

Regents' Committee on Learning Disorders
April 29, 2003
University System Office
DRAFT Minutes

Present: Dr. Anne Gormly, Chair; Dr. Synnove Heggoy, Dr. Noel Gregg; Dr. Janice Reid; Dr. Kathleen Burk; Dr. Sue Murphy; Dr. Margo Habiger; Dr. Randy Butterbaugh; Ms. Cheryl Biggs; Ms. Anne Loyd; Dr. Mary Morris, Dr. Nancy Reed, Dr. John Colson, Ms. Carol Pope.
Guests: Chancellor Tom Meredith, Dr. Frank Butler.

1. Dr. Gormly began the meeting with introductions and a review of the agenda. A motion to approve the minutes from the November 12, 2002 meeting was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.
2. The Center Directors provided a report of activities and issues since the last meeting. Dr. Heggoy began by reporting that a licensed psychologist for the Georgia Southern Center was hired in March; a school psychologist was hired in January. There have been a similar number of evaluations and not as many presentations as last semester. Dr. Heggoy reported an increase in the number of evaluations that have been paid for by Vocational Rehabilitation. She praised the cooperation they were receiving from Voc Rehab counselors; many of the students they are serving come to the Center accompanied by their Voc Rehab counselor. Dr. Heggoy attributed this increase involvement by Voc Rehab to the transition workshops. The Center has also learned that Georgia Southern will be moving the Center location within the year. Dr. Heggoy indicated that she would be retiring September 1 and that Dr. Sue Murphy would become the Center Director. They will then need to hire a replacement liaison for the Center. Dr. Heggoy described the staffing in the Center; unlike the other two Centers, the Georgia Southern Center is not linked to a Psychology program with Ph.D students. Despite this disadvantage of not having access to clinical interns, the Center nonetheless has been successful in serving an increasing number of students.
3. Dr. Mary Morris reported an increase in the number of students served at the Georgia State University Center. They have established a waiting list for the summer. She reported that Gainesville College no longer uses the GSU Center; students from Gainesville now are served by the UGA Center. She indicated that this transition was a smooth one. She described a seed grant that they received to conduct a study on the barriers for LD students to access information using assistive technology. Data have been collected on 14 students; once this data has been analyzed, Dr. Morris said she would share the report with the Regents' Committee. Dr. Morris indicated that the Center recently lost their administrative assistant and they are seeking to fill this position as soon as possible. She also announced that effective April 1, she became the chair of the Psychology Department at Georgia State University. She will continue in her role as Center Director. She provided members with the RCLD bookmarks, which were produced at UGA.
4. Dr. Noel Gregg reported a slight increase in the number of students evaluated in the UGA Center. She noted that a vacant psychologist position has been frozen; they plan to hire two

post-doc students to fill the staffing needs. Effective July 1, the UGA Regents Center will move from the Student Affairs Division to Academic Affairs Division in the Psychology Department. This move was described as a very positive change as it will help provide more doctoral students serving internships in the Center.

5. Dr. Gormly raised the issue of the change in the language contained in the guidelines for student technology fees. In July 2000 the former Senior Vice Chancellor for Capital Resources agreed to remove language regarding “adaptive equipment for students with disabilities” from the guidelines. Unfortunately, this change was never made and a new administrator is now in place. Dr. Burk will provide a form to facilitate communicating the need to correct this information to the appropriate person in the University System Office.

6. Dr. Mary Morris talked about the inconsistency regarding the interpretation of the applicability of the recent HIPPA legislation to the Regents’ Centers. The Center at UGA was told that they were subject to HIPPA and they have created a brochure to inform students about HIPPA. At Georgia State University, the Regents’ Center was informed by the University counsel that they were NOT subject to HIPPA. The Georgia Southern Center has not been informed either way with regard to HIPPA. One issue is the impact of FERPA for HIPPA; FERPA requirements for student records are more stringent than HIPPA requirements. The confusion arises due to lack of clarity about whether the evaluations created by the Centers are considered student records or medical records. In response to a request from the committee last fall for advice, the USG counselors advised that it was the responsibility of the host institution to deal with the HIPPA requirements. It was agreed that we would invite Betsey Neely to the next RCLD meeting to discuss the issues with the committee.

