

BSLAS COORDINATING COMMITTEE

March 22, 2023

Meeting Notes

Zoom meeting – 8:15 a.m.

Attending

Charles Matthews	Maribeth Nottingham	Wilma Shires
Kathleen Hardgrove	Amy Gantt	Rolando Diaz
Nirmala Soundararajan	Rachel Callicoat	
Carolyn Fridley, ex officio	Susan Hodson, ex officio	

1. **Call to order.** The meeting was called to order at 8:17 a.m. by Charles Matthews, BSLAS-CC Chair.
2. **Approval of minutes.** Kathleen Hardgrove motioned to approve the minutes from November 16, 2022, seconded by Nirmala Soundararajan.
Discussion: Charles Matthews asked Rolando Diaz if he is a voting member of the Committee. Carolyn Fridley interjected that Rolando Diaz *is* a voting member. Since the last meeting, the Faculty Senate [BSLAS-CC University Committee](#) web page has been updated to include: (1) the addition of the Chair of English, Humanities & Languages (EHL), or their designee, as a voting member, and (2) Tribal Organization Leadership as a degree option.
The minutes were approved by acclamation.

3. **Committee’s recommendation for the position of Instructor/BSLAS Program Coordinator.** Charles Matthews reported that the March 7, 2023 job posting differs from the recommendation made by the Committee. In the Program Review, the Committee recommended hiring a full time, tenure track faculty member to also serve as the BSLAS Coordinator. Additionally, the Committee recommended the hiring of an Assistant Coordinator. The EHL department forwarded this request to Academic Affairs, and the request was denied, explaining that the position is currently filled at the Instructor rank, so the position will be similarly advertised (at the Instructor rank). Academic Affairs did not address the hiring of an Assistant Coordinator. There may be additional differences between the Committee’s recommendation and the job posting, e.g., the option of a remote position.

Discussion: Carolyn Fridley noted that the remote option *does* appear in the job posting, but that it is incorrectly located under “Duties/Responsibilities” rather than in the “Summary,” where the remote option is typically placed. The other difference is a start date of August 1st, rather than the recommended start date of July 1st. Carolyn Fridley added that in a recent EHL department meeting, Rolando Diaz (Chair, EHL) said that the Assistant Coordinator position will be budgeted for the next year. Rolando Diaz corrected that statement, noting that he did not say that the Assistant Coordinator position *will* be budgeted next year, rather that *the request* will be made, adding that Dr. Teresa Golden (Vice President for Academic Affairs) has not committed to the second position. Charles Matthews said that at the EHL meeting her heard that the position would be *requested*. The idea, he continued, is that the budget is flat, so the administration does not want to create new lines. In reference to the start date, Rolando Diaz would like to follow up with Human Resources to inquire about pushing it back to July 1st. Charles Matthews said that the job posting indicated that summer would be extra; it is not a 12-month position. Charles Matthews noted that Carolyn Fridley’s appointment is not for 12-months, so the proposed position is consistent with the current position. A July 1st start date would imply that it was a 12-month position which would make it a different position. Carolyn Fridley provided background explaining why her position is *not* 12-months. At the time of her hiring (in 2017) it could not be known that the growth of the Program would necessitate offering the Capstone in the summer. It became clear that the Capstone *must* be taught and BSLAS students *must* be advised in the summer. The Instructor/BSLAS Coordinator position has evolved since its inception. Hopefully the individual hired position can work 12-months because that is what the position requires. Charles Matthews added that the expected work schedule (10-months or 12-months) is an important question to be asked in any interview process. Rolando Diaz asked if there should be a follow-up to the July 1st start date? Charles Matthews said that the question could be raised but that he suspects the answer lies in the 10-month versus the 12-month issue. Rolando Diaz said that he would ask the question. Carolyn Fridley added that it will be a problem if the job is 10-months because the question becomes, who will teach the Capstone, advise LAS students during the summer, and submit Major Clearance Letters for summer graduates?

Rolando Diaz said that he will talk about this issue with Dr. Golden. Carolyn Fridley said that she will be teaching the Capstone in the summer 1 term which is why she chose the retirement date of July 1st.

4. Search Committee for the Instructor/BSLAS Program Coordinator. Charles Matthews asked if a search committee had been formed. Rolando Diaz said yes, and identified the committee members as Wilma Shires (Chair), Charles Matthews, Carolyn Fridley, and Rachel Callicoat, noting that approximately ten applications have been received to date. Charles Matthews said that he is willing to serve but would like the BSLAS-CC's input and asked if anyone would like to put their name forth. Rolando Diaz said that he would be open to the BSLAS-CC's input on the composition of the search committee. Kathleen Hardgrove said that she has unlimited faith in Charles Matthews' ability to serve to which Carolyn Fridley, Nirmala Soundararajan and Amy Gantt agreed. Charles Matthews said that he will communicate what he learns in his work on the search committee. Charles Matthews asked Rolando Diaz if we knew where the job had been advertised outside of the typical outlets. Rolando Diaz reported that the job posting did not go into *The Chronicle for Higher Education* but was posted on higheredjobs.com.

