

Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee

Approved Minutes

Friday, April 18th, 2025

9:00AM – 11:00AM

University 156

Attendees: Bitters, Cole, Cravens-Brown, Crocetta, Dugdale, Hedgecoth, Jenkins, Lee, Martin, Nagar, Nathanson, Neff, Ottesen, Podalsky, Smith, Smith, Steele, Vankeerbergen, Xiao

Agenda

- Approval of the 04-04-2025 Minutes
 - Cole, Crocetta; approved with one abstention.
- Workforce Development (Guest: Randy Smith, Office of Academic Affairs)
 - Smith: What I would like to do today is break my remarks into three parts. First, I will give a bit of context of my roles at the university. Then I will talk about a couple of areas I am working on that I think you should be aware of. Finally, I will discuss workforce development and the issue of concurrence.

I am currently one of about ten vice provosts reporting directly to the provost. I work closely with Norman Jones (Undergraduate Education), Mary Stromberger (Graduate Education), James Orr (Strategic Enrollment Planning), and Jason Lemon (Online Education). Katie Reed reports to me, as does the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) Office, the director of College Credit Plus, and my program manager. COAM is a committee with about 60 members handling around 1,000 academic misconduct cases annually. I have brought in a systems analyst to observe how COAM operates and suggest improvements to systemic function.

Katie and I handle about 1,500 course proposals a year all ourselves; there is no reviewing committee. If she spots a concurrence issue in this process, she flags it, and I get involved. Once courses are finalized, we send them directly to the registrar for implementation.

Unlike courses, programs go to the Council on Academic Affairs. Some proposals stop with CAA, but others move on to the Senate, the Board of Trustees, and the Ohio Department of Higher Education. I have started reviewing proposals at three levels: If it is a simple internal change—like moving a course or swapping one for another—I announce it at the CAA meeting, it is recorded in the minutes, and it becomes official without full council review. For smaller proposals, like minors or those already vetted by the Graduate School, the CAA Chair and I (as Subcommittee D) review and present them to the Council. They are handled in a single meeting, so units are not waiting a month or more. Larger proposals like majors get full subcommittee review. We deal with nearly 100 proposals a year.

Most are curricular, but we also handle structural changes like new departments or department name changes.

- Committee member question: Is “Subcommittee D” something new?
 - Smith: I started it in the last ten years or so. Before that, every proposal went to a full subcommittee, which prolonged things. Now, CAA has caught up and we review proposals that have come into the office just within the last four weeks, so there is no backlog.
- Smith: In addition to all of this, I meet with all specialized accrediting teams that come to the university. We have about 50 programs that are required to have specialized accreditation, and those teams come in fairly frequently. I am also the overseer of student learning outcomes assessment. As you know, we have the assessment conference every year and provide funds for course redesign and similar efforts, but we leave learning outcomes to the colleges to do.
 - Committee member question: Is there a distinction between the learning outcomes you supervise and the GE? Are you looking at learning outcomes for programs or courses?
 - Smith: We deal with learning outcomes of every level of program. That includes GE, graduate, professional, undergraduate. The GE is now considered a program, so CAA and OAA oversee it. Even though we have others handling the day-to-day, it’s still under the purview of CAA from a program and assessment standpoint.
- Smith: I am also heavily involved with policy-level issues at the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE). Every new major has to go through ODHE for approval, so we are constantly sending materials down to them. There has also been a lot happening in the transfer space. ODHE oversees all 36 public institutions in Ohio and is focused on improving transfer systems like Ohio Transfer 36. Right now, no one is fully in compliance with these systems. We recently hosted a day-long summit with ODHE to explore why compliance is lagging. Much of it comes down to institutional staffing—frequent changes and not enough personnel to keep up with shifts.

Another key focus is the state-level “Math Initiative”. Math is a huge stumbling block in transfer across institutions. We brought together Math Chairs statewide to reignite this initiative and talk about why that is.

