

**COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION (COTE)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Minutes
Princeton, New Jersey, October 21-23, 2008**

1. The Meeting of the Committee on Theological Education (COTE) was held October 21st – 23rd, 2008 at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey.

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), Michelle Melton (Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary [substituting for Dean Thompson]), David Tomlinson (San Francisco Theological Seminary [substituting for Phil Butin]), Skip Shaffer (University of Dubuque Seminary [substituting for Jeffrey Bullock]), Mark Lomax (Johnson C. Smith), William J. Carl (Pittsburgh Theological Seminary), Iain Torrance (Princeton Theological Seminary), Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, Landon Whitsitt, Kathy Wolf, Kenneth Kovacs, Roger Gench (GAC Liason), Andrew Sonneborn (GAC Liason), KC Ptomey, Terry Holland, Fran Lane-Lawrence, Joseph Doh, Nicholas Yoda, Max Sherman, and Chandler Stokes.

Corresponding Members: José Irizarry (E.S.P.R.), Barbara Wheeler (Auburn Seminary), Ron Kernaghan (Fuller Theological Seminary), Gary Eller (Omaha Seminary Foundation), and Alvin Padilla (Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary).

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), Rob Fohr (Program Assistant Office of Theological Education and Seminary Relations), and Cindy Pope (Administrative Assistant, Office of Theological Education and Seminary Relations).

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

Guests: Bruce Reyes-Chow (Moderator of the 218th General Assembly of the PC(USA)), Byron Wade (Vice-Moderator of the 218th General Assembly of the PC(USA)), Gene Alice Sherman (spouse of COTE Member Max Sherman), Helen Doh (spouse of COTE Member Joseph Doh), Raymond Bonwell (Director of Continuing Education Programs at Princeton Seminary).

3. **Excused Absences:** Phil Butin (San Francisco Theological Seminary), Dean Thompson (Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary), Jeffrey Bullock (University of Dubuque Theological Seminary), and Daniel Earheart-Brown (Memphis Theological Seminary).
4. **New Member Orientation** was held on October 21st for Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, Landon Whitsitt, Roger Gench, Chandler Stokes, Max Sherman and Michelle Melton, Kathy Wolf, and KC Ptomey and led by COTE Chair- Fran Lane-Lawrence, Lee Hinson-Hasty, and Rose Eileen Niles.

5. The **Institutional Review** Committee met on the afternoon of **Tuesday, October 21st** and the **Executive Committee** met at 4:00 P.M. the same afternoon.
6. A reception was held for COTE Members at 6:00 P.M. in the Main Lounge of the Mackay Campus Center followed by a group dinner in the Private Dining Hall of Mackay Campus Center. Fran Lane-Lawrence prayed followed by introductions of newly elected members: **Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, Andy Sonneborn, Landon Whitsett, Chandler Stokes, Roger Gench, Kathy Wolf, KC Ptomey, Max Sherman** and new PC(USA) staff member, **Rob Fohr**.
7. **On Wednesday, October 22nd at 8:45 AM** COTE opened its meeting with a Worship service in the Miller Chapel led by Rev. Jan Ammon, assisted by Landon Whitsitt and Kathy Wolf and a Princeton Seminary Choir. **Opening Worship**
8. After the Worship service, COTE gathered for Plenary in the Kuch Boardroom of Speer Library. At **9:45 AM. COTE Chair Fran Lane-Lawrence called the full committee to order and opened the session with prayer. Iain Torrance** was recognized by the chair and welcomed the Committee, new members and guests to campus and prayed for those members who were not in attendance. **Meeting Called to Order Wednesday, October 22nd**
9. The Committee **approved** the minutes from the 2007 COTE Meeting in Louisville, KY. **OCT. '07 Minutes Approved**
10. Fran Lane-Lawrence reported for the **Executive Committee**: **Meeting Schedule Approved**
COTE voted to approve the recommendation to adjust the distributed Meeting Schedule to respond to change in member availability.
11. The chair then recognized Laura Mendenhall to introduce and explain the plenary discussion format on the “Future of Theological Education and the PC(USA)”. **“Future of Theological Education in the PC(USA)” Discussed**

Members were invited to enter into a “fishbowl” to discuss in depth the supplementary reading, Dan Aleshire’s *Making Haste Slowly*. Lee Hinson-Hasty moderated the discussion about the reading first with the Institutional Representatives then with the Elected Members.

