

## Activities of the Center for the Liberal Arts: Report to the Faculty of Arts & Sciences

September 5, 2017

This 2016-17 academic year marked the second full year of the College Curriculum, so we are halfway toward full implementation. Highlights of the past year included:

- Introduction of a full "dress rehearsal" year for the new Campus COLL 300 program.
- Participation in several large conversations around the COLL curriculum, especially the Campus COLL 300 and planning for COLL 400.
- Mini-grant support for faculty innovations with their COLL courses.
- Continued workshop support for innovation and skills-building among our COLL 100/150 courses.
- An upgraded classroom space at Morton 303, transformed from a traditional classroom into an innovative teaching studio.
- Another round of outgoing and incoming Fellows, in accordance with our intention to support a continual infusion of new ideas and creativity into the CLA.
- Our new Associate Director, Ben Boone, began work in Spring 2017.

Also notable at the end of 2016-17 was the cycling out of our *ex-officio* Fellow for the first three years of the CLA's existence – Dean for Educational Policy Lu Ann Homza. Lu Ann was instrumental in each stage of the CLA's founding. She provided stalwart support from the Dean's Office and fostered a creative environment where Fellows are free to help engineer the implementation of the new curriculum. We thank her for her support, and wish her all the best as she rejoins the faculty.

In the coming year, expect to see the CLA Fellows leading January/May seminars to spur the development of COLL 400 courses — the next major piece of the COLL curriculum. In addition, we will continue to host lunch workshops and one-on-one meetings to assist faculty in proposing courses for the COLL 300 attribute. We hope to promote a wider conversation about the value of teaching in the COLL curriculum, along with ways to promote a risk-tolerant culture that encourages experimentation. We also expect to fund faculty innovation grants focused primarily on support for the Campus COLL 300 and COLL 400 courses.

The report that follows describes the CLA's activities for the 2016-17 year and looks forward to the coming challenges. Our previous annual reports as well as more information about the CLA can be found at the [CLA website](#).

Gene Tracy, Director  
Center for the Liberal Arts

We begin by reminding readers that the idea for the Center for the Liberal Arts (CLA) grew out of faculty discussions held during the curriculum review. The CLA was eventually chartered to “...support a robust liberal arts education through the continual organizing and infusing of content, integration, creativity, and innovation throughout the undergraduate College Curriculum.”

The Fellows are charged to anticipate aspects of COLL implementation before they occur and to bring proposals to the faculty in a timely manner that allows for full discussion so that the new curriculum will remain true to the intent of the faculty. It is important to stress that the CLA is an advisory rather than executive or policy-making body; its role is to provide counsel, advice, and encouragement to the faculty, EPC, and the Deans.

The COLL curriculum is a collective effort involving many of our faculty. We are grateful to those colleagues who welcomed us to departmental conversations, attended lunch-time work group sessions, January / May seminars, and brainstormed with us. We are excited about the third year of COLL implementation and believe that best and most creative work lies ahead of the faculty.

### **The Center and the Fellows**

This year we welcomed three additional Fellows to our ranks who will serve two-year terms (May 2017-19): Michael Cronin (MLL); Alison Scott (Kinesiology & Health Sciences); and Kristin Wustholz (Chemistry). We currently number 10 Fellows, including our Faculty Director, Gene Tracy.

The returning Fellows (May 2016-18) are:

- Arthur Knight, English / American Studies / Film & Media Studies
- John Lombardini, Government / Classical Studies
- Iyabo Osiapem, Africana Studies / Linguistics
- Fabricio Prado, History
- Barbette Spaeth, Classical Studies / Pilgrimage Studies
- Silvia Tandeciarz, Modern Languages & Literatures / Latin American Studies

In January, we hired Ben Boone as our new Associate Director. Ben joins Sharon Morris, who is now full-time as the CLA’s Administrative Assistant after working with us on a part-time basis for three years. The administrative staff of the CLA is responsible for planning, budgeting, and implementation of the Fellows’ program initiatives. This includes coordinating the Campus COLL 300 visits and symposia, organizing all faculty development programming, and ensuring that operations run smoothly.

### **Breaking new ground, setting precedents, making it real**

Morton 303 has transformed from a regular Morton-style classroom into an innovative teaching studio, with seating for 25, new audio-visual equipment, modular seating for group work and collaboration, and each wall having either a dry-erase or chalkboard. Faculty can schedule this space outside of the regular scheduling process by contacting the CLA directly, with priority given to COLL courses and CLA seminars.