- Smith: This all gives you a fuller picture of who I am and what I do. I work most closely with the university-level version of this committee. We are also in the process of revising the OAA Handbook, which we hope to have ready by Fall. We want to keep the university-level guidelines high-level enough to avoid micromanaging, so colleges can supplement them as needed.
- Smith: Shifting to work the university has been focusing on, we are continuing to build momentum in two major areas—our College Credit Plus (CCP) program and our preparation for the upcoming reaffirmation of accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

College Credit Plus, Ohio's dual enrollment program that allows high school students to earn college credit, is a statewide initiative, and every institution engages in the program differently. At our university, we have taken a more rigorous approach than many others across the state. We now serve nearly 500 CCP students here on the main campus, with another 500 students enrolled across our four regional campuses.

Our reaffirmation of accreditation with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) will be coming up in March 2027. We had a strong showing during our last review in 2017, and we are preparing to repeat that success. I have put together an initial team that will work closely with various offices to gather evidence, shape the narrative, and guide us through the review process.

The accreditation process itself centers around four key criteria. The first criterion is mission—not just what our mission is, but how it was developed, how it shapes our operations, and how it reflects our commitments to community engagement and diversity. The second is integrity, which covers our governance, policies, and things of that nature. The third, teaching and learning, focuses on resources for faculty and students, how we assess student learning outcomes, how we structure and evaluate our general education program, and how we conduct program reviews. The final criterion regards institutional resources, budget, and planning with emphasis on sustainability.

Each of these four areas will be documented with evidence of how what we say in the narrative plays out in practice. Several of us, myself included, serve as peer reviewers for the HLC and are regularly evaluating submissions from other universities and visiting campuses as part of site review teams. This insight will feed directly into how we approach our own reaffirmation process.

- Smith: Another set of developments on the horizon relate to Senate Bill 1. There are two primary areas emerging from this legislation that we are keeping a close eye on. The first concerns low-enrollment undergraduate majors—specifically, degree programs that have produced fewer than five graduates over the past three years. We have identified which programs fall into this category and have begun conversations with the deans of the affected colleges. While no definitive plans have been made yet, we will begin developing strategies for how to address these programs moving forward.

The second element of Senate Bill 1 is the creation of a new civics course requirement. While details are still emerging, this likely will not be a single course, rather a small set of courses that meet the legislative criteria. Based on the content and focus of the proposed requirements, we anticipate that the College of Arts and Sciences, John Glenn College, and Chase Center will likely lead the development of these offerings.

- Smith: Turning to the topic of workforce development, we put together a group to explore what the university might do in terms of immediate workforce needs that people already in the labor force are missing, or that soon-to-be graduates could

use to move directly into a job. We began to pursue two main directions. First, we started looking at programmatic offerings beyond traditional degrees (certificates, stackable credentials, and micro-credentials) that could help someone in the workforce move up or make a career shift. This was especially relevant in fields like STEM and business, but we have broadened that work to include areas like sustainability and entrepreneurship. An exciting development that the Graduate School will soon bring forward is a new proposal to stack certificates into a master's degree.

The second direction we have taken focuses on pathways to Ohio State. We have built strong partnerships with Columbus City Schools and Columbus State Community College to create better pathways into the university. Columbus State has been our largest transfer partner, with around 50-60 established pathways, mostly in Arts and Sciences. They want to expand that number to include fields beyond Arts and Sciences, which is something we absolutely support.

At the high school level, I have learned a lot recently about Career Technical Education within Columbus City Schools. Students there can begin CTE in 11th grade and can train in fields like IT, health care, and skilled trades. Some students move straight into jobs after high school, others go to Columbus State for further credentials, and some want to keep going all the way to Ohio State.

We just completed a \$7 million grant with JPMorgan Chase to support these workforce development efforts, and we were told that IT and cybersecurity are two areas where we are not doing enough. A student might complete IT credentials at Columbus State, but there is not a clear bridge to a relevant program at Ohio State without having to put another 3 or more years in. We have a working group with faculty from Engineering, Arts and Sciences, and Columbus State to design a new IT and cybersecurity pathway that we hope to launch within the next year. There are 22 other technical and community colleges across the state that are also eager to partner, and we have not really explored that yet.

