

Date: 21 April 2023

To: James White, Craver Family Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

From: Cognate Units Program for Public Discourse Advisory Committee

## Introduction

The Cognate Units Program for Public Discourse Advisory Committee has met four times this spring. We deliver this report to you, answering the questions you set before us in the charge (Appendix A). What follows outlines the steps we recommend, with a discussion of options within those steps.

As we worked, we kept in mind the current mission statement of the Program for Public Discourse (PPD), as well as the description of goals for the Communication Beyond Carolina (CBC) requirement in the Ideas in Action General Education Curriculum. We hope that our report works in tandem with the recommendations that will follow from the Ad Hoc Committee Dean Abigail Panter has been charged to lead, whose goals are to clarify how the CBC requirement should be read.

## Summary

The committee proposes three basic models for staffing the CBC courses. We suggest they could proceed sequentially, but you should also view them as a menu. Within each, we note options for PPD, as well as needed support from College administrative and pedagogical structures. Details are discussed more fully in the sections following the summary.

1. **Hire the first seven TAPs** during AY2023-2024. They will join the TAP currently being hired through PPD. We would like to **cluster them in PPD and COMM** in order for them to function as a supported cohort while we expand both CBC and PPD. We recommend:
  - a. 3 TAPs with primary appointment in the Department of COMM, who may (but do not have to) have secondary affiliations with PPD.
  - b. 4 TAPs with primary appointments in departments in the College other than COMM, with a likely secondary appointment in PPD.
  - c. We have discussed a few different approaches to constituting the initial hiring committees for the 4 non-COMM hires. Whichever approach is chosen, we urge collaboration between cognate units wherever possible.
  - d. This first cohort of TAPs could each teach 5 CBC courses along with a sixth course on their own research specialty, a different gen ed need for their department, or bought out by the College for a specific administrative task related to the CBC requirement.
  - e. Even in the first year, we suggest that staff support from Undergraduate Education for course logistics be in place. It might be helpful to give a secondary administrative appointment to an existing faculty member in the College to help manage the CBC courses. PPD's workshop model should be leveraged here as well to support both these TAPs and other faculty whose CBC courses have been approved. We have discussed various models of shadowing existing courses, targeted co-teaching to pair experienced and new instructors for CBC, and an expanded facilitated cohort gathering for current instructors (modeled on successful programs in the IAH and drawing from COMM, CURE, PPD, CFE, and others).

2. **Hire to fill in the rest of the CBC needs**, over the next couple of academic years through a process that allows **any department to participate** (with the continued emphasis on building capacity in COMM and the opportunity for secondary appointments in PPD).
  - a. We have referred to this as the “Many Cooks” model, as it proposes that CBC needs to be woven throughout Carolina, with some classes specific to majors or fields, others focused on difficult discussions, and others using skills-building as the overall approach. We recommend that the College utilize as many sources of CBC courses as possible to build a robust and intellectually diverse portfolio of courses.
  - b. To build and maintain enough sections of CBC for students to progress easily toward their degree, we suggest the College move to a hiring model that proposes a quota of CBC courses taught in each department that receives a position. Departments and College leadership can on a case-by-case basis designate whether these hires are tenure/tenure track or TAP; in this model, CBC courses can be taught by anyone in the department who gets their syllabus approved.
  - c. PPD could participate alongside and in coordination with other departments, which allows for the development of other curricular or staffing needs in PPD beyond pinning them to CBC courses only. This should be maximally flexible, though we urge continued strong alliances between PPD and departments (as with any cognate units across the university).
  - d. Support structures built in 1.e should continue, with key decisions made along the way about the right training and support, with feedback from students and instructors.
  
3. **Invest in an Oral Communication Laboratory**, hosted by the College with leadership potentially coming from COMM and/or PPD, and with other key departmental participation, to position Carolina as a thought leader in these areas over time.
  - a. This would require space and hires but could be a gem in UNC’s academic programming. Ideally, the lab would also be grant-funded, and would support students, teams of faculty researchers, and instructors.
  - b. Graduate students could pursue badging or certification in CBC teaching qualifications.
  - c. The lab could also support grants for research and be a bridge to working with faculty outside the College (e.g., Education).
  - d. The lab could be an incubator for new methods and techniques in teaching our students how to communicate with the rest of the world.

