CLAS Faculty Council Meeting
Zoom
Thursday, December 11, 2025
Zoom Only
9:00AM -10:30 AM

MINUTES

Members Attending: Michael Abeyta, Masoud Asadi-Zeydabadi, Ryan Brown, Emma Bunkley, Mia Fischer, Jeffrey Golub, Rodney Herring, Lorna Hutchison, Laurel Hyslop, Katharine Kelsey, Julien Langou, Michael Moore, Scott Reed, Jennifer Reich, Chad Shomura, Dale Stahl, Anna Warrener

Council Members Not Attending: Betcy Jose

Ex-Officio Attendees: Michelle Comstock, Pamela Jansma, Lisa Keränen, Marjorie Levine-Clark

Guests: Alyssa Martoccio

Recording: Karen Fennell

Review of Minutes:

- The Minutes for both the November and December 2025 meetings will be reviewed and voted on at the February 12, 2026 meeting.

Dean's Office Updates: Pam Jansma

Faculty Assembly Representatives Discussion:

- The Dean met recently with CLAS Faculty Assembly Representatives who had a discussion with her about the lack of communication between CLAS Faculty Council and Faculty Assembly representatives.
- There was concern about potential miscommunication among these groups and how to improve communication back to the departments.
- Faculty Council has one person from each department, so information can go from this body back to the departments.
- Faculty Assembly has 10 CLAS representatives, not one for each department. Some departments have a Faculty Assembly representative that can keep them up to date, others don't.
- One idea was to have Faculty Assembly representatives as members of Faculty Council. Not all 10, but 1 or 2.
- Another option is to invite 1 or 2 Faculty Assembly reps to each meeting to give an update to create some cross-communication.
- We're in the middle of redoing the bylaws for CLAS Faculty Council and for CLAS so this is a good time to think about how we might want to go forward with this change.
- Another item that came up for discussion is what are the roles and expectations of what reps do on these committees? They were a bit confused as to Faculty Assembly as well as there's no onboarding process. They reached out to the leadership of Faculty Assembly yesterday who said they're in the process of creating a document, a training, or something that outlines what the responsibilities are for Faculty Assembly reps. We can do this for CLAS Faculty Council, CLAS Staff Council, and CLAS BPC reps as well.

- The request was to do this early in spring so it can go out to people before elections, that way people know what they're getting into if they choose to serve.
- There was a question about if we should have a line in the proposed revisions to the bylaws that says at least one member of Faculty Council should also serve on Faculty Assembly so that there is a liaison between Faculty Assembly and Faculty Council. Would one person be sufficient?
- It was suggested that communication from Faculty Assembly could be sent by email to be consistent and concise instead.
- There was also a lot of discussion at the meeting about IRC faculty representation. We do have IRC faculty on Faculty Council, but how do we want to do that across the college more broadly and do we have enough representation?

Proposal to Revise the CLAS Graduation Requirements: Kathy Kelsey

- Kathy Kelsey provided some background on the proposal to date and how the group could proceed with final review and voting on the proposal.
- In 2023, CLAS Faculty Council tasked the Academic Planning Working Group (APWG) with recommending changes to the CLAS graduation requirements. This fall, that working group brought a proposal back to Faculty Council.
- It was pointed out that today is the last day Faculty Council can consider this proposal to get any of these revisions into the catalog for next year. To serve the students, which is the effort behind this, we are under a timeline to try to pass what we can today. We had a long deliberation at our last meeting and have since talked with our departments about the details of the proposal. So, we can deliberate a bit on the pieces of the proposal, but we really have to look at the goal of moving through all of this today.
- As it stands, the proposal from the working group was brought to us as a whole so, with no further discussion, we could vote on that proposal as a whole.
- If a motion to vote on the package as a whole doesn't pass, there could be a motion to consider it in pieces and move forward that way.
- If there is a motion to divide the proposal package up, then we can deliberate on if and how we would divide it for voting and then vote on that motion. If that passes, then we would vote on the package in pieces. If that fails, we would vote on the package as a whole.

