

**Report from the Franklin College Ad Hoc Committee on Telemeeting Crimes to the Franklin
College Faculty Senate**

Submitted to the Senate for approval, March 23, 2021

Ad Hoc Committee Chair

Cassia Roth, Assistant Professor, Department of History and Latin American & Caribbean Studies

Ad Hoc Committee Members

Benjamin Britton, Associate Professor, Lamar Dodd School of Art

Emily Mouilso, Clinical Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology

Vasant Muralidharan, Associate Professor, Department of Cellular Biology

Nancee C. Reeves, Senior Lecturer, Department of English

Alberto Villate-Isaza, Assistant Professor, Department of Romance Languages

Background

On October 27, 2020, during a Franklin College-sponsored Zoom lecture organized by UGA faculty, a crime occurred. A group of anonymous intruders posted hate speech and made terroristic threats against the invited attendees. The attackers suggested the death of some UGA faculty members by posting verbal threats, listing faculty home addresses, and displaying a video clip of a murder. This is, to date, the most threatening in a series of ongoing hate crimes that have occurred in UGA-sponsored Zoom meetings, including some involving [UGA student organizations](#). These attacks have most often targeted faculty and students from historically underrepresented groups.

At a Franklin College Senate meeting on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, a group of Franklin faculty members briefly presented six discussion items created in response to the October 27, 2020 attack, with an awareness that similar attacks were likely to continue. The charge to constitute an ad hoc committee on telemeeting crimes was then presented at a Franklin College Senate special session, on Tuesday, December 8, 2020, during which the Franklin Senate approved the formation of a committee to consider these discussion items and make recommendations concerning them. To form the committee properly, the President of the Senate made various attempts to identify at least one Senator from each of the five divisions of Franklin to serve. Given the wide array of academic venues in Franklin that have thus far been targeted, including a [Chemistry class](#) and a meeting of the [Phi Kappa Literary Society](#), it was hoped that many senators would see the value of this committee and that volunteers would readily come forward. However, no senator from the Division of Physical and Mathematical Sciences volunteered and those who were asked declined to serve on the committee.

This report articulates the ad hoc committee's charge and provides details of the process by which it was fulfilled. Note: in some cases, the charges below differ in their wording from the discussion items first presented at the November 17, 2020 Senate meeting. These alterations have been made with input from the writers of the items and are presented as friendly amendments.

Charge for Item I

"Whereas recent hate crime incident(s) at UGA have placed supervisors in roles that require some specialized knowledge of how to competently interact with traumatized individuals, we resolve that: Franklin College require yearly "trauma-informed" training for all college and department heads and supervisors when it comes to the reporting and handling of hate crimes and the victims of hate crime. Faculty of UGA's School of Social Work at UGA have offered their expertise to help design such training."

One or more committee members will converse with faculty in the School of Social Work regarding the nature and scope of the training in question. Assuming this conversation proves satisfactory, committee members will then draft language for a Senate vote on this item. If approved by vote, this item will be presented to the Dean and to offices in upper administration as appropriate. The voting item's language may be similar or identical to the item as first stated, if the committee sees no need to make revisions. committee members should be prepared to lead discussion among Senators as to the feasibility and effectiveness of this new training for heads and supervisors.

Committee Report on Item I

Beginning in January 2021, the committee has been in conversation with various campus stakeholders on implementing trauma-informed training modules for college and department heads and supervisors. Trauma-informed training is based on the principle of [“Trauma-Informed Care,”](#) which “understands and considers the pervasive nature of trauma and promotes environments of healing and recovery rather than practices and services that may inadvertently re-traumatize.” At UGA, trauma-informed training refers to a commitment to appropriately assess trauma in the workplace by implementing specific techniques to avoid re-traumatizing faculty, staff, and students and ensuring everyone feels safe on campus. Trauma-informed training prioritizes the education of faculty and staff and provides policy and practical resources, including crisis, safety, and de-escalation plans. It underscores the non-tolerance of violence, including language in any form, bullying, or shaming by any faculty, staff, or student, or any other campus members. Trauma-informed training asks campus stakeholders to constantly attend to UGA’s organizational culture, thus minimizing the possibility for re-traumatization.