All 15 of our colleges have shown interest in workforce development and are now participating in various stages. We have a newly revised undergraduate minor in Entrepreneurship, the development of a cross-college undergraduate Game Studies degree program, and continued growth in undergraduate programs that are workforce-relevant. The Provost is aligned with these goals and believes the university is heading in the right direction. Workforce development is also expected to be a major theme in the next state budget bill. The Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) now requires workforce alignment in all proposals, so any materials submitted for their review must clearly articulate the workforce development components.

- Martin: There is also an ongoing effort by the College to better communicate the value of an Arts and Sciences education to help students, parents, and prospective students understand what an ASC degree can lead to. Unlike fields such as engineering, where the job title directly matches the degree, Arts and Sciences

graduates follow diverse career paths. Helping students discover those paths—and highlighting majors with high value that are often overlooked, like GIS in Geography—is an important part of the work.

There is also a push to enhance existing degree programs by incorporating workforce-relevant skills in ways that do not require major curriculum overhauls. One example is the creation of new AI certificates that will help students build skills that are increasingly in demand. The goal is to ensure students can leave with both a deep understanding of their field and a set of skills that employers recognize and seek out.

- Nagar: Would you say the online BA completion that we are working on for students who have left and want to finish their degree is part of this?
- Martin: Absolutely, and an important aspect of that program is helping students think critically about their own workforce experience. What makes the program especially exciting is the flexibility. Students will be encouraged to shape their pathway through it in a way that aligns with their individual career goals after Ohio State.
- Smith: I encourage you to keep an eye on what other colleges are doing in workforce development. Proposals that respond to emerging workforce needs are becoming more frequent, especially from colleges like Agriculture, Education and Human Ecology, Business, Engineering, Law, and Social Work.

The Sustainability Institute is preparing to bring forward a proposal this fall for a master's degree in sustainable energy. Some Arts and Sciences units have already been involved, and it is a strong example of the kind of cross-college collaboration we will see more of. Keep an eye on developments in that area and consider where your unit might fit in. It is important to recognize that our role does not always mean creating new degrees from scratch, but taking smaller, more targeted initiatives.

I want to emphasize that we are not trying to replicate what institutions like Columbus State are doing. Instead, our strategy is to complement and supplement what they offer, working alongside them rather than duplicating their efforts. I plan to establish a new position for an Associate Vice Provost for Workforce Development, so we will have a dedicated person driving this effort forward.

- Martin: One of the ideas that has been gaining traction relates to deepening our collaboration with Columbus State around IT. A lot of folks working in IT, including many here at Ohio State, do not necessarily have degrees in Computer Science, but a combination of foundational technical training and a broader four-year degree.

The idea is students would complete a two-year IT degree at Columbus State, then transfer to Ohio State to finish in a major like Communication, Statistics, or English. From what we have seen, this kind of pathway really works in the IT field. And as a college, we are large enough and flexible enough to make this kind of transfer model work. If students come in with some prior experience or

training, we can offer them a place to finish strong and expand their career options.

- Committee member comment: Students are expected to choose a pathway, particularly technical or career-focused tracks, in high school at such a young age. That is why it is important to create meaningful pathways for students who want to continue their education later, even if they did not take the “traditional” route the first time around. We are helping to create bridges back into higher education rather than expecting students to know everything at 16.
- Committee member question: To follow up on the transfer compliance issue brought up earlier, can you talk more about what is happening, how ODHE is responding, and if they are eager to work through it with us?
 - Smith: Students are showing up at their next institution and are being told that the transfer agreements we have in place are not being honored. Students can go through a formal complaint process, but most students do not know that they can push back, so ODHE informally hears about the complaints. That is where ODHE reaches out to me, and I reach out to the unit where the course in question is. I often find that they may not realize that these are state-mandated requirements. It is a fixable issue, but we need to be more consistent and communicative across departments and institutions.
 - Martin: We have found that transfer students in Arts and Sciences actually have the same four-year graduation rates as students who start at Ohio State as freshman. While ODHE is hearing these anecdotal issues, they are not hearing about all of the students who do not have problems with transfer credits. Of course, these issues are real and should be looked into, but from what we can tell, the transition is largely seamless.
- Martin: You all are familiar with the Ohio Prison Education Exchange Project (OPEEP). They had their official site visit from the HLC that took place at the prison. The visit went very well, which is great for the program’s ongoing success. They are always looking for faculty who are interested in teaching in the program. It is a challenge, but we are grateful for faculty support.
- Smith: We have been partnering with Columbus City Schools on a summer program called STEAMM Rising. Every June, teachers come to campus for a week of experiences with different departments and they are learning about programs and jobs that they did not even realize existed. The impact has been incredible, and this summer, we are expecting around 400 teachers. We have been working to maintain those connections by keeping faculty in touch with the teachers they met. We are trying to make sure this program reaches counselors.