There was a motion, which was seconded, to separate the proposal to reform the CLAS graduate requirements into 4 items and vote on them separately as broken into the following units:

1) The lower CLAS upper division credit requirements.
2) Reduced upper division credits for minors and certificates.
3) Removing all CLAS-specific graduation requirements:
   A) Distribution requirements
   B) Communicative Skills requirement
   C) Second-Language Proficiency requirement.
4) Creation of a required CLAS Signature Capstone.

<u>Discussion:</u>

- It was commented that a group of faculty have worked for two years now on developing these recommendations with a lot of input from a range of people. It is also important to consider central administration’s goal to revise the entire core in the coming years.

- Some of these requirements might be well suited for the general core, but not at the college level. One of the stakes of voting on graduation requirements at the college level is that we are facing a situation where our budget and enrollments are tied to students within our college, and our requirements are longer and more complicated, particularly for students who are switching into CLAS majors.
- Looking at data from the first-year experience group, you see students change majors after the first year and over 40% are changing across colleges. You have to think about what that means in terms of students' abilities to move into CLAS.
- There was discussion that the Communication Department is also impacted by the proposed changes to the communicative skills requirement. However, Communication as a department supports this decision to remove the communicative skills requirements. Even though it's going to cost us about 8 sections of our public speaking and business and presentation classes, we as a department recognize we need to innovate and to reduce our credit hours. So, the department that's mostly impacted by Item 3B is, in favor of removing this requirement.
- One member expressed concern that the consequences of eliminating the second-year language requirement have not been taken fully into account by the APWG. There was concern that when we see these kinds of cuts, we lose programs and don't get them back.
- There was a counter motion, which was seconded, to first consider the entire proposal package as it stands, and if it should fail, then go to an itemized vote.
- There was an additional amendment to the first motion that if the proposal is considered as itemized units to strike segment 3C from consideration. This would retain the second language proficiency requirement at 6 credit hours. This motion was seconded. The Council determined the best approach was to first consider the motion to strike segment 3C from the proposal before considering the rest of the document.
- Kathy Kelsey did a count of members present and confirmed there are 16 members eligible to vote participating in the meeting. She also clarified that the Council Chair will not vote unless there's a tie in the voting.
- It was determined to vote live on Zoom using the "raise hand" emoji rather than by anonymous poll so that it would be clear as to which of the attendees were voting on the proposal and relevant items.

Motion to strike section 3C from proposal:

- Motion to strike section 3C from the proposal, which is the removal of the language requirement from the graduation requirements. (A vote of "yes" would be a vote to retain the 6 credit second language proficiency requirement).
- 7 in favor, 9 opposed
- Motion to strike section 3C from the proposal failed.

Motion to consider entire proposal as a single package or 4 itemized units:

- A vote of "yes" would allow the Council to proceed with considering the proposal as 4 itemized units (with section 3 containing three segments A, B and C) and to vote on each of the 4 units separately.
- First poll resulted in 8 votes in favor, 8 opposed.
- Kelsey then cast her vote as Chair to break the tie for a total of 9 votes in favor, 8 opposed.
- The motion to consider the entire proposal as a single package failed, the vote was in favor of considering the proposal as 4 itemized units

The Council then proceeded with considering the proposal as 4 itemized units with section 3 containing three segments A, B and C as had been previously motioned and seconded.

One Council member had to leave at this point to attend another meeting, leaving 15 members available to continue voting (not counting the Chair).

Motion to lower the CLAS upper-division credit requirements from 45 to 30:

- Motion made and seconded
- 15 in-favor, 0 opposed
- Motion passed

Motion to reduce all upper-division credits for minors and certificates from 6 to 3.

- 15 in-favor, 0 opposed
- Motion passed

Motion to consider removing all the CLAS-specific Graduation Requirements as a single item, including:

A) Distribution requirements that repeat the areas of the core (humanities, social sciences, behavioral sciences and math/natural/physical sciences)
B) The Communicative Skills requirement
C) The Second Language Proficiency requirement.

