

**Cornerstone University Steering Committee**  
**AGENDA**

**November 11, 2025**

**Attendees: In-Person:** Kim Hofstra, Matt Wallace, Garret Eriks, Alexia Kirkpatrick, Eleanor Vandyke, Janorise Robinson, Dan Bartels, Scott Haid, Laurie Burgess, Kristin Rich, Jenny Longfellow **Virtual:** Mike Irwin

I. Welcome/Introductions

II. Cornerstone University Updates

A. CAEP Accreditation

- Purpose of Steering Committee - *We will be asking questions and asking for your input throughout this process.*
- Self study report due June 2026
- Site visit March 2027

B. Program updates

- Secondary Science - *Unfortunately, we are closing the secondary science program. We currently only have 3 students enrolled in this program and feel this is the right decision to make.*
- Stand Alone SPED certification - *Applications are accepted in April 2026, to be available by Fall 2026. But, MDE might not accept apps until Nov, so this could be an issue. We will wait and see. CU is pursuing this to offer students who come into CU to obtain a specific certification for Special Education. This certification allows the teachers to teach in a resource room, but this does not allow for them to teach a grade. Janorise - Do students prefer the stand alone certification? Kim - This is not specifically known. The motivation is that it lightens the students' work load for students only wanting to focus on special education. Kristin - There is always the concern that, while this leads to a quicker degree and at a lower cost, it limits the students' future teaching/career opportunities by having a limited certification. Time will tell.*

C. Placement needs - We have an increase in student placements (We have 50 students needing placements)

- ELL (Laurie) Need ELL certified teachers for placements
- SPED- *Intro class ideally would love students working with certified Spec. Ed Teacher. We need to increase placement options for*

*students. Kristin - We need SPED placement just for January (4 weeks) with a full-time special Ed certified teacher*

- TAP
- Student Teaching, Secondary SS (30 students needing placement - not many options available)

D. SCECH credits - Do districts offer SCECH credits for Cooperating Teachers hosting pre-service teachers? *Janorise - We used to, but no longer offer this. I believe Calvin provides SCECH. Potter's House could do a checklist for prof. Development. Dan - We could also look into doing this at Excel, but do not currently. Scott - Will check to see if Forest Hills does this, but does not believe they do. Mike - There isn't a huge motivator for teachers for this.*

E. Addressing accommodations - *Kim - Do your schools offer accommodations for your teachers who struggle with anxiety or mental health struggles in the classroom? The consensus overall is no. The students are the priority in the classroom. Educators are encouraged to engage in practices outside of the workplace to encourage a healthy work/life balance. Being in the classroom can be difficult and stressful. A lot of teachers deal with anxiety in the classroom, but as a teacher you have to be able to manage that well for the sake of the students. It is important that students are prepared before they reach graduation for the difficulties they will face in the classroom. It would be helpful to have more direct conversations with students about whether this is the appropriate career for them. The mindset shift needs to go from student to teacher. It might be helpful to have the students list what causes them anxiety and address those issues early on so they can lean into these during student teaching. Kim noted that CU is trying to flag students early on to help support or redirect them.*

### III. News from the districts

- A. TESOL update- Scott stated there is no funding for this, but they are still maintaining the model. It's working, but will continue. Kentwood currently is full speed ahead with MU students. Encourage students to get a TESOL minor.
- B. P-12 trends and challenges
- Janorise - ELL full-time teacher - mom is leaving to be stay-at-home mom.
  - Dan - Since the pandemic, student engagement has been extremely challenging. The teacher needs to be in command of their classrooms. Students need a teacher who sets rules and

enforces them. Teachers must set structure, standard and rules. This seems hard for new teachers.

- Janorise - It would be helpful to ensure that the supervising teacher is scaling up their expectations/tasks of the student. It is not helpful to them if they aren't given the full burden of the job while learning.
- Dan - More and more parents are presenting as a problem. It is important to understand how to have conversations with the parents and give proper messaging. Parents can be unrealistic in their demands. Being proactive with the parents is extremely helpful.
- Kristin - She has noticed with her students that they feel confident in talking with parents, but doesn't think they have a realistic understanding of what those conversations can entail. It is important to help student teachers understand the conversations they need to have.
- Scott - Kent County ISD (crisis prevention) has shifted to a "hands-off approach" with kids, instead using foam shields. Training is done by the ISD. Trained teams handle dysregulated students. P146-147 (Dyslexia bill) will throw high schools for a loop. It demands 2-tier and school needs to be equipped. At the elementary level -explicit written instructions. When interviewing teachers, "What do you know about explicit written instructions?" Student behavior is the top concern. Deans at every elementary are there to help with behavior. PBIS - Frontload with expected behavior trying to hold kids accountable. Really focused on dyslexia and student behavior as well as parental behavior.
- Kim - CU is working on dyslexia instruction. Anyone who demonstrates 90% reading avoidance.
- Scott - Are we teaching students how to build community/classroom culture?
- Eleanor, Garret, and Alexia - CU is very good at creating a good classroom culture and fostering community in the classroom. Discussions are had on how to handle difficult topics and build community through those discussions.
- Kim - We strive to model community building with students.
- Janorise - If teachers are looking for an expedited Masters Program, does CU offer this?
- Kim - The most accelerated program is Masters in TESOL. They could complete in 15 months. I will be meeting with Michael Pasquale to see if it can be completed in 9 months. We are still trying to figure out how to accelerate the PA program.
- Janorise - If a teacher has a BS in another major, does Masters in TESOL allow for certification?
- Kim - She will look into this and see if the Masters in TESOL will give you a certification.

#### IV. Open Discussion