### **Expanded Report**

#### Process

We met four times as a whole committee, and we brainstormed and wrote together in small teams in between. To deliver this report to you, we began by outlining models for hiring the initial seven Teaching Assistant Professors (TAPs) and delivering the CBC courses, as well as building PPD.

The committee chose to dismiss two of those initial options and focus on the remaining five. Our reasons were as follows:

The Advisory Committee considered and rejected two models of The Program for Public Discourse's role in the teaching of Communication Beyond Carolina courses. The first, 'PPD Owned,' would involve PPD taking full responsibility for teaching CBC courses. The Committee rejected this model on the grounds that it offers a conception of CBC that is far too narrow, removing departments' ability to craft CBC courses for their disciplinary-specific purposes, and would threaten to undermine PPD's focused mission of supporting a culture of robust public deliberation. The second model, 'No Role,' would involve PPD having no role in the teaching of CBC courses. The Committee rejected this model on the grounds that PPD, with its expertise in equipping students to engage in civil public discourse and deliberation, can make a valuable contribution to CBC.

In our second meeting, we narrowed the five remaining options down to three, as we felt that two of the models were not viable on their own but instead could be folded into the remaining three. As we discussed the three options, it emerged that they could function in sequence. Our third meeting led us to endorse presenting our recommendations in that format. Since you asked us to focus on options, what follows outlines a sequence of steps the College could follow, with a set of choices within each. We have tried to signal here decisions we fully support, decisions we can live with, and decisions we would be worried about. In the discussion that follows, we also call out the effect on or opportunities for PPD at each step. We are happy to discuss more in person; we seek to put options before you, knowing that we are writing at a particular moment in time.

In our third meeting, we turned to the consequences and opportunities the suggested models held for PPD. In our fourth and final meeting, we aimed to write into our report the temperature of our endorsements, as well as other decision points you might wish to consider.

As we did our work, a few principles emerged. They included, at minimum, commitments to: do no harm to PPD; do no harm to departments' abilities to deliver their majors/minors; and preserve the processes wherein faculty continue to own the gen ed. We also were motivated by proposing structures that support and protect teaching track faculty, train and prepare faculty and graduate students to support these classes, and imagine options that respond to the range of undergraduate student needs. Finally, we aimed to signal some places where we have opportunities in this moment to build something truly unique to Carolina—in both the CBC delivery and in PPD.

### Sequential models

Our deliberations have led us to recommend to you a sequential structure that the College could follow to build capacity for CBC for the Ideas in Action general education curriculum, while simultaneously strengthening, expanding, and clarifying the Program for Public Discourse within the College. Most precisely, we are recommending an initial set of actions to hire seven TAPs and bring their CBC classes online over the academic year 2023-2024. After that, we are proposing two, possibly parallel, possibly sequenced, steps to take. Done fully, we believe this could result in a structure unique to Carolina – intellectually powerful and supportive of students and faculty. We would like a transparent model for how hires get assigned, regardless of which of these recommendations are chosen. Each is discussed below, along with our reflection on questions that will need to be answered, our thoughts on options within the models, and a sense of the warmth of our endorsement of each.

#### 1. Structure for initial Communication Beyond Carolina TAPS

The Committee recognizes the pressing need to begin building capacity in the College to prepare to

offer courses that meet the CBC requirement. In response to this need, we see an initial hiring focus specifically designed to build this capacity. This need is stipulated in the Charge in section 2.

Section 2 asks the Committee to consider optimal rostering structures. We recommend that the College complement the initial position already authorized with seven additional TAP lines. Three of these lines can be focused on developing CBC capacity in the Department of Communication, as we expect this department to take on a significant role in the CBC requirement. The other four lines should be placed in departments other than COMM within the College and likely have a secondary appointment with PPD. The additional PPD hire (in progress) can be placed in any department within the College. We recommend that all these initial positions be affiliated with established academic departments—with their institutional and intellectual benefits—in order to fully engage in their commitment to the IDEAs in Action curriculum with the proper optimal support and infrastructure. Such support is crucial for TAP faculty, who might otherwise be more vulnerable to institutional isolation.