- Motion to remove all of sections of 3A, B, C as a single item made and seconded.
- 11 in-favor, 4 opposed
- Motion passed

Motion to create a required CLAS Signature Capstone:

Lisa Keränen provided more detail as to how the Signature Capstone was envisioned:

- The idea for the capstone was to address issues stakeholders raised and one was that career skills are increasingly something parents and students are seeking when they look at the university experience. While we don't want to give up the liberal arts and sciences background that is critical thinking and teamwork, we did want to ensure that when students leave, they are able to articulate the skills and knowledge they've learned.
- When we studied trends in CLAS curricula over time, one of them is to have a capstone experience that asks for the synthesis of the learning experience. A lot of the units in CLAS are already doing this, and it can be done using many high-impact practices. We wanted to do something that was highly flexible and would not place a burden on students or faculty.
- The thinking was that units that already had a capstone could submit their existing capstone thesis, project, internship, service learning, etc. to EPCC. As long as the unit could show the relation to the three learning outcomes of a capstone, then EPCC could approve it and the major can continue what it's already doing.
- For the units that feel like we don't have staff, capacity, don’t want to do it, or don't think it's needed, the college would do a couple of things, and one of those would be to have interdisciplinary capstones where students are asked to work through a project over the semester that shows synthesis and strong communication skills that they can articulate to employers, parents and others, what a liberal arts and sciences education has given them, and how they're going to use it in their life and career goals.

- We thought that for some students, it might be good if we could break that down into three units that would accomplish the same thing, but at targeted moments in time. Those are 3 one-credit capstone experiences.
- The first is similar to a first-year experience for incoming first years, and then a separate but similar one for transfer students, but it's not like a first-year experience because it's an introduction to the liberal arts and sciences and the whole package of knowledge and skills that you get, and why it's important to have the humanities, sciences, and everything in between, and see how putting them together can help your life and goals.
- The second one is as you're heading into senior year, to begin to put language around all of your coursework and experiences.
- The third is as you're getting ready to leave CLAS, right as the student is transitioning into a career. We have to look at how we are packaging the CLAS experience in a way that is going to maximize things for students.
- We envision that to have oversight of this, we would have someone whose job it was to coordinate the capstone experience, for example a faculty member with course-release time. We would set up the sections in such a way that there was a team of people who were teaching them who could help with evaluating the projects. So, we would funnel students into the science section, or into the humanities section, and know that A) we're staffing it with faculty from that divisional area, but B) the committee would meet maybe monthly and help each other through some of these issues to make sure there was adequate oversight but the assignments and the projects are driven by the students themselves.
- Keränen clarified it is up to the Council to deliberate and to decide on this item. Some departments have said they have no interest or capacity to engage in something like this or, they are not interested in engaging with a capstone for their majors. This part of the proposal was partially a response to that issue, because we know what the literature says about this being a best practice.

Discussion:

- One member expressed the opinion that creation of a Signature Capstone goes against the motivation of the rest of this proposal by adding a roadblock for students, rather than removing one. Our students have been able to achieve a liberal arts education without a signature capstone being necessary. From talking to their faculty and students, none of them seem to support anything like this.
- Another member noted their faculty supports the general idea of the capstone as a way to integrate across disciplines things that have been learned by students as part of their liberal arts education, but we have serious concerns about how it would be administered. In certain forms the capstone could be quite onerous on students and faculty, and I don't feel like the proposal as it is formulated has addressed those concerns to a significant enough degree.
- One department already has a capstone created for students that is required in the BS degree and wondered how this might require a change in classes due to some of the new requirements if this were approved.
- There was concern about how the campus and faculty are already involved in doing a lot of other projects right now, including a first-year experience initiative and a core review. It feels like maybe the best path forward is not to make this a graduation requirement for the whole college at this point, but instead for the Dean's office to support departments with funds to develop this experience within the departments that have capacity, and to really incentivize and leverage the best materials you've collected to support faculty in doing this within departments, rather than making it a graduation requirement for all students.

- One member commented that while they see the purpose for changing the CLAS graduation requirements and support that part of the proposal, the idea of creating a capstone is a very separate thing. So, while we need to clear out unnecessary requirements to make the path for our students easier, our faculty don't connect with the idea that our students aren't ready to get jobs and a way to add value to their job prospects is through a capstone and our students definitely don't see it either. I don't want to have to tell potential majors that this is something that they have to do when I don't see the value.
- One member noted, in terms of grading or assessment policy, all of the options that are listed under Capstone could conceivably have very different sorts of grading metrics associated with them. Would consideration of different metrics like a pass-fail option and others that might it more applicable to more students in terms of their capacity or skill set be allowed?
- There was another comment that if part of the goal of this proposal overall was to eliminate barriers to people joining CLAS I do think it might be better if the capstone doesn't pass today and to revisit that idea again in the future. Let's first see whether we're actually meeting the goal of ensuring that we have the robustness in our liberal arts education that we want.

