

RACSA 2008 Fall Meeting Minutes

Compiled by Jodi Johnson

October 30, 2008

In attendance: Neil Aspinwall, Waycross College; Donald Avery, East Georgia College; Rodney Bennett, University of Georgia; Dennis Chamberlain, Gordon College, Irvin Clark, Savannah State University; John Clower, North Georgia College and State University; Jim Cottingham, South Georgia College; Gail Dillard, ABAC; Randy Gunter, Savannah State University; Jim Fatzinger, Georgia Gwinnett College; Dale Hartenburg, Medical College of Georgia; Brian Haynes, Clayton State University; Darryl Holloman, Columbus State University; Jodi Johnson, Dalton State College; Vincent June, Georgia Perimeter College; Kurt Keppler, Valdosta State University; Ron Koger, Southern Polytechnic University; Melanie McClellan, University of West Georgia; Lynn McCraney, Macon State College; John McElveen, Middle Georgia College; Vicki McNeil, Armstrong Atlantic State University; Bobby Olive, Atlanta Metropolitan College; Bill Schafer, Georgia Tech; Ron Shade, Georgia Highlands College; Gina Sheeks, Columbus State University; Terrance Smith, Fort Valley State University; Melinda Spencer, University System of Georgia; Tom Walter, Gainesville State College.

John McElveen called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

New members were introduced. Randy Gunter introduced Irvin Clark, Interim VP at Savannah State University, effective upon Randy's retirement in December. Randy was recognized by the group for his service both to Savannah State and to RACSA.

The minutes were approved unanimously.

The first item of business was a discussion of the upcoming student fee audit. It was noted the audit would include all mandatory student fees, not just student activity fees. Several questions were raised regarding the timeline and the scope of the audit. Mendi Spencer advised the group that the process was still unfolding and the group should consider this audit to be in the same vein as the P-card audit. She said Ron Stark would pass information along as it became available. The group was advised that the auditors would be looking to see if stated fees are being used for stated purposes. We were also reminded that student activity fees and technology fees must be approved by SAC on an annual basis. All institutions should already have approval processes in place.

The impact of the budget reduction was the next agenda item. Obvious ways to cut such as changing the format of the RACSA meeting to a one day drive in meeting were discussed. It was noted that the System Office was looking for budget impact stories. Concern was expressed about the impact on students of additional fees. We have been told that at this time no decision has been made and various scenarios are being

considered. The question was asked if charging tuition above 12 hours was being considered. Kurt Keppler proposed RACSA develop a resolution to recommend tuition charges above 12 hours. He cited several reasons in support of the resolution including the rate of student drops at mid-point in order to keep to HOPE, the fiscal and cultural impacts, and the positive effect such a change would have on RPG efforts. The consensus of the group was to wait to see the outcomes of the Presidents' meeting. Melanie McClellan pointed out that raises for 2009 were still in question, however, employees were expected to make health care decisions now. It was pointed out that faculty would be exempt from losing their raises and that the Chancellor said the decision would be made system wide, not institutionally. Most people in attendance indicated their institutions were committed to salary increases for staff.

John McElveen asked if any other schools were experiencing difficulties finding dentists who accepted the new dental insurance. No one else seemed to be experiencing difficulties. Jodi Johnson indicated Dalton State employees were having difficulty finding physicians who would accept the new health insurance plan.

Next there was a discussion and comparison of hardship withdrawals/refund policies. Ron Koger said if financial aid was not involved, Barry Birkhead made decisions independently at Southern Poly. He asked how other schools were handling their hardship withdrawals. A discussion of various practices followed. It became apparent that schools have a variety of policies. Darryl Holloman suggested more guidance from the USG. Ron asked that people email their school policies to Barry.

Tom Walter discussed the recent court ruling: Free Speech/Harassment – Temple, 3rd circuit, where sexual harassment wording was ruled as too general. Tom pointed out that while it was not binding in Georgia, we should keep a close eye on this ruling. Our language in the common statement is very similar. Mendi provided some background on the case and brought up the recent intellectual diversity survey. She stressed the importance of having a student grievance procedure. She also reminded us that schools should adopt and publish the ACE statement on intellectual diversity.