5. Coordinator's Report: Alumni information. When compiling data for the 2022-2023 Program Outcomes Assessment Report (POAR), Carolyn Fridley learned that 2021 Alumni Survey differed from the Alumni Surveys administered in the past. Specifically (and most importantly), some of the questions previously asked were not. This presented a problem for learning outcome #4, "Demonstrate the knowledge and understanding for successful participation in society." The omitted questions were precisely the questions used to address this outcome. An additional problem is that the data had not been disaggregated between undergraduate and graduate students or by degree. Jeremy Blackwood (Dean of Graduate School) referred Carolyn Fridley to Kristie Luke (Associate Dean, Institutional Research and Records) to see if she could cull any useful data for the LAS Program. Kristie Luke was able to narrow alumni responses to undergraduates in the LAS Program, but for the purposes of the POAR, the data was unsatisfactory. Nonetheless, Carolyn Fridley used the data provided and created three charts for learning outcome #4, along with a brief narrative that included a key question that had been omitted: "Rate the level whether you agree that Southeastern has prepared you for the following activities: assuming leadership responsibilities, contributing to your community and deepening your commitment to personal development." The narrative also noted that because this key question was not asked, the data lacked the depth of the previous year's learning outcome, and that we will consider new data sources. Carolyn Fridley is bringing this matter to the Committee's attention because this issue will need to be addressed for the 2022-2023 POAR. (She informed the Committee that she has begun writing the 2022-2023 POAR so that when she retires, the data will be current.) She proposed a remedy: to develop our own alumni survey. In her conversations with Jeremy Blackwood, she learned that several departments administer their own alumni surveys to track graduates. An in-house alumni survey would provide information about whether the program is addressing learning outcome #4. Developing an alumni survey to track graduates would involve significant time that the incoming Coordinator is not likely to have, so this may not be a viable option until (or if) an Assistant Coordinator is hired. Charles Matthews added that there are ways to track alumni that requires less time, like keeping an excel file with LAS graduates, and update as new information becomes available. He suggested asking Jeremy Blackwood which departments administer their own alumni survey then contact those departments to inquire about their process. Charles Matthews asked Rolando Diaz whether he is aware that Randy Prus (former EHL Chair) kept alumni data. Rolando Diaz reported that EHL does have files that need to be kept current. Charles Matthews said that in the Mathematics department, Brett Elliott (Mathematics Professor) keeps a record of graduates using an Excel spreadsheet that he updates. It may be that the information represents fifty percent of the graduates but fifty percent is better than zero. Charles Matthews thanked Carolyn Fridley for keeping up with the POARs and all the attendant questions that completing the POAR requires. He asked that he be given all the POAR information before retiring. She informed Charles Matthews that she has already begun transferring BSLAS files to a dedicated thumb drive and has written a narrative that includes detailed information about the contents of the thumb drive, along with procedures and a timeline for the Coordinator's responsibilities. Charles Matthews said that while it is not known how the hiring process will progress, he will pass along the information to the new Coordinator.

6. Increasing credit hours for LAS 4991 (Capstone). The Committee has addressed this before and Charles Matthews asked if the Committee voted to increase the number of credit hours from one to three or if the decision was to table the idea for later consideration. Carolyn Fridley said that there had been no vote. This question has been raised several times over the years and asked by a variety of people, namely site coordinators, in advocating for a few more upper division hours

for their advisees, and by LAS students. Before his retirement in May of 2022, Randy Prus asked to bring this question before the Committee again, noting that the Faculty Senate proposal for the creation of the Capstone, also brought to the Academic Council, was for a three-hour Capstone. Carolyn Fridley shared her screen to show the script prepared by Randy Prus and Meg Cotter-Lynch (English Professor) of the September 16, 2016 proposal, reflecting the original intention of a three credit hour Capstone. Randy Prus also said that when the course was reviewed by Academic Partnerships, the content was sufficient to support three credit hours. Rolando Diaz said that he believes that this question should be pursued, noting that the Argos Report reveals that there are 186 BSLAS students and if the credit hours were increased he believes the administration would respond favorably. Charles Matthews said that he sees several issues: (1) some of the BSLAS students have a lot of credit hours and with a maximum number of credit hours to receive financial aid, he suspects that some have already reached that limit and would therefore be unable to receive financial aid for another two credit hours (2) the committees and Academic Council would need to be convinced that there is enough content in the Capstone to merit three credit hours. He is not suggesting that there is not enough content, rather that the Academic Council may be difficult to convince. An easy-to-understand argument would be needed to explain why the Capstone has comparable content to Composition I, for example. The question is more complex than increased revenue for credit hour production. The more attractive position is to make degrees less expensive for students, which will bode more favorably with the administration and the Regents. Charles Matthews asked whether this question should be considered now, or whether its consideration should be postponed until a new Coordinator is in place. Carolyn Fridley added that another option is for the Committee not consider the question. Charles Matthews suggested that the new Coordinator will have enough work transitioning into the new position without re-organizing the Capstone as one of their first responsibilities. Perhaps it merits a 3-hour course, but it may be prudent for the new Coordinator to experience the course as it exists now. Amy Gantt said that she would be in favor of tabling this question until the new Coordinator has been hired. Kathleen Hardgrove agreed, as did Nirmala Soundararajan and Charles Matthews.

7. **Adjourn.** Kathleen Hardgrove motioned to adjourn, seconded by Amy Gantt, so the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 am.

Respectfully submitted by Carolyn Fridley