7. Dr. Burk proposed guidelines for the administration of the Regents’ Test and placement tests in reading and writing for students with learning disabilities that prevent them from taking these tests in the typical manner. A motion was made, seconded, and after a thoughtful discussion, approved to use these guidelines in the Centers. These guidelines are included at the end of the minutes. Dr. Burk agreed to refine the language in the documents and send them to the Center Directors. This information is not for use on the website, but rather is to be used to ensure that there is consistency across the Centers on the type of accommodation. Dr. Burk also indicated that the USG office could provide an electronic copy of the Regents’ Test. Carol Pope suggested that the Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB) could take the electronic version of the test and make it available for use in a way that would be secure. To use this version, institutions would have to have a digital reader and the appropriate software. The general consensus was that institutions had this equipment and software already available on their campuses. Dr. Burk agreed to check with RFB to implement this suggestion.

8. At this point in the meeting, Chancellor Thomas Meredith visited with the committee to learn about their concerns and to talk about the state of the USG in general. He asked about the value of the evaluations students receive from the LD Centers; for a fee of \$400 and soon a fee of \$500 students receive an evaluation they would have to pay anywhere from \$1500 to \$2000 if they used a private psychologist. The special arrangement that the Centers have with their host campuses with respect to budgets was raised as an issue as well as the importance of making the needs and successes of learning disabled students visible in the USG strategic plan and on the

institutional campuses. He thanked the Center directors for the work and the support they are providing for University System students. He also gave a brief report on his success with the legislature in maintaining the formula funding. Dr. Noel called Chancellor Meredith's attention to the leadership that Dr. Gormly has provided to the Regents' Committee on Learning Disorders.

9. Following the meeting with the Chancellor, there was discussion about the technology available at the institutions and the model workstation project initiated at GSU. Tools for Life, a program of the Department of Rehabilitative Services offers information and resources for assistive technology. It was suggested and agreed that we should invite Christopher Lee to the next RCLD meeting to talk about assistive technology. He is a graduate of the USG and works for Tools for Life. Members of the committee spoke very highly of him as an advocate for LD students since he was one himself. Dr. Gregg agreed to talk with Christopher Lee about possible dates he could come to Milledgeville to meet with the committee.

10. Dr. Mary Morris brought the issue of the use of a reduced course load as an accommodation to the committee for discussion. Students seeking federal financial aid must maintain a full course load; hence the suggested accommodation of a reduced course load could lead to students reducing their financial aid awards. It was agreed that the Center directors would create a common disclaimer statement to include in the evaluation report regarding the possible impact on financial aid of a reduced course load.

11. A suggestion was made to recognize the support the Centers and students have received from Vocational Rehabilitation counselors. It was agreed that a thank you be sent to Commissioner Michael Thurmond with the hope that it will be included in the Department of Labor newsletter. The Center directors agreed to draft a letter to Commissioner Thurmond.

12. Dr. Synnove Heggoy shared the power point presentation that the Center directors created for the meeting with the Chancellor. It was suggested that this power point be put on the RCLD information website. It was also suggested that this power point be presented to the joint meeting of the Academic and Student Affairs Vice Presidents' meeting in July. The meeting will be held in Athens. Dr. Gormly agreed to bring this suggestion to the Executive Committee. Since there are a number of new VPs who know nothing about the purpose and functions of the Centers, this presentation could help educate and remind them of this resource. July will be the 10th anniversary of the Regents' Centers; the presentation at the VPs meeting could commemorate this event. Dr. Heggoy agreed to attend this meeting and present the power point.

13. Ms. Carol Pope asked about the status of the DTAE pilot program for LD evaluations. Dr. Heggoy provided information on the pilot since she is on the committee that oversees this program. Since she is retiring this year, it was suggested that she request that her replacement on the committee be another Center director.

14. Dr. Morris indicated that she has been talking to service providers about the annual survey sent out by the USG office. She indicated that there is a need to better define some of the categories. She agreed to work with her group to develop a series of questions that could be clarified regarding the survey. She agreed to bring these back to the committee at the next

RCLD meeting. Dr. Burk asked the committee members to consider the suggestion of conducting the survey every other year instead of every year. There is a need to distinguish between the current purpose of the survey, which is to identify the diverse services provided to students who get accommodations from the intent of collecting information about the total service hours provided by service providers even if the students receive no accommodations. Dr. Burk pointed out that many people completing the survey list “multiple disabilities” as the most common category; she suggested that the primary disability be used to identify the student’s diagnostic category.

