

CLAS Faculty Council Meeting
Zoom
Thursday, February 12, 2026
Zoom Only
9:00AM -10:30 AM

MINUTES

Members Attending: Michael Abeyta, Masoud Asadi-Zeydabadi, Ryan Brown, Larry Erbert, Jeffrey Golub, Rodney Herring, Lorna Hutchison, Laurel Hyslop, Betsy Jose, Katharine Kelsey, Julien Langou, Michael Moore, Chad Shomura, Dale Stahl, Marty Otañez

Council Members Not Attending: Emma Bunkley, Scott Reed, Jennifer Reich

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

Guests: Keith Guzik, antwan Jefferson, Rae Anne Martinez

Recording: Karen Fennell

Welcome and Introductions: Kathy Kelsey

Approval of Minutes for November 13, 2025 Meeting: Kathy Kelsey

- Motion to approve the Minutes, seconded.
- Minutes approved by majority vote with no changes (0 opposed, 1 abstention)

Approval of Minutes for December 11, 2025 Meeting: Kathy Kelsey

- Motion to approve the Minutes, seconded.
- Minutes approved by majority vote with no changes (0 opposed, 3 abstentions)

Dean's Updates: Pam Jansma

Budget Update

- There is an upcoming meeting with Megan, the Provost, and Jen St. Peter in the next few weeks to discuss the CLAS Budget.

Program Viability/Vitality Process

- The process is moving forward and all programs have received their tiering feedback and are working on their action steps.
- Action steps are due March 2 to Central and can include things people are already doing.
- We've prepared a short memo and a spreadsheet that's accessible for people to see what others are doing and to support collaboration across programs.

Graduate Education Task Force

- The Task Force report has been submitted to the Provost.
- The Deans reviewed the document yesterday and there will be some minor revisions before it is released for general comment.

KPMG Study on AHEC

- It was asked if the Dean had heard anything more about the KPMG study on AHEC regarding management of campus Facilities and their financial practices.
- Pam heard briefly from Dan Maxey they've received the draft report from KPMG and are preparing a response.

ChatGPT Edu

- The announcement yesterday caught many of us by surprise that the University of Colorado has entered into a three-year agreement with OpenAI to provide ChatGPT Edu systemwide to students, staff and faculty. They're putting together an FAQ and hopefully we'll have more details soon.
- Coincidentally, CLAS has a Student Advisory Council meeting today and we had already planned to ask students what they think about using AI in the classroom. Cameron Blevins and Joanne Addison will also talk about how they approach AI as faculty. We are curious to hear what students have to say.

Shared Governance Communication Enhancement

- We are having ongoing discussions with Faculty Assembly representatives about improving shared governance communication within CLAS.
- Ideas will be brought to Faculty Council, which are up to the faculty how they want to proceed.

Core Curriculum Revision Presentation: Michelle Comstock, antwan jefferson

Background

- The working group was convened in Fall 2023 with 25 members including faculty, staff and administrators. Anyone still interested in joining the working group should contact Hamilton Bean.
- We researched student data, national data, regional data and met with people at the flagship and regional campuses to get feedback.
- Students overwhelmingly preferred flexibility and a curriculum focused on transferable workplace skills. That steered us away from a sequenced core.

Core Revision Highlights

- We developed core objectives and a kind of vision statement. From there, we developed more concrete learning outcomes and durable skills.
- The Provost suggested making Artificial Intelligence its own learning outcome instead of grouping it under Data Analysis. The group voted and the majority supported making AI a separate outcome for the core.
- These learning outcomes would be measured across courses, not in a single course.
- The structure of the core was also revised. We aimed to reduce credits, similar to other Colorado institutions that are aligning with GT Pathways (a 31-credit core accepted statewide). We want to make it easier on transfer students to get here and have all their courses count in the core.
- We also want to make it easier on students to stay with us so they can pursue double majors, minors, and certificates.
- We reduced our core from 34–40 credits down to 30–31.

Lab Requirement Discussion

- The Provost also recommended making lab science optional.
- Students who don't need a lab wouldn't be required to take one, but if they transfer out, they may have to take one later.

- There were mixed reactions to this proposal. Some faculty strongly support the importance of lab-based scientific literacy. While others point to this as creating barriers for students and variance across institutions.
- The working group is evaluating this element of the proposal based on additional feedback.

Thematic Clusters

- We're talking about the thematic clusters now and getting more clarity on how those might work or be operationalized in the university.
- These would be optional groupings of courses like “Sustainability” or “A Just Society”.
- Clusters provide coherence for students wanting structured pathways and can lead to badges or certificates. These would be created collaboratively across schools and colleges and go through the normal pathway of approval.
- Students are not required to take a cluster. They could instead earn a foundational skills badge. The foundational skills certificate or badge is meant to make the core meaningful for students and employers. If faculty approve the core, they’re approving those skills outcomes as well. Clusters help students see coherence rather than feeling like they’re checking boxes.
- A visual model was provided to illustrate potential student pathways.

