

Regents' Committee on Learning Disorders
May 8, 2002
Georgia College & State University

Present: Dr. Anne Gormly, Chair; Dr. Synnove Heggoy, Dr. Noel Gregg; Dr. Janice Reed; Dr. Kathleen Burk; Dr. Sue Murphy; Dr. Margo Habiger; Mr. Wayne Akins; Dr. Randy Butterbaugh; Ms. Cheryl Biggs; Ms. Anne Loyd; Dr. Cynthia Sellers; Dr. Mary Morris.

Dr. Gormly welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the agenda. She announced that while Dr. Frank Butler had planned on attending this meeting, he was called out of town unexpectedly and was not able to attend.

OLD BUSINESS

The Center Directors began the meeting by providing reports on activities of their centers. Dr. Morris reported that there was nothing unusual in the numbers of evaluations conducted; she described the pilot assistive technology project that Nancy Reed and Lawanna Wimberley are working on at Georgia State University to develop a model workstation and training materials for students with learning disabilities. Once these materials are completed they will be made available to the other centers for piloting purposes. Dr. Morris indicated that they are expecting to lose their psychologist this summer. Dr. Morris provided a summary sheet describing the evaluations conducted and provided sample training materials for the assistive technology project.

Dr. Gregg reported that the Center at UGA had an increase in the number of evaluations; they expect that by July they will have had a total between 140-145. Last year, they conducted approximately 110-115 evaluations. She described several research activities of the Center. Dr. Heggoy provided information on the number of evaluations conducted to date at their center. She announced that Sue Murphy is now an associate director. While they hired a school psychologist in January of this year to replace the one who left in July 2001, the licensed psychologist left at the end of February leaving yet another vacancy.

Margo Habiger gave a report on the 4 transition workshops conducted during the spring semester. A total of 154 people attended. A nominal fee of \$10 was charged for the workshops resulting in a profit of \$1211. After a short discussion a motion was made, seconded, and passed to use these funds to pay for the printing of bookmarks about the Centers. Noel Gregg will explore printing options at UGA and compare them with the information on printing at GSU provided by Mary Morris. Future transition workshops will be planned for both the fall and the spring semesters of next year. Noel Gregg will investigate establishing an agency account for the profits from future workshops; this will allow the use of funds beyond the end of the fiscal year.

****Center directors brought forward a proposal to change the definition of learning disabilities in the Academic Affairs Handbook (section 2.22.01) to a more updated and**

clearer version presented by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities. After a short discussion a motion was made, seconded, and passed to replace the current definition in the handbook with the NJC definition.

Noel Gregg described a proposal for the UGA RC to serve as the pilot institution to provide services for eCore/webMBA students with disabilities; a motion was made, seconded, and passed to designate the UGA Center as the pilot for eCore.

****Margo Habiger provided an update on the legislation passed regarding e-texts. Since the bill requires further study by the University System, a motion was made, seconded, and passed to select a subcommittee to draft a revised letter of support and an action plan in support of using e-texts. Noel Gregg agreed to lead the subcommittee composed of Mary Morris, Synnove Heggoy, Carol Pope, and Margo Habiger. As soon as a draft letter is ready, it will be sent by email to all members of the RCLD for approval. Anne Gormly agreed to present this issue at the joint Academic and Student Affairs meeting in June. Information will be assembled on the current use of e-texts.**

Wayne Akins reported on the efforts to conduct a pilot project on using Banner to track the success of students with learning disabilities who receive accommodations. While they were having some technical problems moving forward with the project, he reported that he thought he would be able to provide a full report at the fall meeting.

Following a discussion about the System Survey, it was agreed that the Center directors would review the survey questions and instructions for clarity and consistency in definition. The purpose of the survey needs to be clear to the service providers and categories (including the accommodations) should be consistently defined. Dr. Heggoy agreed to collect the revisions suggested by the Center directors and to collect information about data that should be collected in common for discussion at the fall meeting. It was suggested that a format for a spreadsheet be developed for use at all three centers. Kathleen Burk asked that the directors check the list of technical devices on the System Survey for relevance and accuracy.