15. Dr. Margo Habiger reported on the status of their efforts to provide evaluations for students enrolled in both the eCore and eMBA program. It was noted that there needs to be an official statement regarding the availability of disability services at the Regents’ Center for Learning Disorder for eCore students; eCore students may have different accommodations from students enrolled in traditional courses. Currently, there is confusion about the coordination of services for LD students enrolled in both eCore and traditional courses. It was agreed that this issue would be revisited at the fall meeting.

16. Ms. Carol Pope reminded committee members of an upcoming conference at UGA on Accessible IT on May 12 from 9 to 5. She agreed to send information about the conference to Dr. Gormly who would pass it on to committee members.

17. Since this was Dr. Heggoy’s last meeting prior to her retirement in September, Dr. Gormly recognized her and thanked her for her contributions and support of LD students over the years.

18. The next meeting will be in Milledgeville in the fall; the exact date will be determined once we have confirmed the availability of Christopher Lee.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 PM.

Addendum

GUIDELINES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE REGENTS’ TEST (AND PLACEMENT TESTS) IN READING FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

All reasonable accommodations to assist students in reading independently through visual means should be considered. (In some cases, for example, very slow readers have been given the test over a two-day period. Others may be able to read independently if given accommodations, such as use of a dictionary, that they depend on for their other academic reading.) RCLDs must approve most accommodations other than those involving extended time and setting. Institutions may also provide a large-print test format or a scribe to record answers on the scan sheet without RCLD approval.

Students whose disability prevents them from reading independently through visual means regardless of the types of accommodations provided may be allowed to use technology to demonstrate competence in comprehension of printed information. Such students may be permitted the use of a scanner and text-to-voice technology or an electronic version of the test.. They should be required to take the test through independent use of the technology. RCLDs must approve this accommodation. Upon request, the Regents’ Testing Program office can provide a form of the test better suited to scanning or an electronic

version of the test.. (While use of this accommodation will probably become commonplace within the next few years, it might be best for practical reasons to use it only when absolutely necessary at this time. Test security is a major problem .)

There may be a very small number of students whose disability prevents them from learning how to use technology to access printed information. In such cases, the taped version of the test (produced by RFBD) may be requested from the Regents' Testing Program office. Because this is a major accommodation and no criteria have yet been developed for consistent implementation, the Center Directors have agreed to confer with one another before granting this accommodation.

Readers may not be used for the reading test.

DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE REGENTS' ESSAY TEST FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

All reasonable accommodations to assist students in producing a written essay independently should be considered. The following accommodations may be made without RCLD approval:

- extended time and/or separate room for test administration
- use of a word processor, typewriter, or scratch paper for composing the essay (The student must handwrite the essay on the regular essay form for grading, or, if the student's diagnosis indicates an inability to copy the essay, the test administrator or proctor must copy the essay as written by the student with no changes.)
- reading of the essay to the student (If the student's diagnosis indicates a visual processing deficit that prevents the student from reading his or her own essay accurately, the proctor may read the essay aloud exactly as written while the student makes corrections to the essay.)

Other accommodations must be approved by the RCLD.

Students whose disability prevents them from writing or using a word processor may be allowed to use voice-to-text-technology to demonstrate competence in composition. They should be required to take the test through independent use of the technology. RCLDs must approve this accommodation.

There may be a very small number of students whose disability prevents them from learning how to use technology to produce a written essay. In such cases, an oral essay may be necessary. Because this is a major accommodation and no criteria have yet been developed for consistent implementation, the Center Directors have agreed to confer with one another before granting this accommodation. The tape-recorded essay will be submitted to the RTP office for grading.

Except as indicated above for students who are unable to copy or read their own essays, the product submitted for grading must be produced by the student with no assistance provided or changes made by any other person. Scribes may not be used for the essay test except for the purpose of copying a student's typed or handwritten essay exactly as written. Local grading may not be used.