Further Discussion

Q: I like the idea of integrating cultural diversity and global perspectives throughout learning outcomes, but am concerned about what happens when cultural diversity is no longer an independent requirement? How will we assess it in courses, and how do we ensure it doesn’t get tucked away or have its value diminished?

A: antwan jefferson responded it will be important to have a robust assessment plan for learning outcomes across the core. Currently, we regularly review core courses according to the existing knowledge areas and competencies. If cultural diversity outcomes become integrated, they would still remain tied to humanities, arts, or social sciences. Students would still be required to take courses focused on diverse racial/ethnic identities in the U.S. and on global perspectives. One reason these outcomes weren’t recommended to remain standalone is that standalone requirements add credits, and we don’t want CU Denver’s core to be larger than core requirements across the state. Keeping them integrated still allows existing courses to remain eligible. With some updates to learning outcomes, those could continue to fulfill requirements without increasing credits. We need to ensure our students meet statewide requirements, especially if they transfer to or from other institutions. We’re also revising our approach to cultural diversity and international perspectives based on feedback. Many agreed it shouldn’t be a 3000-level extra requirement. We want these to be lower-division knowledge area requirements embedded early so students still take designated courses.

Q: Why is making the lab optional being considered?

A: antwan said he was initially surprised by the Provost’s request to make the lab requirement optional. However, when this feedback was brought to the full working group, the vote showed strong support for making labs optional, not removing them, but allowing students a choice. Many CU Denver students struggle with physical/natural sciences when a lab is required. Students transferring out often encounter lab requirements at other institutions, but an optional model still allows science coursework while reducing barriers. Please submit feedback about the lab requirement. We are getting substantial pushback about this issue and want to incorporate your input.

Q: It sounds like the working group originally wanted AI included within another category, but then the Provost requested it be its own independent learning outcome. What was the rationale behind ultimately voting for a standalone AI component instead of embedding it elsewhere? I’m curious what people on the working group felt was the advantage of making AI its own requirement.

A: Regarding artificial intelligence, antwan replied he shares those concerns. AI is a big trend, and the idea was that students need familiarity and responsible-use skills. Making AI a separate learning outcome raised many questions, and some working group members suggested focusing more broadly on current forms of technology. But the vote resulted in a majority supporting a stand-alone AI outcome. We can incorporate ethical, political and environmental issues into the AI learning outcome, making it both critical and practical. Members can please send critiques to antwan or Michelle Comstock directly or through the Formstack link https://ucdenverdata.formstack.com/forms/core_proposal_survey . If AI remains required, we want it to be robust.

Q: Regarding the 30-credit core, do departments choose which courses count toward those 30 credits, or is this set externally?

A: Michelle Comstock answered those 30 credits must be core-approved courses and CCOC will continue approving them. Multimodal communication and quantitative reasoning must follow state GT Pathways requirements. Ideally, the other knowledge areas will too.

Q: When I design my syllabus for my class I have a section that addresses use of AI in the course and with each course we have a level of freedom to decide how much AI to allow or forbid. My concern is if AI becomes part of the core then it seems we may not be able to say outright you cannot use AI in my course.

A: I hope one would not affect the other and those outcomes don't apply to every course. I think Faculty Assembly would need to determine whether that policy changes or not.

Next Steps

- More work is needed to develop robust assessment of outcomes, including cultural diversity and global perspectives.
- We've been getting feedback through faculty visits and will revise proposals accordingly.
- An info session with the Provost is scheduled for February 26.
- A full faculty vote is anticipated in April after review by Faculty Assembly, CCOC and EPCC.

IRC Promotion Criteria Update – Kathy Kelsey

- We've been asked to approve a document describing the promotional criteria and process for our IRC faculty.
- I'm putting together a small working group to review the document that includes Tenure-Track, TPT, and instructional faculty. If there are IRC faculty who might want to participate, especially clinical track faculty, we'd like the group to be diverse across disciplines and tracks, including non-council members. This group will review the document as it currently stands, look for places that may need revision and prepare recommendations.
- The goal is for the working group to identify any suggested revisions, bring them back to this Council, look at proposed language at the next meeting and then have a focused review and vote in April.

Discussion

- One member commented, I'm wondering how best to explain this to my department. After the Council approved previous documents, our faculty approved our own primary unit criteria for instructional-track promotion and our department moved from a three-year to a five-year review period for promotion based on the college standards. So, how do I reopen this

conversation in the department without suggesting that the vote we took in December was meaningless?

