

BSLAS COORDINATING COMMITTEE
November 19, 2020
Meeting Notes

Zoom meeting – 1:00 p.m.

Attending

Randy Prus	Lei Qian
Charles Matthews	Tara Hembrough
Susan Hodson, ex officio	Alicia Wallace
Carolyn Fridley, ex officio	Marlin Blankenship, ex officio

Not attending

Maribeth Nottingham
 Rachel Callicoat

1. **Call to order.** The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. by Randy Prus, BSLAS-CC Chair.
2. **Approval of minutes.** Charles Matthews made the motion to approve the minutes from October 29, 2020, seconded by Tara Hembrough. With corrections, the minutes were approved by acclamation.

3. **Revision of the membership statement to include representation for the new Group (VII: Tribal Organizational Leadership).** Randy Prus reported that he and Carolyn Fridley met with Shannon McCraw (Chair of Art, Communication & Theatre), and in consultation with Brad Ludrick (Associate V. P. for Tribal Relations & Academic Affairs), the suggestion was made to recommend Amy Gantt (Assistant Professor, ACT) to represent Group VII in the Committee member. Amy Gantt is a tenure-track professor who teaches in Native Studies. If not Amy Gantt, then Marlin Blankenship (Executive Director – Center for Student Success) was suggested, but he already serves as an ex-officio member. Randy Prus (screen) shared a proposed revision to the Committee membership described in the Academic Policies & Procedures Manual (A.P.P.M. 3.5). Randy Prus noted that there have been numerous organizational changes, including new job titles. It is Randy Prus’ understanding that Marlin Blankenship’s title is now “Executive Director – Center for Student Success.” Susan Hodson said that the title is accurate and clarified that together, the Learning Center and the Academic Advising & Outreach Center make up the Center for Student Success. The question is if the Committee wants to propose these changes to the A.P.P.M., given the input from Shannon McCraw and Brad Ludrick. How do we proceed?

Discussion: Charles Matthews asked for clarification of the changes being proposed, which Randy Prus reviewed. In the A.P.P.M. the proposed changes would include adding one Group (VII: Tribal Organizational Leadership) and updating Marlin Blankenship’s title. Charles Matthews asked for a recap of the content of the meeting with Shannon McCraw and Brad Ludrick, which Randy Prus provided. Randy Prus proposed presenting these changes to the Faculty Senate.

Charles Matthews made the motion to present these proposed changes to the Faculty Senate, seconded by Tara Hembrough. Charles Matthews noted that the proposed language does not specify who would serve as the representative for Group VII, but that one would be assigned by the Faculty Senate’s Committee on Committees. Randy Prus said that he would add the recommendation to appoint Amy Gantt to the Committee. Carolyn Fridley shared her understanding of committee appointments by the Faculty Senate; it is not uncommon for certain faculty to be recommended to serve on committees, based on their expertise and interests. Motion was approved by acclamation.

4. **Program Review.** Randy Prus (screen) shared the current draft of the Program Review and suggested completing the Program Review as if it were March or April (2020), and not be concerned, at this point, with the new changes (or new data) that have come since then, given that this is the first Program Review. He solicited thoughts from the Committee.

Discussion: Charles Matthews suggested that it should be clear to the External Reviewers what is in the data and what is not. Randy Prus agreed. Between COVID-19 and Colleague it has been difficult getting data. Charles Matthews added that he believes that we will be fine – for now – as long as it is clearly stated what is and is not included. Randy Prus agreed, and added that we are already deviating from other Program Reviews because of the unique nature of the Program. There is an absence of financial information, Curriculum Vitae for all faculty, facilities, for example, which because this Program Review is different. Carolyn Fridley had similar question about the parameters of the Review. Charles Matthews suggested including a brief statement to that effect. Randy Prus added that an italicized disclaimer should be included at the

beginning, stating that Group VII was not approved by the Regents until September. Carolyn Fridley indicated that she would make that change (to include disclaimer) to the Program Review.