The group reconvened as a whole and offered reflections and commentary on the discussion, which included:

- Encouraging seminary professor sabbaticals in parishes as “scholars in residence and/or professor and pastor “exchange programs.”
- Noting how important the pastor’s ability to translate and integrate theological education is to the vitality of congregations.
- Hoping that theological institutions can be relevant with respect to interpretation of current economic conditions.
- Being intentional about involving CPMs and Presbyteries in this collaborative ministry.
- Emphasizing the homiletical incorporation of “God talk” for the revitalization of the connection of the church to the broader society.

The Committee recessed for Sub-committees to meet at 11:00 a.m.

**Committee Recesses
for Sub-Committee
meetings**

12. The Committee reconvened in Plenary at 3:30 p.m. and the Chair called the meeting to order.

**Plenary Reconvened
at 3:30 p.m. Wed.,
October 22nd**

13. Brian Blount reported for the **Nominating Committee:**

COTE voted to approve the Nominating Committee’s recommendation to place **Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri** on the Self-Study Task Force to replace Neal Presa.

**Cintrón-Olivieri
elected to Self-Study
Task Force**

14. Ken Kovacs reported for the **Institutional Review Committee:**

**Institutional Review
Reports**

- a. **COTE voted to approve** the recommendation to suspend the Seminary’s Liaison Project in its’ current form.
- b. **COTE voted to approve** the recommendation to hold a Site Visit to University of Dubuque Theological Seminary in conjunction with the GAC and COGA representatives at a date to be determined and that **Nicholas Yoda and Landon Whitsitt** be appointed as COTE Representatives.

**Seminary Liaison
Project suspended**

**Dubuque Visit
Approved**

- c. **COTE voted to approve** the recommendation to create a three-member task force consisting of **Nicholas Yoda, Landon Whitsitt and Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri** with staff as ex-officio members to recommend what questions need to be asked during seminary Site Visits and how that information will be utilized with a report due at the April 2009 COTE Meeting.

- d. **COTE voted to approve** an amended recommendation to renew a Covenant Agreement with E.S.P.R, until General Assembly meets in 2010, to forward that recommendation to the General Assembly Council, and to move forward with the covenant renewal process and report due by October 2009.

- e. **COTE voted to approve** the following percentages of the actual 2008 Theological Education Fund (TEF) receipts, minus TEF promotion and marketing expenses (\$404,111), plus restricted funds made available for this purpose as the 2009 TEF Allocation to schools and the TEF discretionary fund.

**Site Visit Format Task
Force Established**

**ESPR Covenant
Renewal Forwarded**

**TEF Budget
Approved with
Allocation
Percentages for
Seminaries**

**Percentages of TEF
to be Allocated to Schools**

Seminary	Weighted Graduates Percentage	Times 46.50% is:	Plus Shares of 51%	2.5% Discretionary	Percentage of TEF
Austin	8.48%	3.94%	5.00%		8.9422%
Columbia	11.51%	5.35%	5.00%		10.3531%
Dubuque	4.12%	1.92%	5.00%		6.9159%
E.S.P.R*	3.00%	1.40%	1.00%*		2.3972%
Louisville	5.93%	2.76%	5.00%		7.7597%
McCormick	7.71%	3.58%	5.00%		8.5836%
Pittsburgh	8.18%	3.80%	5.00%		8.8045%
Princeton	28.37%	13.19%	5.00%		18.1928%
S.F.T.S.	9.42%	4.38%	5.00%		9.3815%
J.C. Smith**	1.81%	0.84%	5.00%		5.8425%
Union- PSCE	11.46%	5.33%	5.00%		10.3270%
Discretionary Fund	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.50%	2.5000%
TOTAL	100.00%	46.50%	51.00%	2.50%	100%

* Each school is allocated one share except ESPR, which receives one fifth of one share.

** A \$24,000 additional annual gift from the Discretionary Fund from 2007-2011 was authorized by COTE in November 2005.

- f. **COTE voted to approve** recommendation to allocate no less than \$13,400.00 up to \$23,400.00 of TEF discretionary funds, if available, to the cooperative grant project *Calling for the Order of the Day*, cycle II.
- 15.** Bill Carl reported for **Interschool and Mission Cooperation Committee:**
- a. **COTE voted to approve** the recommendation for COTE to co-sponsor a new January-term course with McCormick Theological Seminary and the Interfaith Youth Corps.
- b. **COTE voted to approve** the recommendation for the Nominating Committee to form a small committee, to discuss development of criteria for the “Award for Excellence in Theological Education.”
- c. **COTE voted to approve** the recommendation to support “Preach for America” partnership with the GAC by developing a small committee for concept support and voicing COTE encouragement for the program with one suggestion, the consideration of a program name change that does not include the word “America.”
- d. **COTE voted to approve** the recommendation for seminaries to work cooperatively on the issue of Seminarian Health Insurance and that **Michelle Melton and Andy Sonneborn** bring a report back to the COTE in April 2009 after consultation with PC(USA) Seminary Deans of Students and/or other appropriate persons.
- e. **COTE voted** to forward the information regarding the **Group Certified Background Checks** to Admissions and Field Education Offices of our PC(USA) Seminaries.
- 16.** After a break, Moderator Bruce Reyes-Chow and Vice Moderator Byron Wade joined the Committee during the plenary session and were invited to engage in a dialogue with COTE entitled “Reflections on Theological Education, Vocation, and Leadership in the PC(USA).” After the conversation and a prayer, the Committee recessed for dinner at 5:00 p.m.

