

BLAS Coordinating Committee
October 16, 2023
Meeting Notes

Attending

Amy Gantt

Jake Pruett

Jeni Maple, ex officio

Amy Mills

Wilma Shires

Susan Hodson, ex officio

Tim Patton

Nirmala Soundararajan

1. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m. by Jeni Maple, BSLAS Coordinator.
2. **Approval of minutes:** Amy Gantt motioned to approve the minutes from March 22, 2023, seconded by Nirmala Soundararajan.
3. **Elect Committee Chair:** Amy Gantt accepted a nomination for chair of the committee and was approved unanimously.
4. **Coordinator's Report:** The 2022-2023 POAR has been submitted, and Jeni Maple noted that Carolyn Fridley had nearly completed the report prior to retirement and has been invaluable in providing information and support during the transition. Jeni Maple provided updates on two items discussed by the committee in the 2022-23 academic year.
 - a. **LAS Alumni survey:** In her notes regarding the POAR, Carolyn Fridley emphasized that Outcome 4 is problematic and recommended the committee re-evaluate the outcome or identify better ways to assess the outcome. One idea discussed by the committee in its March 22, 2023 meeting was the development of an alumni survey for the LAS program. Jeni Maple has started reviewing examples of surveys from Alumni Association and other programs and hopes to create an instrument to be implemented next academic year.
 - b. **BSLAS Assistant Coordinator:** The request for an Assistant Coordinator for the BSLAS was not approved for this academic year. However, Jeni Maple reported that Dr. Teresa Golden said the request will be reconsidered for next year.
5. **Increasing credit hours for LAS 4991:** The committee has discussed this numerous times in the past, most recently in the March 22, 2023 meeting when it was tabled until the new coordinator was hired. Jeni Maple shared that the original proposal was for a 3-hour class though it was ultimately created as a 1-hour class, presumably to limit cost and additional credit hours for students who may already have excessive credit hours and/or reached aid limits. Amy Gantt asked what changes might be made if the course were three hours. Jeni Maple provided an overview of the current course structure (a research project as well as instruction and assignments to increase understanding of liberal arts and interdisciplinary education) and explained that some changes she would like to make include a more in-depth research project to include a presentation in addition to the research paper, career development including a resume assignment, and additional instructional materials. Amy Gantt asked if the course would still be 7 weeks or if it would be expanded to 16 weeks if the credit hours were increased. Jeni Maple said

that the course would likely remain a 7-week course as that format seems to work well for the students and accommodates students who may change to this major during their last semester to graduate more quickly. Nirmala Soundararajan asked about the additional cost for the institution and students if the credit hours were increased. Jeni Maple said that the only cost to the institution would likely be the addition of a BSLAS Assistant Coordinator, which is already being considered, but noted that it could increase costs for students. Tim Patton pointed out that the additional hours could still be used toward the degree, so for most students, it should not require additional total hours. Jeni Maple noted that there are students who are only lacking the Capstone course when they declare the LAS major, so for those students, these would be additional hours with an additional cost. Jeni Maple said she will investigate the percentage of students who only lack the Capstone when they declare the major to better assess the impact of increasing the credit hours.

6. POAR Outcome #4: As noted by Carolyn Fridley in her comments on the 2022-23 POAR, and as discussed by the committee previously, Outcome #4 (“Demonstrate the knowledge and understanding for successful participation in society”) is problematic. It is difficult (if not impossible) to accurately assess as written. Jeni Maple summarized previous discussion among the committee to consider deleting or revising the outcome or identifying a measurement instrument. Amy Gantt said she would be in favor of deleting the outcome given the strength of the remaining three outcomes. Tim Patton said he agreed that the outcome was impossible to access as written. He asked if the outcome could be replaced with a more appropriate outcome, particularly if feedback from previous reviews identified gaps. Jeni Maple said she would review feedback received on previous reports to share at the next committee meeting.

7. Adjournment: Tim Patton made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Nirmala Soundararajan, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:45.

Respectfully submitted by Jeni Maple