There are several options regarding the teaching responsibilities, placement, and affiliation of these seven TAPs. Regarding the teaching responsibilities of the seven TAPs, all seven could be responsible for teaching 6 CBC courses per year. Alternatively, these initial TAPs could be expected to follow the ENGL105 model of teaching five CBC courses and one course on their own specialty; their sixth course could fulfill another gen ed need for their department, or the course could be bought out by the College for a specific administrative task related to the CBC requirement. Other options we discussed but had less consensus around include co-teaching and assigning a quota of CBC requirements to the host department without requiring the TAP themselves to teach all these courses.

Regarding placement and affiliation, there are several options regarding the placement of the four TAPs not designated for the Department of Communication, as well as what the seven hires' affiliations with PPD should look like. Such focused hiring centered in the Department of Communication and PPD would help create a sense of a cohort among the new hires. Moreover, PPD-affiliated faculty could offer CBC courses focused on public discourse regarding contentious issues, which may be attractive to students whose departments do not offer something similar. For some TAPs, an affiliation with PPD would not be a good match (e.g., when there is no strong focus on difficult topics). TAPs who are not affiliated with PPD may still engage with other new hires through PPD workshops and other professional development supporting CBC courses. A robust support system around CBC courses will help these unaffiliated TAPs retain a sense of community with other CBC hires and encourages the development of a broad range of CBC courses.

The initial hiring focus in COMM and PPD would allow the hires to build a sense of community and connection while also providing them the structural support a department can offer. PPD can serve as a crucial resource for affiliated faculty AND non-affiliated faculty who teach CBC courses. We also suggest the College start the process of appointing a coordinator for the CBC courses (likely through the existing structure of Undergraduate Education), who can help gather metrics for what we are learning while building these courses.

Each department selected could chair its own Hiring Committee for these positions, in which case we recommend a role for the PPD director or staff on the committees or at the least during the campus visit process. Alternatively (though less strongly endorsed), the College could convene a single hiring committee chaired by the PPD Director, with representatives from appropriate cognate units, as determined by the Dean; this structure would allow a single call for applicants, rather than individual ads

from participating departments. This approach seems most applicable to non-COMM hires, as it may be difficult to determine which departments should be granted TAP lines prior to the search. Whichever approach is chosen, we urge collaboration between cognate units wherever possible.

A less desirable but possibly acceptable option would not have any of the seven TAPs affiliated with PPD, with PPD only providing support for affiliated faculty teaching CBC courses. This option is less desirable since it would not take full advantage of what PPD has to offer; it would be better for PPD to play a bigger role. We are uncomfortable recommending that all faculty teaching CBC courses must be affiliated with PPD since this might not always make sense—faculty teaching existing approved upper-division language courses, for instance, do not necessarily need the affiliation.

What is the role of PPD in the teaching of teaching CBC courses and the IDEAs in Action Curriculum? PPD has excelled at creating a culture of discourse on difficult topics. We expect PPD to continue its leadership role by offering support for these new hires as they develop CBC courses (e.g., difficult discourse workshops, and course development grants). This support need not be limited to these hires and should be available to faculty on campus who are preparing and teaching CBC courses. We see PPD as an enduring resource for the faculty. As conversations to develop PPD's potential curricular focus continue, we also note that none of this precludes future hires—whether for CBC courses or not—in PPD once its personnel documents are drafted and approved through the standard processes. We recognize that this process may require acceleration, and in that case, we encourage as much consultation with cognate units as possible.

While more fully incorporated into the Lab suggestion outlined below, even in this first year of hiring and growth, we recommend that PPD could also sponsor a Working Group that meets twice per semester, which would provide each cohort of CBC instructors the opportunity to talk through challenges and share resources. As appropriate, the Working Group could also involve experts in communication and pedagogy from campus units, including the Center for Faculty Excellence and other relevant departments in the College and other Schools.

The Committee also sees the need to launch a research-based effort associated with Communication Beyond Carolina and the broader challenge of innovating ways to build lines of communication between the cutting -edge of scholarship with and the communities we serve. We recommend that the College establish an early research presence (most likely in the Department of Communication) to develop UNC's capacity to lead in this challenge.

## 2. Expansion and Diffusion to staff CBC Fully

After the initial phase, the Committee envisions the further development of the College's capacity to teach CBC courses, with PPD playing a similar role to academic departments. We also urge a continued emphasis on building capacity in COMM. We have referred to this as the "Many Cooks" model, as it proposes that CBC needs to be woven throughout Carolina, with some classes specific to majors or fields, others focused on difficult discussions, and others using skills-building as the overall approach. We recommend that the College utilize as many sources of CBC courses as possible to build a robust and intellectually diverse portfolio of courses.