Since the creation of this committee, Dean Dorsey has worked with Dean Anna Scheyett and faculty members from the School of Social Work on creating and implementing a trauma-informed training module for Franklin College. [Initial models](#) focused more on the theoretical underpinnings of trauma-informed care. Subsequent iterations have focused on practical tools and have further included input and feedback from faculty members from the Franklin College Department of Psychology. The committee shared these materials and discussions with the original targets of the October 27, 2020 hate crime as well as with other faculty with expertise on the subject in both Franklin College and the School of Social Work. All were supportive of the Administration’s actions but further emphasized the need to clarify the practical aspects of trauma-informed training modules, including how the training modules would be conducted and whether follow-up training modules would be required. As of February 2021, the trauma-informed training program resides with Professor Meg Amstutz in the Provost’s Office, who has expressed support for providing trauma-informed training for administrators. Deans Dorsey and Scheyett have spoken with her about their activities and shared their materials. Professor Amstutz is now putting together the training with several panelists representing different perspectives. The Provost’s Office is focusing on the practical tools needed to assist those who have been traumatized. This training will be implemented in spring 2021, although no firm date has been given.

Additionally, the committee has worked with the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), in particular with its director Dr. Meg Mittelstadt, to organize and disseminate [trauma-informed teaching materials](#) for all instructors, with [specific instructions](#) on how to respond in a trauma-informed manner to students after any potentially traumatic telemeeting event in the classroom. Moreover, CTL has offered trauma-informed workshops to both faculty and graduate students.

Finally, the committee engaged with UGA Police Chief Dan Silk on how the UGA police incorporate trauma-informed responses to crimes on campus. The force has worked to instill trauma-informed care’s underlying principles as a guide for all they do. Their training documents include specific mentions of trauma-informed policing, advising officers that “intentionally proceeding with a trauma-informed

approach to any investigation, can lead to more successful outcomes in the investigation while also providing support and compassionate care for the community.”

In execution of its charge, the committee offers the following recommendations for potential resolutions related to Item I and requests that the Senate discuss them as possibilities going forward.

1. That the Provost’s Office should implement the trauma-informed training module in spring 2021. All faculty and staff, regardless of supervisory capacity, should be notified of the training once it becomes available;
2. That any trauma-informed training modules adopted by Franklin College should incorporate explicit short- and long-term plans for implementation (including, but not limited to, how the training modules will be conducted, when they will be conducted, and who will be required to undergo training);
3. That trauma-informed training modules should be required for anyone in Franklin College who acts in a supervisory capacity, but should also be open to all who wish to participate in them;
4. That the Center for Teaching and Learning should actively disseminate their trauma-informed teaching resources to instructors across campus. In addition, the CTL should expand their hosting of trauma-informed teaching workshops to help instructors and mentors incorporate these methods into their pedagogy.

Charge for item II

“Whereas knowledge of recent hate crime incident(s) at UGA has been sporadic, partial, or nonexistent amongst UGA community members, we resolve that: Franklin College institute a mechanism for publicly reporting and documenting the incidents of hate crimes at the University or against any members of the University. This mechanism’s primary functions would be to promote awareness and safety and undertake data collection and analysis of hate crimes and terrorism. We all have a right and responsibility to know.”

The committee will first confirm the lack of any official mechanism for publicizing hate crimes and terroristic threats at the University of Georgia (aside from UGA’s annual crime statistics, which include terroristic threats), and will likewise confirm lack of coverage of such crimes in UGA Today and Columns. The committee will research relevant examples of hate crime reporting mechanisms at other colleges and universities, and will consult with the UGA Police Department to learn how gathering and reporting of terroristic threats currently works on campus. The committee will consider whether it is feasible for a more robust reporting mechanism based in Franklin College to cover hate crimes and terroristic threats University-wide. The committee will submit a brief written report on its findings at a Senate meeting in early 2021 and make recommendations, either for one or more voting items or for further inquiry and planning.

Committee Report on Item II

The committee had detailed conversations with [UGA Police Chief Dan Silk](#) and [Marshall Chalmers](#), Associate General Counsel responsible for Clery Act Compliance, and a brief communication with the

[Clery Center](#). According to these sources, the issue of reporting can be divided into two instances: 1) the reports made by victims or people affected by terroristic threats or hate crimes; and, 2) the public report of such types of incidents by the University to the public. While prompt reporting to the UGA police, if victims so choose, is the necessary step to trigger public reporting as it pertains to the Clery Act, the committee focused exclusively on addressing public reporting and documentation of hate crimes at the University of Georgia.