The first full Campus COLL 300 year was a success, with the Fellows learning much about how to help deliver the third-year requirement of the curriculum. Faculty embraced our “pre-pilot” year, which brought six visitors to campus to share their experiences through the lenses of “Well-being” and “Unrest.” These visitors interacted with nearly 250 students taking COLL 300 courses, not including the

hundreds more who attended public events hosted by the CLA. Finally, the CLA coordinated two COLL 300 end-of-semester symposia, one each in Fall and Spring, that featured student work. The energy that flowed between students and faculty from different courses was palpable, and some students remarked that the symposium was among the most positive experiences they have encountered at the university.

The 2017-18 academic year will be the first official pilot year of the two-year pilot approved by FAS for Campus COLL 300. We are excited to bring six guests who will “bring the world to W&M,” and lift us a bit out of our comfort zones while engaging with the themes of “In/Exclusion” in the fall and “Sustainability” in the spring. Our visitors for the fall include a trans\* performer and activist from India; Yoruban practitioners from Nigeria; and a Native American legal scholar focusing on sexual assault. In the spring, we will host a traditional navigator from Hawaii; one of the lead designers for the African American Museum of History and Culture; and a food sustainability activist from India. Contact the CLA if you would like more information, or ideas on how to engage with these and future visitors.

The themes for the following two semesters (2018-19) will be “Bodies that Matter” and “Ceremony.”

In addition to the stipends for the Fellows, we worked from a program budget of roughly \$120K this past year. Funding was provided by the Dean's Office, Charles Center, Reves Center, private gifts, income yields on several W&M endowments, and the Mellon Foundation's COLL curriculum implementation grant.

Going forward, the CLA will continue to offer support for department or program retreats that are aimed at COLL course development, with a particular focus on enhancing Campus COLL 300 and COLL 400 courses. If additional funding is available we will seek to promote a campus-wide conversation on risk-taking in our course development, and the evaluation of teaching, along with the role of these in promoting the development of an innovative Liberal Arts curriculum.

Respectfully submitted by the Faculty Fellows,

Michael Cronin, Arthur Knight, John Lombardini, Iyabo Osiapem, Fabricio Prado, Alison Scott, Barbette Spaeth, Silvia Tandeciarz, Gene Tracy, & Kristin Wustholz

## Summary of CLA Activities and Accomplishments, 2016-17

**Brownbag / Workshop Lunch Seminars.** Eight of these events were organized with 55 faculty in attendance. A complete list is appended below.

**May/January Seminars.** Two January Seminars and four May seminars in support of COLL course development were supported with 63 faculty participating. A complete summary is appended below.

<u>CLA Brownbags</u>	<u># Attending</u>
Sept 27 & 28: Engaging the Campus COLL 300s	15
Oct 4 & 5: New Faculty- COLL Curriculum	22
Feb 28 & Mar 1: COLL 300	8
Mar 20 & 21: COLL 400	10
<b>May/January Seminars</b>	
Dec 13-15: December "May" Seminar- COLL 100/150- Communication Concepts and the First-Year COLL Experience	16
Jan 11-13: COLL 300: Adapt or Develop Campus COLL 300 Courses	8
May 16-18: COLL 100/150- Communications Concepts and the First-Year COLL Experience	15
May 16-18: COLL 300	10
May 16-18: COLL 400	8
May 21 & 22: COLL 200-Medieval & Renaissance	6

**Department/Program Engagement:** The CLA Fellows engaged with A&S programs and departments, as well the schools of Business and Education to discuss development of COLL 400 courses as well as participation in the Campus COLL 300.

**Faculty Innovation Grants.** These supported “outside of the box” ideas for faculty who want to bring new ideas to COLL course creation. Our awardees were Calvin Hui, Elizabeth Harbron, Annie Blazer, Magali Compan, Fabricio Prado, Alexander Prokharov, Joanne Braxton, and Mike Jabbur.

### **Campus COLL 300 Visitors, 2016-17 (in calendar order)**

- Steven Wise: Unlocking the cage
- Tamer Farag: Disease surveillance for global child health
- Wilson Wewa: We are created from this land
- Eric Sawyer: Resistance, activism, and protest: Time for a rebirth
- Erna Brodber and Catherine John: African Jamaican disruptions and routes to freedom
- Freedom University and Emiko Soltis: Inclusion and the university