We have also been rethinking the flow between Columbus City Schools and our university. We are not seeing the level of interest we should from their students, especially considering they serve about 150,000 students. We conducted a team interview with school counselors and other stakeholders, who identified key issues. In response, we have established an implementation group to begin addressing those insights.

One major recommendation is to establish a dedicated point person who focuses solely on maintaining the relationship between our university and Columbus City Schools. For instance, many admitted students have to start at the Newark campus, and then transferring to Columbus is not always seamless. A designated K–12 CCS connection would help with those complications and more.

- Smith: I want to go back to concurrence. Historically, most of the emphasis has been on courses. I go through them and send them off to the registrar, trying to keep everything moving. But every so often, something bigger comes up where units might not agree. If they cannot work it out, it lands on my desk. In that case, I bring everyone to the table with the syllabi. More often than not, once they actually compare what is being taught, they realize the other unit is taking a different angle on the topic. I always try to stress that concurrence is not about judging whether the syllabus is “good” or whether it looks like what *your* college would approve, but if this course or program seems to have substantial overlap with something your unit is already doing. If the answer is no, then it can move forward. If the answer is yes, then there needs to have a conversation.
 - Committee member question: Do we have a definition of substantial overlap?
 - Martin: I use a guiding question in thinking about concurrences: If a student takes both of these courses, are they walking away with something unique from each one, or is it the same course material packaged a little differently? That is not a technical definition, but I think it works in practice.
 - Smith: In general, if it seems like more than 50% of the course content is overlapping, that is when I start to flag it.
- Martin: Sometimes, when we send courses out for concurrence (like some of the Chase Center courses), we get feedback that raises other kinds of concerns related to course design. I always make a point to pass that feedback along, even if it is outside the scope of concurrence, but the core of the concurrence process is that question of overlap.
- Smith: At the programmatic level, concurrence is getting more complex. We have been navigating this in Arts and Sciences in the context of Medicine where they have started to move into areas that traditionally fall within the Natural and Mathematical Sciences (such as Anatomy). In the end, these disputes land with the Council on Academic Affairs, but our approach has always been to try to work with the units directly first. When the Anatomy situation came up with Medicine, we got leadership from both sides in the same room to talk it out. We need to do this before proposals have already started circulating, so I think I am going to be doing this more proactively moving forward.
- Nagar: Thank you for laying down the framework for us. I think the concern gets deeper when it involves newer entities like the Chase Center. With something like Medicine doing Anatomy, it is understandable. When talking about something new like Chase, it starts to affect not just enrollment concerns but also the *philosophy* behind what we do in Arts and Sciences and the humanities. It is not just about *what* we teach, but *how* we teach it. We have processes and standards

that reflect this, and while I trust that Medicine will follow those processes, I cannot say the same for other entities.