In reference to page 5 of the Program Review (I-C, “Sources of financial resources available to support the department,” and I-D, “Departmental access to other sources of funds”), Carolyn Fridley asked Randy Prus that as department chair, does he have the departmental budget to be included as an Appendix. Charles Matthews said that department chairs are given their departmental budget before Program Reviews are due and added that it is likely that the administration will not be asking for Program Reviews this year because they are prioritizing other areas. To clarify, Carolyn Fridley asked if we would be unable to finish the Program Review until that information is provided. Charles Matthews said ‘yes’ that the administration will establish a deadline, and at that time, financial information (and other data) will be provided and speculated that it may be a while until the Committee is expected to finalize the Program Review. Randy Prus agreed and said, however, that he was planning to submit what we have because this Program is out of sync with other Program Reviews. Charles Matthews suggested asking Brad Ludrick, noting that the Committee is well prepared with what has been completed thus far. Randy Prus said he considered including statements that there was no data available, suggesting that this Program is being given less attention than others. Randy Prus said he would talk with Brad Ludrick.

Charles Matthews raised Tara Hembrough’s question about confusion or misconceptions students may have about the BSLAS. Randy Prus asked if we should explain the program more clearly. Carolyn Fridley said that she believes this question is connected to another about how students who are struggling in their declared majors find the BSLAS program. She explained that faculty will typically refer these students to either Susan Hodson or her. The Course Catalog offers limited information about the BSLAS, and that in her view, faculty know little about the BSLAS. In the initial advising session, Carolyn Fridley addresses the potential implications of an LAS major as it relates to graduate school and careers. Susan Hodson agreed, and as an individualized degree, detailed information would be difficult to include in the catalog. Perhaps a ‘frequently asked question’ could be included on the website. Charles Matthews noted a distinction between having misconceptions about a degree and what can be done with it after graduation. He believes that the question actually speaks to addressing this question within the Program Review. Carolyn Fridley said that it is common for students entering the Capstone (LAS 4991) to have misconceptions about the major, but by the end of the term they understand the major and its value (as evidenced in the end-of-term student surveys). Susan Hodson said that she believes the language in the Program Review needs to be worded differently, that as currently written it seems to imply that students remain confused. Revising the language to state that as the result of their participation in the Capstone, students have learned more about their degree. Tara Hembrough agreed that the statement in the Program Review needs clarification and suggested adding a sentence or two about student misconceptions and how they are being addressed.

Randy Prus suggested that what may be needed, in addition to the Capstone, is a cornerstone course – like an orientation. Charles Matthews said that it was an interesting idea but that most students in this Program want to apply the credits they have earned to a degree. Charles Matthews’ impression is that some students do not have a need to specialize so they take this generalized route after a couple of years in another major. Charles Matthews said that he provides information about a Mathematics degree online. Carolyn Fridley noted that a <5 minute video explaining the LAS is in production to post on the website.

Tara Hembrough asked about the statement in the Program Review about students having difficulty finding courses to complete their degrees. Carolyn Fridley noted that the issue addressed in the Review referred to general education courses not being offered online every semester. That problem has been reduced of late, with general education courses offered online more regularly. Susan Hodson agreed that with the addition of 100% online courses, the number of general education sections has been expanded – online and online in 7-week format.

Tara Hembrough asked about retention rates of various majors. Carolyn Fridley reported that the data from Kristie Luke reflects a 68.3% retention rate for LAS majors. Marlin Blankenship said that type of data is housed on the website under Academic Affairs. Carolyn Fridley mentioned the Common Data Sets “Retention Study,” beginning on page 33. If the question is about which majors more commonly change to LAS, the recent trend is with Fisheries & Wildlife Science, but overall, the major that most often changes to LAS is Elementary Education. Susan Hodson added that she also sees

students who have changed their majors multiple times and never landed on one permanently, and they are just ready to finish a degree.

5. Coordinator's Report (Carolyn Fridley).

--Met with the site coordinators to provide information about Group VII and the Regent's approval.

Marlin Blankenship reported that we have our first student choosing the Group VII option. The student is an employee of the Choctaw Nation and transferred to Southeastern with courses in Native Studies that are applicable to Group VII.

6. Adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Carolyn Fridley