Cooperative Grant on African-American Preaching

Interschool and Mission Cooperation Reports

Interfaith Class at McCormick Co-Sponsored

Committee to recommend criteria for Award for Excellence in Theological Education Established

GAC “Preach for American” Concept Endorsed

Seminarian Health Insurance Cooperation to be Encouraged

Background Checks Company Information to be Forwarded

Conversation with Moderator and Vice-Moderator of 218th General Assembly

17. A reception was held at Springdale (Princeton Seminary's President's Home) hosted by Iain and Morag Torrance at 6:00 pm followed by a group dinner in the private dining hall in the Mackay Campus Center. **Iain Torrance opened in prayer** and introduced Princeton Seminary faculty and staff members in attendance. Former COTE member **Neal Presa was recognized for his service on the committee.** Newly elected COTE members were recognized for their service and were presented with a gift from the Theological Education Staff.
- Reception and Dinner Held to Honor Presa**
18. The Committee reconvened at **8:45 a.m. on October 23rd**, Gary Eller opened with a prayer.
- Plenary Reconvened Thurs., October 23rd**
19. Cynthia Campbell reported for the **Theological and Church Concerns Committee (TCC):**
- Theological and Church Concerns Reports**
- a. The TCC commended the report/study on Status of Inquirers to members for review.
- Status of Inquirers Report Commended**
- b. **COTE voted to approve** the recommendation to request the presidents and/or deans of each PC(USA) seminary and the seminaries in covenant and corresponding members to identify two Bible professors from their faculties to partner with the Presbyteries' Cooperative Committee on Examinations (PCCE) to attempt to modernize and improve the Bible Content exam and to encourage PCCE to keep COTE updated.
- Bible Professors to be Recommended to PCCE**
- c. **COTE voted to** encourage and invite academic deans to report to COTE the international education issues they are facing and partnerships they currently have.
- Seminary International Issues and Partnerships to be Reported**
- d. **COTE voted to commend the final "Report on McCormick Consultation Asian and Latino/a Second Generation Ministerial Leadership"** to seminary academic deans and middle governing body executives for reflection and study.
- Second Generation Asian & Latino/a Consultation on Ministerial Leadership Commended**

20. Nicholas Yoda reported for the **Implementation and Interpretation Committee:**
- Implementation and Interpretation Reports**
- a. **COTE voted to** add the PC(USA) “Big Tent Event” to the list of approved events at which COTE has joint seminary displays. **“Big Tent Event” Added to Seminary Joint Display List**
- b. **COTE voted to approve** that COTE conduct the **Fourth Five-Year Review of the Theological Education Fund (TEF)**, have the Nominating Committee name persons to conduct this review, and have this review committee report to the April 2009 meeting of COTE. **Fourth Five-Year Review of TEF Approved**
- c. **COTE voted to approve** the recommendation that each COTE member be assigned a list of churches to call and thank for their 2007 contribution to the TEF. A detailed report back to the staff on the calls was encouraged. **Thank You Calls Approved**
21. Barbara Wheeler Reported on the Commissioned Lay Pastors (CLP) Study followed by a committee-wide discussion on the findings of the study. **Barbara Wheeler Presents CLP Study**
- COTE VOTED to recommend:** 1. The General Assembly Council (GAC) and Committee of the Office of General Assembly (COGA) invite Barbara Wheeler to present her findings of the CLP study. 2. Ask the GAC and COGA to commission a comprehensive study of the role of CLPs in the PC(USA). **CLP Study to be Shared with GAC and COGA**
22. After a short break the Committee reconvened to hear “Seminary Highlights” from Institutional Representatives. **Seminary Highlights Shared**
23. **COTE voted** to adjourn at 11:15 a.m., Laura Mendenhall gave the closing prayer. **Closing Prayer and Adjournment**

Respectfully submitted on November 13, 2008,

Lee Hinson-Hasty, Coordinator of Theological Education & Seminary Relations

Rob Fohr, Program Assistant for Committee Support and Information Services