- Another member noted our department went through the same thing. We have approved criteria that have already gone to the Provost.
- What we're trying to do now is ensure more IRC voices are involved. Some departments still don't have criteria and this review process helps guide them. IRC faculty have flagged issues in the document and this is an opportunity for shared governance. It's important to note this will affect next year's promotion cycle, not this year's. Those going up for review this year should follow their department's current criteria. You may keep your department's criteria or there may be some changes.
- Some IRC faculty were confused when the earlier documents came out, so this review process will help clarify expectations.
- The new working group will look more closely at the three- and five-year structure. The college's guideline was a five-year timeline, with a potential three-year option for exceptional cases if the chair supports it. For example, the Psychology department criteria, approved by the Provost, require five years of teaching experience total, with at least three of those years at CU Denver. Part-time and full-time teaching both count. Departments can define specifics, but the overall structure follows that model.

Improving Communication Between Faculty Assembly and Faculty Council: Kathy Kelsey

- Earlier today, Dean Jansma mentioned improving communication between Faculty Assembly and Faculty Council and leveraging Faculty Council as a way to communicate what's happening at Faculty Assembly back to our departments. This would be a bit random as not every department has a representative on Faculty Assembly, but all departments have a representative on Faculty Council.
- One idea is to have a designated Faculty Assembly member attend CLAS Faculty Council meetings as a non-voting liaison.
- Another is to create a dedicated Faculty Council seat reserved for a Chair and then that person can liaise with Faculty Assembly and Chairs & Directors.
- There are 10 CLAS representatives on Faculty Assembly. We have 17 Departments. So, we would need to consider how this communication and representation would work.
- Minutes could also be shared more systematically to improve communication.
- We should consider all shared governance bodies, including UCDALI. Especially because so many IRC faculty are in CLAS, we need consistent communication between UCDALI and Faculty Council as well.
- Information overload is a challenge. It would help if Faculty Council identified one or two priority items for Faculty Assembly representatives to focus on. Representatives could also give brief updates each meeting. I agree that communication is important, but it needs to be specific and targeted.

Bylaws Revision Work: Kathy Kelsey

- A small working group is meeting again soon to prepare the next round of revisions to the CLAS bylaws. The goal is to have specific language that this Council can review, discuss and vote on at the next meeting in April.
- The current bylaws discuss faculty membership on the CLAS Faculty Council as being one person, one member, from each department. The current bylaws reference a member from the Interdisciplinary Council, which no longer exists. That structure has been revised and all the

members that head interdisciplinary programs are now rostered within departments. So, we need to reconsider the structure and language of that portion of the bylaws.

- We also need to consider when new interdisciplinary programs are created. Writing any of those new programs by name into the bylaws may require them to be revisited multiple times. So, there needs to be a way to consider defining the members of CLAS Faculty Council and who attends by function or something that would maintain consistency when we have smaller-scale changes among programs.
- There was one suggestion to maintain Faculty Council representation at the department level; 17 departments with 17 representatives on the Council.
- Another suggestion was to define eligibility by function rather than title, for example allowing representation for degree-granting interdisciplinary programs. Interdisciplinary Studies includes several degree-granting programs (e.g., Master of Humanities, Master of Social Science, Integrated Sciences, and several undergraduate majors).
- One member expressed concern that allowing representation for degree-granting interdisciplinary programs would create a situation of double-representation. For example, two members of this current Council are both from the same department. If one faculty member represents IDS and another represents English, our department effectively has two votes. How do we avoid this? The principle of this Council has been that no single unit should have two votes.
- We do have more interdisciplinary programs now. If all the faculty who are in those programs are also rostered within another department, we probably don't want to go the route of having all of those represented because then we will have an issue with some departments being overrepresented. Conversely, if we only have one representative from each department it could be possible we don't have anyone on the Council who is part of an interdisciplinary program, so that voice might be missing as well. This is the challenge we are up against.
- One member commented there's a need for interdisciplinary representation because this is in the spirit of shared governance. There's a need for representation because there are students who their home department is an interdisciplinary body. So, those students deserve representation as well.
- From a department chair perspective, I think about what we just went through with program viability. We have programs that are being evaluated and being held responsible for the work that they're doing outside of the departments where the faculty participating in those interdisciplinary programs are housed. So, for that reason, I think there are a unique set of concerns. I can see the value for having one interdisciplinary seat. That seems like a fairly minor change for the bylaws. Renaming the representative role in the bylaws would be a minor update that wouldn't require a full faculty vote.
- One member asked if we are closer to resolving the language of the bylaws or are we then going to find that we need to go back to the document beyond April's meeting and that there are other unresolved issues? Do we feel these can be approved before the end of the semester?
- One member brought up wanting to make sure there is a mechanism for representation for IRC faculty on Faculty Council going forward.
- Marjorie Levine-Clark noted the new bylaws draft does create a mechanism for IRC faculty representation.

Next Steps

- The bylaws working group will incorporate today's feedback and present an updated draft in March.
- The goal is to have a final vote on the bylaws by end of semester.

Council Only Session