The Clery Act requires universities and colleges to disclose information regarding all crimes that have occurred in the past three years within a defined geographical area around campus and that fall under the categories covered by Clery, which include criminal offenses, hate crimes, Violence Against Women Act offenses, and arrests and referrals for disciplinary action (a more detailed list can be found [here](#)). Once an incident has been reported to the UGA police, and if it satisfies the condition for being a Clery reportable crime (i.e., a crime category covered by the Clery Act and within campus geography), it must be flagged and reported in the Annual Security Report. In addition to the [Annual Security Report](#), the University is obligated to issue both Timely Warnings and Emergency Notifications. The committee understands that the University of Georgia and Franklin College can exercise discretion when sharing or not sharing other information with the public.

An attack such as the one that occurred on October 27, 2020 falls under the category of intimidation for Clery reportable crimes. While intimidation is by definition a hate crime for Clery purposes, Georgia is only one of four states that does not have a statute criminalizing bias-motivated violence. For that reason, the category in UGA's Annual Security Report is terroristic threats. When terroristic threats are motivated by bias, this is clarified in a note at the bottom of the report. Franklin College could produce its own report that not only includes a specific category of hate-motivated crimes but also gives them a more prominent place.

The committee is aware of the challenges posed by both the geographical requirement of the Clery Act, which may be problematic for telemeeting incidents in which no participants are physically on campus, and the difficulty in establishing clear terroristic threats in contrast to expressive speech protected by the First Amendment. These challenges were highlighted by both Chief Silk and Marshall Chalmers. Addressing these challenges in full exceeds the charge of the committee. In order to reach actionable recommendations, therefore, the committee assumes that the Franklin community understands the vital importance of "reporting all incidents that may seem even remotely bias motivated, as not all members of the community may know what factor may determine [hate crime reporting](#)." At the same time, and in recognition of the need to maintain a robust First Amendment culture and right to privacy, not least for victims of hate crimes, the committee also assumes careful consideration of the information being reported publicly.

In execution of its charge, the committee offers the following recommendations for potential resolutions related to Item II and requests that the Senate discuss them as possibilities going forward.

1. That Franklin College should issue a public report, in consultation with the UGA police, of every hate crime, terroristic threat, or act of intimidation reported to UGA police that affects any member of the Franklin College community, as close as possible to the date of the incident. This could be done with Marshall Chalmers serving as liaison, as he, in addition to being responsible for Clery Act Compliance, is also an advisor to Franklin College. The UGA police department publishes daily reports on its website that can serve to prepare Franklin College's own report;
2. That Franklin College should keep records of all such crimes and incidents and to make the record public once a year, in addition to any other Clery Act requirements;
3. That all related trainings should emphasize the importance of reporting every incident that may seem bias motivated to both UGA police and the Equal Opportunity Office.

Charge for Item III

"Whereas to prevent zoombombing to the extent possible a protocol must be established and followed, we resolve that: Franklin College release faculty, students, or organizers of public events – particularly those that receive funding from Franklin College or any of Franklin College units – from the responsibility to operate Zoom in those events and create a technical position in charge of operating Zoom special events. This technician would also be in charge of securing any links from all non-UGA affiliated social media accounts to give an extra layer of protection to organizers and participants."

After briefly inquiring about possible barriers to creating a technical position that can operate Zoom events outside regular work hours, and about possible other ways to supply such technical expertise, the committee will bring a voting item to a Senate meeting in early 2021. If approved by Senate vote, this item will be presented to the Dean and to offices in upper administration as appropriate.

Committee Report on Item III

After consulting with Dean Dorsey and Executive Director for IT for Franklin College Beth Woods, the committee found that the number of Zoom meetings that are held within Franklin College provides a substantial barrier to creating one technical position as a viable solution to the security of telemeetings. Therefore, a discussion began about a possible initiative to train and pay moderators who would be available to help secure meetings in Franklin. A concurrent education initiative to help students and faculty select the right format for their telemeetings as well as support them with protocols for security was also discussed. Franklin Office of Internet Technology (FOIT) currently maintains relevant information on [large meetings](#) and [public events](#). The committee also learned that departments have the ability to purchase the [Georgia Center's services](#) to host digital conferences. Additionally, Executive Director Beth Woods conveyed that the IT managers at UGA have created a University-level committee to discuss the issue of telemeeting security, including concerns about zoombombings and recommendations for public events.