This model calls for multiple departments to propose courses and provide instructors for CBC. If PPD's status and structure changes, its role in offering and advising on CBC courses will change

appropriately. Regardless, PPD will likely continue to be a leader in the CBC courses.

Additional TAP and tenure-track faculty should be placed within academic departments to teach CBC courses, and some should be affiliated with PPD, with these faculty developing and staffing CBC courses that focus on the civil discussion of contentious issues. Initial hires to the Department of Communication can support this further capacity building by providing personnel capable of running training workshops for new hires who may need to develop necessary expertise, especially if the Oral Communication Lab is also greenlit to provide incentives for participating departments and faculty.

The Committee envisions a structure that replicates how the curriculum approaches Focus Capacities, allowing different units to contribute their discipline-specific expertise and strengths, including PPD. It would allow CBC to be adapted for different disciplinary approaches/focus areas where subject-matter expertise helps determine both what the conversations are and what needs to be conveyed. It also allows for the skills-based curriculum to be contextualized into specific majors, which can be useful for students looking for communication expertise in a specific area. Additional hires in this model will be grounded in departments and will be held to the same standards regarding retention, promotion, and/or tenure as other tenure-track or fixed-term faculty in their department.

As this process evolves, we also note the importance of incorporating tenure track hires, rather than relying only on TAP positions to deliver CBC courses. The opportunity should be embraced to expand the intellectual and pedagogical footprint of oral communication experts using all the hiring types available to us.

PPD could participate alongside and in coordination with other departments, which allows for the development of other curricular or staffing needs in PPD beyond pinning them to CBC courses only. This should be maximally flexible, though we urge continued strong alliances between PPD and departments (as with any cognate units across the university).

Support structures built in the initial hiring stage should continue, with key decisions made along the way about the right training and support, with feedback from students and instructors. PPD, the Center for Faculty Excellence, and others can and should be encouraged to support instructors through workshops and training. In addition, opportunities for team teaching or course shadowing and other incentivized professional development to connect CBC faculty and promote effective pedagogy around public discourse could be built. We also encourage clear expectations to be set for departments and instructors about CBC requirements and quotas.

### 3. Communication, Discourse, Oral Communication Lab Model

A final (or concurrent to the above) phase could involve the development of an Oral Communication Lab firmly based in the College. This lab would provide faculty hired within and across departments throughout the College to teach CBC courses with a space that can serve as a hub for discussing how curricular requirements can be adapted across disciplines while still maintaining their core learning objectives and competencies. It can serve as a site for creative collaboration and the orchestration of resources. It can provide guidance in the creation of new CBC courses, including best practices for incorporating oral communication into courses already offered. It can help faculty develop a cross-departmental community and engage in professional development related to best practices for CBC while still ensuring those faculty have homes within distinct departments. A lab model could also

potentially focus on research, experimentation, and innovation with approaches to teaching oral communication that can help ensure that UNC becomes a leader in this space.

While the lab could exist as a separate entity unaffiliated with any one unit in the College, its mission and function would initially be developed through a collaboration between the Department of Communication and the Program for Public Discourse. The lab would work best in conjunction with the hiring of CBC faculty across departments within the College. For the lab to operate as intended, it would need a director who is a communication pedagogy expert and should be in a tenure-line position with an active research agenda in this area. This tenure track position could be part of the expansion of the investment as noted above. It is understood that a lab would take time to create and become fully operational. The lab could also be an interesting host for collaborative grant writing among teams of researchers. As such, it should be pursued as a follow-up to an initial focus on hiring CBC TAP faculty. Ideally, the new director of the lab could play an integral role in helping figure out how other hires should be distributed throughout the College and what pedagogical and/or professional expertise CBC TAP faculty require, regardless of disciplinary focus.

Beyond the ability to provide faculty teaching (or interested in teaching) CBC courses with guidance, training, professional development, and community, an Oral Communication Lab would allow UNC to become a leader in innovative approaches to oral communication through a focus on experimentation and research. In turn, this would allow us to develop innovative pedagogical techniques and best practices for teaching oral communication and engaging multiple audiences across Carolina, including emerging technological innovations in augmented and virtual reality. A lab would support research into new and shifting modalities for oral public engagement, such as video conferencing, live streaming, podcasting, and vlogging, with the goal of preparing students to use these mechanisms effectively for public discourse.