The format for the annual reports from the Center directors was discussed. The directors agreed to create a format that would incorporate suggested questions from Kathleen Burk and bring this format to the fall meeting for discussion. It was agreed that a fiscal year report would be appropriate for the annual report.

Margo Habiger provided an update on the approval letter from Board of Education providing a waiver from the CPC foreign language requirement for students whose learning disabilities preclude them from learning a foreign language. At this time only two students have received such waivers. It was agreed that information regarding this waiver and what it means and does not mean with regard to post secondary admissions and degree requirements would be placed on the information website for parents, students, and teachers. Margo agreed to contact the HOPE Scholarship office to clarify the issue about whether or not these waivers would be included in the calculation of the high school GPA for HOPE.

The departure of Charlie Nutt from the committee has created a vacancy. After discussion of the composition of the committee, a motion was made, seconded, and passed to invite Penny Wills from Floyd College and John Colson from Waycross to the join this committee.

NEW BUSINESS

Since Frank Butler was unable to attend this meeting, the agenda item dealing with budgetary process and personnel oversight for the Centers will be deferred until the Chair, Kathleen Burk, and the Center Directors can meet with Frank. A June 10, 10 AM meeting in Atlanta has been set for this meeting.

**Noel Gregg presented a proposal from the Center Directors to raise the current fee of \$300 for evaluations to \$500. The reason for the fee increase is to support the costs associated with doing the evaluations. The current fee was set ten years ago and has not been raised. This fee and the proposed fee of \$500 are well below the fee currently being charged by outside evaluators (typically ranging between \$1500-\$2000). While some of the fees charged by the Centers are paid for by Vocational Rehabilitation, health insurance, and financial aid, a concern was raised that this fee increase would be born by students, some of who have trouble paying the current fee. The fee increase request is one way to solve the problem the Centers have of having little means of increasing their operating budgets when costs have gone up. After much discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and passed (5 for, 4 against) to recommend an increase in the fee for evaluations from \$300 to \$500. It was requested that the Center Directors collect information on how many students have these fees covered by other means. This recommendation will be discussed with Frank Butler at the June meeting.

Mary Morris raised the issue of accessibility for the COMPASS test; the COMPASS test is not amenable to text readers, making it impossible for some students with disabilities to take the test without some other form (Braille, alternative paper/pen measure). Kathleen Burk reported that she did not think that COMPASS would be modified in any time soon to make it more accessible.

Margo Habiger raised the issue of the University System increasing the range of services provided to students of disabilities to include medical, mobility, and sensory disabilities. The range of disabilities currently covered by the Centers is limited to learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders. In the pilot for eCore, the UGA Center will provide for a broader range of disabilities including medical, mobility, and sensory disabilities. This begs the issue of should the System consider a similar structure for these disabilities as it has for learning disabilities. Currently, the Centers are not budgeted or equipped with the expertise to deal with an expanded range of disabilities even though they frequently are called upon by the institutions for help in dealing with students with these needs. The issue of consistency of service in reviewing evaluations and recommendations for accommodations was raised in the discussion. It was agreed that this issue should be raised in the meeting with Frank Butler.

**Another issue raised was the clarification of responsibility in providing services to students with disabilities who are enrolled in consortia or external degree programs involving more than one system institution. After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and passed recommending that *prior to the approval of any consortia and/or external degree program within the System, that a statement be included delineating the institution that will be responsible for providing services to students with disabilities enrolled in the program. This statement would identify the channels of communication among and within the institutions involved in the consortia.* Synnove Heggoy will provide specific information to Kathleen Burk concerning current problems that need to be resolved. Anne Gormly agreed to present this recommendation at the Academic and Student Affairs meeting in June.

Dr. Burk indicated that this committee would need to address the issues associated with the new Regents' Exam for Quantitative Skills which is being piloted and field tested in the 2002-2003 academic year and implemented in Fall 2003. This issue will be included on the Fall meeting agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 PM. The next meeting will be in Fall 2002. A date for this meeting will be set following the June 10 meeting with the Center Directors and Frank Butler.