Question: If a department already has a capstone, will they still have to submit it to EPCC?
Answer: For the use of those three capstones, which were CLAS-wide, the department would just have to submit a syllabus and the cover sheet.

Question: If a department already has a capstone, would it have to go through EPCC again?
Answer: We would create an approved list of courses and put that up on the CLAS website, so it could be cataloged that you needed to take an approved capstone for fall.

Question: Who will oversee the courses and how would they be assessed?
Answer: The courses would be designed in such a way that they can be used by interdisciplinary teams, so that the rubric is asking things about the clarity of expression of the problem that you're addressing, and then the identification of specific methods of solving that problem so it can be adapted to any of these knowledge divisions. Then, we would put out a call for somebody to oversee the capstone options and have an interdisciplinary steering committee. There are some departments that have more tenure-stream and rostered faculty than they have section capacity. So, this is another way for units that have too much capacity to be able to talk amongst themselves and figure out who might be interested and who might make sense to lead one of the capstones.

Question: Was this just capstone classes? I thought that capstone could include an internship, a research class, or a directed study. I just want to clarify that because that's how we work in our department. So, we would be moving a ton of people into a capstone if those options were not approved as part of that capstone.
Answer: Those are eligible for inclusion as long as your internship isn't run in a manner where you give the person 3 credits and they don't do any academic reflection on it. As long as there are the learning outcomes that are in line with the HIPS and the best practices and it would count.

- Motion on creation of the new Signature Capstone made and seconded.
- 6 in-favor, 8 opposed, 1 abstention
- Motion to create the new capstone failed.

Summary of Outcomes of Proposal:

The Council considered the proposed revisions to the CLAS Graduation Requirements recommended by the CLAS Academic Planning Working Group in 4 pieces and the results of the voting are as follows:

1) The Council voted in favor of lowering the CLAS upper-division credit requirements from 45 to 30. (15 in favor, 0 opposed)

2) The Council voted in favor of reducing upper-division credits for minors and certificates from 6 to 3. (15 in favor, 0 opposed)

3) The Council voted in favor of removing all CLAS-specific Graduation Requirements including:
   A) Distribution requirements that repeat areas of the core (humanities, social sciences, behavioral sciences, and math/natural/physical sciences)
   B) The Communicative Skills requirement
   C) C) The Second Language Proficiency requirement. (11 in favor, 4 opposed)

4) The Council voted against creating a required CLAS Signature Capstone. (6 in favor, 8 opposed, 1 abstain)

IRC Promotional Criteria: Kathy Kelsey:

- In the November meeting, the Council briefly discussed IRC promotional criteria. The plan going forward is to have an ad hoc committee work on revising these promotional criteria.
- The timeline is for the committee to work on it early in the semester with a report back mid-semester so we can finalize the document as a group and vote on it.

Grievance Policy: Jennifer Reich

- The Chancellor signed a new policy on faculty compensation that was published on September 16th, Academic Policy, 1006.
- In that policy, it says that every college shall post the grievance policies for contesting merit scores, merit increases or raises, and also Equal Pay for Equal Work Act grievances. 1006 also says that links to those policies will be sent out with your merit letters in January.
- We must have all the merit reviews into Central HR tomorrow for their review and approval. Thus letters are not getting generated until after the break.
- It was not clear if CLAS has any finalized or posted policies. Faye Caronan had shared a version at the last meeting as a draft form, so the Council has never formally discussed them.
- It was noted that we do have a salary grievance policy. This was put in place when Rod Nairn was still the Provost. But it does need to be updated and this Council should have an opportunity to discuss.
- It was commented that the policies that were shared recently were labeled in draft form on two of the three policies. The process that Rich Allen announced last spring for the Equal Pay for Equal Work Act grievance process is not the process that was followed this summer and there's no published policy yet.
- It was asked if the policy links that are available could be shared prior to the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 10:57 am