

Minutes of the Biology Academic Advisory Committee
Annual Meeting
Macon State College
April 9, 2012

Present: Ray Barber-ABAC, Rich Griner-Augusta State, Jenny Harper-Bainbridge, Virginia Michelich-BOR System Office, Barbara Musolf-Clayton State, Julie Ballenger-Columbus State, Lindasu Crowe-Darton, Jimmy Wedincamp-East Georgia, Mary Mayhew-Gainesville State, Indiren Pillay-Georgia College and State University, Judy Awong-Taylor-Georgia Gwinnett, Donna Daugherty-Georgia Highlands, Sheryl Shanholtzer-Georgia Perimeter, Stephen Vives-Georgia Southern, Bob Herrington-Georgia Southwestern, Jerald Hendrix-Kennesaw State, David Davis-Macon State, Deepa Arora-Middle Georgia College, Nancy Dalman-North Georgia College and State University, Matt Weand-Southern Polytechnic, Mark Farmer-UGA, Bob Gannon-Valdosta State, Gaylon Cook-Waycross

The meeting was called to order at 10 am by Ray Barber.

There was motion and second to approve the minutes of the March 31, 2011 BAAC meeting. The motion was approved.

Complete College Georgia Plan – Issues: The committee discussed issues relating to the Complete College Georgia plan, especially with respect to the issue of transferability of credits from Technical College System of Georgia institutions to USG schools. The consensus was that science credit from TCSG schools could transfer as non-majors or general education (Area D) credit, but that transfer as majors credit required individual evaluation by the departments in the USG institution.

Transfer Issues and Tracking Students: Mark Farmer from UGA addressed issues with the completion rate of students who transfer to UGA but have not completed BIOL I/II and/or CHEM I/II. The committee discussed several key points related to this issue:

- The need for early advising;
- Students who deliberately avoid science courses to keep their GPA high enough for transfer to UGA;
- If we could track transfer students by criteria such as prerequisites taken and completion of organic chemistry.

Impact of USG Mergers: The committee briefly discussed the four mergers which were in progress affecting eight USG institutions. In each merger, the departments of the two institutions were merged.

Faculty Issues: Full time & part time: The committee discussed several issues related to evaluation of faculty performance.

- One question was who monitors performance of part time faculty at different institutions. At several of the institutions, either full time faculty mentors or course coordinators monitored part time performance in addition to the department chairs. Donna Daugherty at Georgia Highlands College indicated that she has a coordinator for part time faculty whom she pays an overload/administrative stipend.
- The committee discussed the use of peer review for faculty evaluation. Several institutions indicated that they had standardized peer review rubrics.
- The committee discussed the use of external peer review for teaching and/or research.
- The committee discussed the use of online vs paper student evaluations. Several institutions have gone to online systems, such as Digital Measures, for their student evaluations.

Online Science Credit: Dr. Linda Nobel from the Board of Regents came to discuss credit for online science classes, including laboratories. She reported that a USG/Ga Tech task force in January 2012 had made recommendations for ensuring quality in online science classes, especially with laboratories. This discussion was part of a broader discussion to increase availability of distance learning in the state. The committee discussed several issues relating to online science classes.

- How do departments ensure the quality of labs and supervision in an online delivery? Some departments have used digital photos/video made by students to ensure that the work was completed.
- Should there be a GPA threshold for students to take online classes?
- Will other disciplines be under similar scrutiny for their online offerings?
- Dr. Nobel indicated that increased distance offerings is becoming more frequent and required articulation/transferability between institutions, especially with respect to general education courses.
- Lyndasu Crowe from Darton College indicated that her department had offered online labs for several years in Anatomy and Physiology.

Placement Exam for Biology: Richard Griner from Augusta State College addressed the question of a “gateway course” which students would take before entering BIOL I/II, and the use of a placement exam to determine if a student would need to take a gateway or “remedial” biology course before entering the general principles sequence. The discussion in the committee indicated that no schools had a specific “biology placement” exam, although some schools used their Math Placement exam scores for information on students’ readiness to enter BIOL I/II.

Lab Fees: Judy Awong-Taylor asked the group about their use of student lab fees and official Board of Regents policy. The committee members indicated compliance with institutional regulations regarding student lab fees, including maintaining required documentation.

Program & Course Reviews: Ray Barber emphasized the critical need for committee members to respond to requests for feedback on program and course proposals. The BAAC chair is required to report feedback to the Board as a part of the review process.

Election of Officers: The following individuals were elected to committee positions for 2012-2013:

- Jerald Hendrix, Kennesaw State University: Chair
- Mark Farmer, UGA: Chair-elect
- Bob Gannon, Valdosta State University: Executive Committee, Regional University Representative
- Gaylon Cook, Waycross College: Executive Committee, 2 year College Representative
- Barbara Musolf, Clayton State University: Executive Committee, Comprehensive State University Representative

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Amendment to the minutes from Virginia, received May 2.

The physics advisory committee did approve the TCSG physics courses as equivalent to USG PHYS 1111 and 1112. Thus, they should count for majors allowed to take those courses rather than the calc-based physics.