is making curricular changes regarding their Communication requirement: instead of requiring speech *and* two composition courses, the requirement has been lowered to one speech and one composition course, so he prefers a sister institution with the same (general education) requirements. Charles Matthews asked if the SWOSU LAS program has a director, and Randy Prus said that he will make that inquiry. Charles Matthews noted that if there is a director at SWOSU who would be beneficial for our Program Review that would be good, but if there was no one in charge, then that would not be helpful. Randy Prus will contact the dean at SWOSU to inquire about a director or committee. If there is a response, he will e-mail the committee who can decide via e-mail if SWOSU is acceptable -- hopefully before April. Charles Matthews noted that previous Program Reviews required three recommendations for an outside consultant, and it was up to administration to choose. In the meantime, perhaps the committee should look at other institutions. Marlin Blankenship suggested Northeastern State University (NSU) and the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) based on the number of degree completers from their adult degree completion program. They have two programs: (1) state degree completion, and (2) one like our LAS. ECU discontinued the state degree completion program, and now just has their own LAS. Marlin Blankenship said that he does not know if there is an LAS coordinator at ECU. NSU has a state degree completion program that allows students to take courses at any other institution. Charles Matthews suggested that it would be most beneficial to find a coordinator or director even if their program is different because we might learn from those differences. Randy Prus will contact NSU, SWOSU, and UCO and will then provide the committee with the information he receives. Charles Matthews said that the more institutions the better – we can rank them.

Randy Prus noted that the committee needs to consider possible recommendations. For example, looking at the list of courses taken by LAS majors provided by Kristie Luke, Associate Dean, Institutional Research and Records, committee members noticed that some courses are irrelevant or defunct. Perhaps we can agree that a 10-year-old class would be a cutoff point. The committee would recommend whether to accept those classes.

Another possible recommendation is to consider the total number of hours earned. LAS students graduate with an average of 138 hours. The average of all students is 138.8. Studies suggest the longer students are in college, the less likely they are to graduate. Marlin Blankenship asked whether the number is influenced by the number of transfer students we have who must satisfy the residency requirement.

Charles Matthews said he does not want to decrease the total number of hours earned. He said that Mathematics majors sometimes ask, "what is the bare minimum I need to get a degree?" Charles Matthews reported that only 32 hours are required for Mathematics majors, but many take 42 or 44 hours, and the students who take that many hours are the most successful in graduate school. Charles Matthews recommends that Mathematics majors take as many Mathematics courses as possible and acknowledges that some consider it a waste to take more hours than needed. He believes that the issue is not about getting by with the minimum hours, it is about getting an education. Randy Prus said he is curious

about how many hours English majors take and will get a report from Kristie Luke to answer that question. We will discuss this more at next month's meeting.

Another possible recommendation is the new Group VII.

Randy Prus said the committee will consider these recommendations next month. He reminded the committee that if there is information we need for the Program Review that Kristie Luke is a source for data. We will finalize recommendations next month, and finish by April – consistent with the timeline.

Carolyn Fridley asked the committee to let her know if there are omissions, or any revisions needed to the Program Review draft. Randy Prus noted that Teresa Golden (Vice President for Academic Affairs) gave us a standard outline, but this is not a standard program – it is atypical. A place for relevant data can be created. For example, information about site coordinators does not have an obvious place in the standard outline, but it can be inserted. Marlin Blankenship suggested that the LAS numbers are underrepresented, adding that time spent on developing degree plans for students inquiring about an LAS degree is not currently being captured. Susan Hodson and Carolyn Fridley agreed. Charles Matthews reported that 30% of students inquiring about a Mathematics degree do not become Mathematics majors. Randy Prus reported a similar number is true for English majors. Given that a significant percentage of our students are first generation, the time spent with inquiring students may be similar with all majors. Susan Hodson added that some students declare early, which means they are really undecided, but the system, at some point, requires a declared major.

5. Adjourn. Randy Prus adjourned the meeting at 3:02 p.m. (at that point in the meeting there was no longer a quorum).

Respectfully submitted by Carolyn Fridley