John Clower asked if anyone had an active chapter of Concealed Carry, www.concealedcampus.org, on campus. He reported that a group has requested RSO at North Georgia. Melanie updated the group on a recent USG conference call regarding pending legislation allowing guns of college campuses in Georgia. She reported that among the diverse groups represented on the call there was unanimous agreement there should be no more guns on campus. Melanie offered to share a summary of the call with any interested parties. Tom Daniel has invited a small representative group from campus police, students, presidents, and student affairs to Atlanta to discuss the pending legislation. There are many sound arguments against allowing guns on campus including the high use of alcohol by the college population, and the frequent thefts of small, high dollar items. Currently, there is no ambiguity in the guns on campus policy. It was suggested we ask parents to have conversations with legislators, and that we should sit down with our presidents and public safety chiefs to talk about guns on campus. The next scheduled higher education subcommittee meeting originally scheduled for

November 13 has been delayed. SAC plans to send representation and they have come out as being overwhelmingly opposed to guns on campus.

Tom Walter reminded everyone of the CSAO think tank at GCPA this year. GCPA will be held February 25-27. Tom sent around a paper asking for ideas and volunteers.

Bill Schafer provided an update on the Regents' Committee on Learning Disorders (RCLD). The most recent agenda included a discussion of the role of the RCLD, funding, and the statistical recording of disorders on our campuses. Randy Gunter suggested setting up programs with local high schools to promote education and awareness. Kurt raised the concerns of the cost of the testing as well as the long distances some students must travel to be tested. The group agreed AMAC is a good thing. Melanie brought up that the state is evaluating mental health issues, and would it be a good thing to partner with them? Tom mentioned that the foundation gives an allocation each year at Gainesville to assist with testing. Lynn McCraney asked how best to assess services provided. Jim Cottingham said he thought the RCLD was a model for other services in the USG. He pointed out that the RCLD provides services campuses could not offer otherwise.

The NASPA assessment project was discussed. This is a three-year national effort to benchmark student assessment. The price has dropped since the initial offering, and the information would assist schools with SACS reaffirmation visits.

A doctoral program update was next on the agenda (See draft proposal submitted by Melanie.) Bill felt there was strong interest in the program and mentioned that it would be a positive thing to happen in current economic times. He also mentioned it would be good for employee retention. Mendi will take the final proposal to Susan Herbst and Wayne Guthrie for review. Mendi recommended this move forward from the UGA College of Student Affairs Preparation. She expressed concern about the approach RACSA is taking in moving the degree forward. She said the degree must be based on its academic merit, not on professional development, and it should be nationally normed. It was suggested, given the time this project is taking, that we should encourage employees to look at the online program the University of Alabama is now offering. Rodney Bennett stated that what we created was what the Board asked us to do. He said we put together a program for the staff in the USG through a highly collaborative and participative process. Rodney pointed out that RACSA responded to an initiative from the Chancellor. The group consensus was there is a huge need for this program.

Mendi then provided other system updates. Tonya Lam and Felita Williams are leading a group put together to review the academic calendar. Some groups, such as international students, are not satisfied with the current student health insurance program. Tonya, Wayne, and Kimberly Ballard-Washington are working with an outside company to evaluate the needs of student insurance when current contract expires in 2010. A Disability Support Services (DSS) policy will be coming before the Board. The policy states that we must meet needs when presented to us. The policy is not different from ADA, it just affirms the current law. Tonya is the point person. There will be a

presentation on serving DSS at the upcoming Board meeting. A discussion followed regarding resource allocation. For example, the cost and benefits of using an interpreter versus a captioner were discussed .

Additional introductions were made. Vincent June, Georgia Perimeter College, and Dale Hartenburg, Medical College of Georgia, were welcomed to the group.

There has been no update on the summer meeting from VPAA group. John asked if it was worth having a one day drive in meeting several times a year. Some concerns were voiced about meeting given the current budget restrictions. The group consensus was yes, continue meeting at this time. The majority of the group wanted to maintain the same summer meeting format as last year. The value in meeting with the VPAAAs was expressed. It was noted, however, the importance of selecting topics of mutual interest to VPAAAs and VPSAs. It was decided we would meet at either Clayton State or Macon State during the third or fourth week of February.

Under other business, Gail Dillard asked where athletics fell on campus organizational charts. There was no consensus. Answers included student affairs, academic affairs, the president, and advancement.

John asked the members of RACSA to share either an issue or something they were proud of. Shared concerns of student mental health issues, crisis planning, student insurance, economic conditions, increased facility and programming use on campus, and concern about maintaining the admission pilot were expressed. On the positive side, West Georgia has added a patient advocate position to help students locate resources, Georgia Gwinnett College is now awarding federal aid, Gainesville has a new student center, Savannah State has expanded housing, and community education partnerships, Armstrong Atlantic has a new student union and freshman housing, Columbus State has developed an online reporting system, and Middle College and Georgia College have won awards for their admissions websites.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm.