

**COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION (COTE)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Minutes
Richmond, Virginia, April 27-29, 2009**

- 1. The meeting of the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) was held April 27th – 29th, 2009, at Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Virginia.**

- 2. The following persons attended:**

Members: Brian Blount (Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education), Theodore Wardlaw (Austin Theological Seminary), Laura Mendenhall (Columbia Theological Seminary), Cynthia Campbell (McCormick Theological Seminary), Philip Butin (San Francisco Theological Seminary and Vice Chair), Jeffrey Bullock (University of Dubuque Seminary), James Thomas (Johnson C. Smith [substituting for Mark Lomax]), William Carl (Pittsburgh Theological Seminary), Charles Kalmbach (Princeton Theological Seminary [substituting for Iain Torrance], Landon Whitsitt, Kathy Wolf Reed, Kenneth Kovacs, Roger Gench (GAC Liason), Andrew Sonneborn (GAC Liason), KC Ptomey, Terry Holland, Fran Lane-Lawrence (chair), Nicholas Yoda, Max Sherman, and Chandler Stokes.

Corresponding Members: José Irizarry (E.S.P.R.), Barbara Wheeler (Auburn Seminary), Gary Eller (Omaha Seminary Foundation).

Staff from the Office of Theological Education: Lee Hinson-Hasty (Coordinator, Office of Theological Education and Seminary Relations), Rose Eileen Niles (Associate, Office of Theological Education and Seminary Relations) and Rob Fohr (Program Assistant, Office of Theological Education and Seminary Relations).

Adjunct Staff: Joseph Small (GAC Director of Theology, Worship and Education), Marcia Clark Myers (Director of Office of Vocation) Lesley Davies (GAC/OGA Manager of Examination Services, Assistant Stated Clerk, PC(USA) Office of Vocation).

Guests: Jack Haberer, (Executive Editor of the Presbyterian Outlook), Brint Pratt-Keyes, (Admissions Director Union-PSCE).

- 3. Excused Absences:** Iain Torrance (Princeton Theological Seminary), Dean Thompson (Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary), Mark Lomax (Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary), Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, Joseph Doh, Daniel Earheart-Brown (Memphis Theological Seminary), Ron Kernaghan (Fuller Theological Seminary), Alvin Padilla (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary).

- 4. On Monday April 27th, 2009 at 10:30 AM COTE opened its meeting with a worship service in the Lake Chapel at the Early Center led by the Rev. Dr. Lee Hinson-Hasty and assisted by Landon Whitsitt.**

Opening Worship

5. The **Executive Committee** met in the morning of **April 27, 2009** at 11:15 a.m. and the **Institutional Review Committee** met later in the afternoon at 1:30 p.m. Meetings of
Executive and
Institutional
Committee

6. COTE gathered for an Opening Plenary in the Theater Room in Lower Lingle Hall at 4:10 PM. COTE **Chair Fran Lane-Lawrence called the full committee to order and Nicholas Yoda opened the meeting with prayer.** The chair appointed Rob Fohr as recording clerk for the meeting, welcomed the Committee, recognized the hosting president for the meeting, Brian Blount, and thanked him, on behalf of COTE, for the hospitality of the Union-PSCE community. Meeting Called to
Order Monday,
April 27th

7. **COTE voted to approve** the minutes of the October 21-23, 2008 meeting in Princeton as distributed. October Meeting
Minutes Approved

8. **COTE voted to approve the meeting schedule and docket** as proposed, circulated and submitted by the Executive Committee. The chair had Lee Hinson-Hasty give an introduction of the meeting format: Three plenary presentations and discussion around three major questions in for COTE as recommended by the Theological and Church Sub-Committee chaired by Cynthia Campbell. Hinson-Hasty followed his explanation with an introduction of the opening plenary speaker, Barbara Wheeler. Meeting Schedule
Approved

9. **Barbara Wheeler** gave a presentation entitled “How are Presbyterian seminaries responding to the state of the economy?” Wheeler then asked three presidents, Theodore Wardlaw, Cynthia Campbell and Brian Blount to report on how her or his institution is dealing with the current economic crisis. The group then engaged in an interactive dialogue with Barbara Wheeler and each other. The Committee recessed after discussion at 5:30 p.m. PLENARY I:
“How are
Presbyterian
seminaries
responding to the
state of the
economy?”

10. Over dinner together, the committee recognized the three decades of service of COTE Corresponding Member, Barbara Wheeler, President of Auburn Theological Seminary and now the full time Director of the Center for the Study of Theological Education at Auburn. Katherine Henderson has been elected President of Auburn with her service starting on July 1, 2009. OPENING
DINNER:
Barbara
Wheeler
Recognized

11. **The Committee reconvened in Plenary at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday,** the Chair called the meeting to order and **Bill Carl** offered the opening prayer. GOVERNANCE
SESSION:
Reconvened Wed.
April 28th

12. **Lee Hinson-Hasty** shared the highlights from his Coordinator’s Report which included: Coordinator’s
Report

- Status of **Background Checks** being used in our Presbyterian Seminaries. Most are using or are seriously considering using the COTE suggested vendor, www.CertifiedBackgroundChecks.com.
- Reductions in the Board of Pensions **Seminarian Debt Assistance Program**
- Projects going on in **Office of Theology & Worship** including the possibilities in the Re-Forming Ministry project, Missional Preaching in the West, and the Company of New Pastors.
- Reconfiguration of the **GAC's Women and Racial/Ethnic Ministry Area**

13. Fran Lane-Lawrence reported for the **Executive Committee**.

**Executive
Committee Report**

a. **COTE voted to approve** the following Task Force Recommendations as a Consent Agenda:

Consent Agenda

i. **Self Study:**

**Self Study Task
Force Research
Approved**

1. During the time set aside by the Executive Committee for Self Study Focus Groups (Tuesday, April 28 from 4:00- 5:30 p.m.) the COTE conducted conversations in five mixed small groups of Institutional and Elected members to gather data using these questions:
 - a. Given the purpose under consideration name three or more things that COTE has done effectively and three or more things ineffectively. One purpose will be assigned to each of the five small groups.
 - b. From the list of COTE Assigned Functions name three that we does well and three less effectively.
 - c. Who are the publics that COTE is designed to serve?
2. The Self Study Task Force will review the responses to the above and formulate a research protocol.
3. In addition to an online survey, one or more theological graduate students will be contracted to assist with this research project.

- ii. **TEF Review:** That the task force receive an extension and report to the November 2009 COTE Meeting for the purpose of probing and documenting the best practices of 46 Presbyteries (25% of total) that actually increased giving to TEF from 2004—2008, successful regional consultants in the TEF Seminary Support Network, and seminaries in supporting the mission of TEF. **TEF Review Report Delayed**
- iii. **Seminarian Health Insurance:** Recognizing the importance of this issue among seminarians, and to encourage more than three seminaries to participate in the survey COTE approves an extension of the fielding process and postponement of a final report until the November 2009 COTE Meeting. **Seminarian Health Insurance Report Delayed**
- iv. **ESPR Covenant Renewal** **ESPR Covenant Renewal Process Affirmed**
1. An on-site visit to ESPR be scheduled during the academic year during the Fall of 2009. After reviewing schedules the second week of September is targeted.
 2. Our Task Force approach the site-visit with a draft of the new covenant agreement and then come out of the meeting with a new draft.
 3. Set up a conference call with our Task Force and a covenant team from ESPR ahead of the visit to clarify expectations.
- The Task Force draw from other approved suggestions of the Seminary Site Visit Task Force and put those into action.
- b. **COTE voted** to refer the following recommendation from the Executive Committee to the Seminary Site Visit Task Force: Insert language in the “*Prior to Visit (Recommendation 1)*” section that Seminaries join conversation to help identify constituencies in which to engage before the Seminary Site Visit and report back to the next stated meeting. **Seminarian Site Visit Task Force Report Sent Back to Committee with Suggestions**
- c. **COTE voted** to accept the Executive Committee’s recommendation to replace language in the Award for Excellence Task Force Report from “*distinguished lifetime*” **Award for Excellence Task Force Report**

service in one or more PC(USA) seminaries” to “distinguished lifetime service in Presbyterian or Reformed Theological Education.” Final approval of this policy will be considered at the next stated meeting but the process as revised and recommended will move forward prior to approval.

Amended and Forwarded to November Agenda

- d. **COTE voted** to hear a more in-depth oral report on the March 2009 GAC and COGA response to the COTE October 2008 recommendation on Commissioned Lay Pastors from Brian Blount, Roger Gench and Marcia Myers.

GAC-COGA CLP Report received

After hearing a report, **COTE voted to postpone** discussion and further action until the final Plenary on Wednesday morning, April 29, 2009.

- e. **Lesley Davies** was invited by the chair to supplement the written report for the Presbyteries Cooperative Committee on Examinations (PCCE).

PCCE Information Shared

14. Kenneth Kovacs reported for the Institutional Review Committee:

Institutional Review Committee Report

- a. **COTE voted** to approve the Institutional Review Recommendation to approve the 2009 Payout Schedule.

TEF Payouts Approved

- b. **COTE voted** to approve the recommendation of the Institutional Review to fund two TEF discretionary fund Interschool Cooperative Project grant proposals in the following ways and as additional funds become available from other Office of Theological Education restricted funds.

Cooperative Project Grants Approved:

- i. \$7,500 for a **Korean-American Theological Initiative** submitted by Dr. Paul Junggap Huh of Columbia Theological Seminary for Korean-American PC(USA) theological educators to hold an organizing meeting. This represents year one (2009) of the project as submitted. Dr. Huh will be invited to submit a budget request for 2010 in October 2009.

Korean-American Theological Initiative

and

- ii. \$18,500 for the Presbyterian and Reformed Theological Field Educators Caucus (PRTFE) as submitted by Dr. Susan Fox of Union-PSCE for a project entitled “Overcoming Distance and Time: Promoting Excellence in Supervision through Technology.

Promoting Excellence in Supervision through Technology

Both Project Directors will be invited to submit reports to COTE for the November 2009 meeting.

15. **Nicholas Yoda** reported from the Implementation and Interpretation Committee. **Implementation & Interpretation Committee Report**
- COTE Voted to participate** in a supplementary round of “Thank you calls” to congregations for the TEF in the Summer of 2009. **Summer TEF Thank You Calls**
16. **COTE agreed by consensus** to use the remaining scheduled Governance Session to continue discussion from the previous day’s Plenary. **Plenary Discussion**
17. The Committee recessed at 10:15 a.m. for a “Community Break” which included a reception with Union-PSCE students, staff and faculty.
18. The Committee reconvened at 11:15 a.m. **Lee Hinson-Hasty and Marcia Myers** gave presentation on the status of Candidates and Inquirers in the PC(USA). The presentation was followed by interactive dialogue. At 12:30 the committee recessed for lunch. **PLENARY II: “Status of Candidates and Inquirers” Presentation**
19. The Committee recognized the service of retiring COTE Member Laura Mendenhall, President of Columbia Theological Seminary, over lunch. **Laura Mendenhall Recognized**
20. The committee reconvened at 1:45 p.m. for a presentation entitled, “What are our values in Theological Education in the 21st Century?” with panelists, **Cynthia Campbell, Chandler Stokes, Roger Gench and Max Sherman**. During and after each presentation the Committee dialogued with the panelists. **PLENARY III: “Values of Theological Education” Presentations**
21. A reception and dinner was held for COTE Members and Executive staff at Union-PSCE. Brian Blount prayed for the gathering.
22. The Chair reconvened the Committee at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, April 29 in the Early Center. **Friday, April 29**
- Ken Kovacs, Landon Whitsitt and Fran Lane-Lawrence led the committee in a brief opening worship service.
23. **COTE voted** to suspend Robert’s Rules and to convene as a committee of the whole. **Convened as a committee of the whole**
- Lee Hinson-Hasty was asked by the chair to summarize the previous days’ discussion.
- The committee engaged in a time of generative conversation.

24. **COTE voted** to close the time as a committee of the whole and reconvene using Roberts Rules of Order. **Closed Committee of the whole**
25. A motion was made by **Theodore J. Wardlaw**, seconded, and **COTE voted to approve** for COTE to convene a Joint Committee on Leadership Needs with the General Assembly Council (GAC) and Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) to: **Creation of a Joint Committee on Leadership Needs**
- a. **Study PC(USA) pastoral leadership and leadership development needs and their impact** on and in the following areas: Commissioned Lay Pastors, Small churches (especially rural, urban and/ or Racial-Ethnic), and leadership structures in consultation with key partners including presbyteries and seminaries in conjunction with the Office of Vocation and the Office of Theological Education.
 - b. **Report and recommend possible strategies and policies that address those needs** to COTE for comment by October 2009 and the GAC and/COGA by February 2010.

Furthermore the COTE Representatives include **Brian Blount, Phillip Butin, Max Sherman, Landon Whitsitt and the President or Seminary Dean at the University of Dubuque.**

26. A motion was made by **Chandler Stokes**, seconded and **COTE voted to approve** instructing the existing Task Forces named below proceed with these additional directions: **Additional Charges to**
- a. **Self Study Task Force** – As the Task Force formulates a report for the November meeting and ultimately the General Assembly the following areas need to be addressed including possible recommendations: **Self Study Task Force**
 - i. Clarity on the Mission and Role of COTE
 - ii. Membership and structure of COTE **and**
 - iii. Stated Meeting norms
 - iv. Coordination of Seminary Resources
 - b. **TEF Fourth Five-Year Review** – To make a goal of their research, report, and recommendations to COTE ways to **increase financial support of our seminaries on a denominational level by** imagining innovative approaches to our current TEF as well as other ways to support seminaries financially. **TEF Five Year Review Task Force**
 - i. **How the funds are raised and what the money funds** (scholarships, Presbyterians, candidates and inquirers, incentives for seminaries and/or students, etc.) **should each be considered.**
 - ii. **The Task Force was instructed to consult with**

others who are working in this area including but not limited to Tony Ruger of the Center for the Study of Theological Education at Auburn Seminary, Laura Bryan of the Financial Aid for Studies of the PC (USA), and Peter Sime who directs the Education Assistance Programs of the Board of Pensions. It was noted that the TEF is not all about money, but the money is important now as much as ever.

- iii. Furthermore **COTE voted to remove the Institutional Representatives** (Ted Wardlaw and Mark Lomax) **from this Task Force and add Chandler Stokes and Fran Lane Lawrence** to the task force that is chaired by KC Ptomey and also includes Nicholas Yoda as an ex-officio member.

27. Having no other business, **COTE voted** to adjourn at 11:05 a.m., with Fran Lane-Lawrence offering a closing prayer.

Adjournment

Committee members, as they were able, joined the Union-PSCE community for a worship service in honor of John Calvin's 500th birthday and a student awards luncheon before departing.

Respectfully submitted on June 5, 2009

The Rev. Dr. Lee Hinson-Hasty
Coordinator for Theological Education & Seminary Relations

Mr. Rob Fohr,
Program Assistant for Theological Education & Seminary Relations
Recording Clerk

Rev. 6.5.09