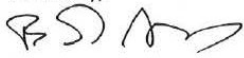
While one can find centers for oral communication at various universities across the country, most of these models are focused on tutoring students in public speaking. Rarely is there significant research and innovation focused on emerging pedagogical practices or experimentation with modalities for engaging in oral communication. As many jobs shift to virtual, hybrid, or multi-modal settings, it is integral that students learn to use oral communication skills adaptable to different environments and for reaching dispersed and diverse audiences. An Oral Communication Lab would stand out as an attractor for faculty invested in public discourse and would allow UNC to take a leading role in shaping oral communication pedagogy's future. Moreover, most centers for oral communication at public universities throughout the US are housed within departments of communication. An Oral Communication Lab that exists separately from a department can become an important hub for experimentation for adapting oral communication within and across disciplines and a repository for creative pedagogical practices emerging from departments across the University.

In return, an Oral Communication Lab can also provide meaningful resources for graduate students across a wide array of departments on how to integrate oral communication into their pedagogy, ensuring that we are also training a future generation of educators. These resources can include workshops, Teaching Assistant placement opportunities, and possibly even a certificate that can be earned in oral communication pedagogy.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this set of options and counsel. As a committee of faculty and administrators, representing all three divisions, multiple tracks and ranks, and degrees of affiliation with the gen ed and PPD, we have appreciated your call for our thoughts.

Sincerely,



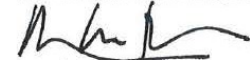
Barbara R. Ambros  
Professor and Chair  
Department of Religious Studies



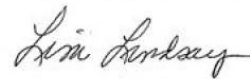
Mark Crescenzi  
Nancy Hanes White Distinguished Professor and Chair  
Department of Political Science



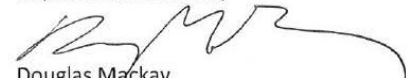
Elizabeth Engelhardt  
Senior Associate Dean for Fine Arts and Humanities  
Kenan Eminent Distinguished Professor of Southern Studies



Matthew Kotzen  
Associate Professor and Chair  
Department of Philosophy



Lisa Landau  
Professor and Chair  
Department of History



Douglas Mackay  
Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies  
Department of Public Policy



Megan Plenge  
Teaching Associate Professor  
Department of Earth, Marine and Environmental Sciences



Avi Santo  
Professor and Chair  
Department of Communication



Sarah Treul Roberts  
Bowman and Gordon Gray Distinguished Term Professor  
Department of Political Science



Molly Worthen  
Associate Professor and Acting Director, Program for Public Discourse  
Department of History



**Appendix A**

## Charge to Cognate Units Advisory Committee: Program for Public Discourse

Overarching question: What is the future of PPD regarding its interface with the rest of the college (and university)? PPD should have primacy in charting its future direction, but it has now, and will continue to have, connections and intersections with many departments and units in the college. How those intersections will be managed is a question that needs clarity and is a question that needs input from PPD's cognate units now.

Please provide advice on the following questions:

1. Faculty (including how to begin and how to change over time)
  - a. Co-roster? Terms?
  - b. Share TAPs and/or TTT's?
  - c. Faculty affiliates?
  - d. With faculty comes research. What are the research intersections with cognate units?
  
2. The college will soon invest seven new TAPs in the teaching of Communication Beyond Carolina. What rostering and reporting structures would work best as we start fulfilling our obligation to teach Communication Beyond Carolina?
  - a. What is role of PPD the teaching of Communication Beyond Carolina?
  - b. What is role of PPD the teaching of the IDEAs in Action curriculum more broadly??
  - c. What is role of PPD in workshops supporting the teaching of Communication Beyond Carolina?
  
3. How can the college community help PPD to achieve their goals as described in their mission statement:
  - a. "Our commitment to cultivating rhetorical acumen is wide-ranging. We mentor students through extracurricular programming. We assist faculty in incorporating deliberative practices into the classroom. We host public events featuring speakers who demonstrate the transformative potential of agonistic dialogue, i.e., collaborative disagreement."
  - b. "Above all, we strive to cultivate an ethos of engaged citizenship by facilitating proto-public spaces for students to practice public discourse while heightening their democratic sensibilities."

The committee is asked to return a set of options on these questions/issues. We ask for a brief report by April 21, 2023.