The committee also met with concerned faculty who reviewed these initiatives and gave feedback, including that the paid moderator program be affordable and available and that it be run out of and paid for by Franklin College. It was suggested that the moderator program should include both trained

graduate students and willing IT staff. This feedback shaped the outline for a proposed initiative that the committee brought back to Dean Dorsey, who expressed his support.

Progress toward preventing these crimes in our workplace requires a collective partnership for telemeeting security between administration, faculty, and student hosts of meetings and Franklin College IT staff based on mutual respect for all of our professions and expertise. This collaboration must also reflect the reality of the scale and availability of telemeeting usage at UGA during the pandemic period and beyond. While the use of safer public-meeting tools such as webinars provides more secure digital meetings, there remains a need for telemeeting formats that allow for more dynamic discourse. The collective support of this format of discourse at Franklin College will require help with telemeeting security that is equally affordable and available. Additionally, because not all public events at Franklin College require the scale of services offered by the Georgia Center, an initiative to train and pay moderators would be a reasonable answer to the committee's charge for Item III.

In execution of its charge, the committee offers the following recommendations for potential resolutions related to Item III and requests that the Senate discuss them as possibilities going forward.

1. That FOIT should implement a college-wide education campaign on the options for telemeeting formats as well as updated protocols for telemeeting security. The education campaign should include how to find available help with telemeeting security needs;
2. That Franklin College should create a program that is centrally organized and administered, providing equally accessible and affordable services of a cadre of trained and paid moderators to provide security for telemeetings across departments. These moderators should be available during and outside of regular work hours to any faculty and students who require their services via a relatively simple request for moderators similar to the FOIT ticket system. The bar should be the same (neither higher nor lower) for requesting a zoom moderator or a zoom webinar format. The request process should respect the judgement of faculty in holding a dynamic meeting and support their decision as a matter of academic freedom. Moderators should be paid by Franklin College, and should include both graduate students from each department and some FOIT staff who are trained in the technical aspects of securing a meeting from hate-crimes, as well as the free-speech requirements of monitoring an online meeting at a public university;
3. That a university policy should be established that in the event of a telemeeting hate-crime, all digital evidence will be preserved for thirty years so that it might be used in a prosecution if the perpetrators are ever apprehended in the future. Moderators should be trained in any relevant evidence preservation techniques.

Charge for item IV

"Whereas two faculty members' lives were explicitly threatened; whereas the rise of telemeeting crimes is as yet not fully addressed in UGA policies and protocols; whereas hate crimes and terroristic threats likewise must be more fully addressed; and in light of the rise of white nationalist terrorism in the US and the many populations at risk (including but not limited to our Black, Latinx, indigenous, Muslim, women,

and/or LGBTQ+ university members), we resolve that: Franklin College take new steps to address these gaps in policy on behalf of faculty and the College as a whole.”

The committee will consult with appropriate administrators, staff, and faculty to determine how to address telemeeting crimes, hate crimes, and terroristic threats, through an expansion of current protocols and procedures. This expansion should address both immediate response to such crimes and ways to aid faculty and students after they have occurred. This consultation should begin with the Office of Emergency Preparedness. The committee will submit a brief report on its findings by the March 2021 meeting of the Franklin Senate, identifying any gaps in current policy and protocol and, where possible, suggesting possible changes to improve the University’s response to these crimes. If committee members deem it appropriate, a voting item can be brought to the Senate along with the recommendations. Since this voting item would concern University-wide protocols, it should be addressed to the Provost and the President.

Committee Report on Item IV

No specific report or recommendations are made related to this item as the committee chose to include information related to gaps in policy, protocols, and procedures in its reports about and recommendations for other items.

Charge for item V

“Whereas the recent hate crime incident exposes the troubling and persistent existence of misogyny and homophobia in our culture (and on our college campuses), and whereas women continue to be underrepresented in positions of executive, legislative, judicial, economic, and intellectual power, we resolve that: Franklin College institute a “Gender and Sexuality Studies” requirement for all its majors. This requirement would be modeled after the “multicultural” requirement and in the spirit of its mission to promote greater understanding, appreciation, and equity amongst our educated citizens and our republic. Please note that the recent hate crime and death threats targeted a talk on violence against women of color, given by an Afro-Latina scholar, organized by women faculty at UGA, and attended mostly by women faculty and students. This is a long overdue reform to our curriculum.”