- Smith: We are seeing a slow curriculum creep into our areas, but we have to recognize that the landscape is changing while also being thoughtful in how we manage that change. Chase is a different situation because it is externally driven. Right now, they are still getting their feet under them. They are thinking about creating courses, and possibly even developing programs down the line, but they are still trying to understand what the process is, what other colleges do, and how they fit into that.
- Committee member question: How can the Chase Center propose curriculum without having faculty in place?
 - Smith: The Director of the Chase Center, Lee Strang, is in the process of hiring. For now, he is working with colleagues across campus who are interested in what the Center is trying to do, even if their primary appointment is somewhere else. He is relying on colleagues' advice and experience to shape the early stages. Chase will still have to follow the same hiring rules, curriculum development process, and fiscal guidelines as everyone else.
- Committee member question: Can programs be developed in Centers? Do you see similar models of Centers having programs?
 - Smith: Centers run programs a college has delegated to them. For example, Engineering has delegated the Aviation program to the Center for Aviation Studies, which is a fully functioning academic unit now. There is also the Center for Life Sciences Education, which runs the Biology major. The difference with Chase is that no college has delegated anything to it. We are seeing a "baby steps" approach: start with some courses, then maybe those become part of the GE; maybe a minor will then develop, then a full program eventually.
- Vankeerbergen: I am wondering what kind of programs Chase might offer that are not what we already teach.
 - Smith: I am organizing a meeting soon bringing together Dean Horn, Andrew, and their counterparts from other colleges to sit down in the same room to talk about what kind of curriculum Chase is thinking about. We will hear from the colleges about how these ideas might overlap with what they already do, where there is potential for collaboration, or where there are concerns. Instead of waiting for a proposal to show up in someone's inbox, we want to have the conversation *before* things get that far.
- Committee member question: Will the mandated readings in this required civics course not inherently cause overlap with existing courses in other units? How will concurrence from Chase work when units propose courses that include those readings and therefore overlap with Chase courses?
 - Vankeerbergen: Chase has already provided concurrence for our courses, so the spirit of collaboration is there.
 - Martin: Different disciplines will approach these texts in very different ways. A sociologist might structure the entire course differently than someone in Philosophy or History, even using the same core documents.

- Committee member comment: We need to keep broadening the departments that offer these civics courses because we often have a narrow view of where civics fits.
- Nagar: Where will the civics course live?
 - Smith: We have not decided where the course will fit within an undergraduate degree. The university is not planning to add 3 credit hours on top of what already exists in programs, but it has not been determined where the course will live.
- Martin: Would there be a review group with representatives from the colleges that looks at proposed civics courses?
 - Smith: We are not there yet, but representation would need to reflect both those who are actively developing civics courses and those who are interested in this in some way or another but do not know how yet.
- Committee member question: Would you say there has been a shift in perspective at the Chase Center from feeling like they owned the space for this civics requirement?
 - Smith: I think it is happening. As Chase has conversations with folks across Arts and Sciences, they are seeing the programmatic and even personal links between them. As Chase works through the curriculum side of things, they are starting to see themselves as part of a broader effort.
- Nagar: Could you speak to possible concerns from our College surrounding Ohio Senate Bill 1?
 - Smith: Groups are being put together to look at the different pieces and figure out what needs focused attention. I have been involved in the work regarding the elimination of programs that graduate small numbers. There are always going to be certain majors or programs that, by their very nature, are essential regardless of whether they enroll five students or fifty. Each college involved in this cut should have the opportunity to make a case directly to university leadership about why these particular programs matter. One of the things that supports this work is our land-grant commission that provides a grant to offer programs that might not be offered in many other places.

As for the public availability of syllabi that the bill mentions, I have not been as closely involved so you might want to talk to Norman Jones. As for faculty-related implications, I would reach inside OAA for the fuller picture of what is happening on those fronts.

- Subcommittee Reports
 - Arts and Humanities I
 - History of Art 4798.04 – approved with contingency
 - Classics 4401 – approved with contingency
 - History of Art 4040 – approved
 - Arts and Humanities II
 - Ethnic Studies 2625 – approved
 - AAAS 4620 – approved with contingency

- History 3595 – approved
- Natural and Mathematical Sciences
 - N/A
- Social and Behavioral Sciences
 - Anthropology 7720 – approved with contingency
 - Anthropology 5515 – approved with contingency
 - Anthropology 2203 – approved
 - Anthropology 3233 – approved with contingency
- Race, Ethnicity and Gender Diversity
 - N/A
- Themes I
 - Slavic 3370 – approved
 - History 3088 – approved with contingency
 - Islamic Studies 3501 – approved
- Themes II
 - German 3354.02 – approved
 - Scandinavian 3354.02 – approved
 - Turkish 3350 – approved with contingency