Committee members will begin by seeking guidance from the Institute for Women’s Studies regarding best practice for considering this item. committee members will then craft a voting item—presented at the first or second Senate meeting of 2021—that commits Franklin Senators to conducting inquiries in their own departments. If Senators vote in favor of this item, they will conduct their inquiries in a timely fashion, and will submit brief written reports by the final Senate meeting of spring 2021. Senators’ inquiries will assess the level of interest in this new curricular requirement in their departments and, as appropriate, will seek to identify current and future curricular offerings that could be part of the requirement. Senators’ findings will be submitted to the Senate’s Executive Committee for further consideration and, if deemed feasible, for further Senate work, and/or further inquiry outside Franklin College, in fall 2021.

Committee Report on Item V

The committee consulted with Dr. Cecilia Herles and Dr. Patricia Richards from the Institute for Women's Studies on what a gender and sexuality studies requirement should look like. Discussions emphasized that the gender and sexuality studies requirement should be modeled after the Franklin College multicultural requirement, and that the requirement: 1) should only be fulfilled by a class that has a "significant focus" on gender/sexuality; 2) should be able to be fulfilled by approved classes from various Franklin College departments; 3) should also be able to simultaneously satisfy other Franklin College requirements; and, 4) should, if possible, be fulfilled early on in a student's studies.

Committee members then met with Dean Dorsey, Associate Dean Jean Martin-Williams, and Dr. Diana Miller, the Director of Student Academic Services, to discuss the feasibility of instituting a gender and sexuality requirement. They indicated that this might be a good time to introduce this change as the USG Initiative is currently working on big shifts that include curricular modifications, and many feel it is time to take a fresh look at current course offerings and the multicultural requirement. Possible issues they raised include the already overpacked schedules for undergraduates; the stress this extra requirement could place on transfer students, double majors, and Double Dawgs; and the stress this would place on Women's Studies, who would have to increase course caps and/or find funding to hire additional instructors. It was suggested that a possible path would be to fold the gender and sexuality requirement into the current multicultural requirement. The committee believes this is problematic as it would water down the multicultural requirement and co-opt the work that has been done to bring attention to racial inequality on campus. If the Senate wants to pursue a gender and sexuality requirement, it will need to be approved by the University Curriculum Council. It was intimated that this path is difficult and time consuming.

In execution of its charge, the committee offers the following recommendation related to Item V and requests that the Senate discuss it as a possibility going forward.

- 1) That senators should conduct inquiries within their departments assessing how much support they have for pursuing a gender and sexuality requirement, what classes each department has that might fulfill the requirement, and their feelings on possibly folding this requirement into the multicultural requirement.

Charge for item VI

"Whereas university members beyond Franklin College are at risk, we resolve that: Franklin College pass a Resolution that calls on the President, Provost, and Deans across campus to pursue similar reforms as university-wide policy."

This item being dependent on the outcome of inquiries concerning, and potential votes on, the previous items, the committee will pass any appropriate recommendations and/or voting items concerning it to the Senate's Executive Committee at the end of spring 2021.

Committee Report on Item VI

From its numerous discussions with various University stakeholders, the committee concludes that telemeeting crimes are constantly evolving situations. Online hate groups are highly sophisticated and organized, and they have proven resilient and innovative in responding to new security measures.

In execution of its charge, the committee offers the following recommendations for potential resolutions related to Item VI and requests that the Senate discuss them as possibilities going forward.

1. That the Ad Hoc Committee should be dissolved and reincorporated into a permanent, existing standing committee in the Faculty Senate with senators from each academic division. This will ensure that the Senate is able to monitor the implementation and consequences of any proposed policies in addition to providing updated recommendations to the Senate as situations evolve;
2. That, after consultation with various faculty members, Franklin College should hire an Associate Dean of Diversity, formerly occupied by Dean Kecia Thomas;
3. That the prevention of hate-crimes goes well beyond the technical aspects of securing a telemeeting to the best possible standard. UGA should meaningfully and honestly address its foundational and systemic racism with apologies, redress, and reparations.

Thank you. The committee commends the work already done and thanks all stakeholders who have participated in creation of this report, in particular Dean Dorsey, who was transparent throughout the entire process, Franklin College Executive Director for IT Beth Woods, Chief of Police Dan Silk, and faculty whose perspectives helped to shape the report and recommendations for this report. Additional thanks go to Associate Professor and Franklin Senator Clifton Buck for his help and to Associate Professor and Franklin Senator Chris Pizzino for his support of our committee.