

Minutes
Regents' Academic Advisory Committee on History
Macon, GA
February 16, 2018

Attending: Alice Pate (Kennesaw State University), Andrew Goss (Augusta State University), Bob Burnham (Middle Georgia State University), Carla Gerona (Georgia Institute of Technology), Craig Pascoe (Georgia College & State University), James Galt-Brown (Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College), John Dunn (Valdosta State University), Jon Bryant (Georgia Southern University), Kenja McCray (Atlanta Metropolitan State College), Mark Vickrey (GAH Liaison), Michael Gunther (Georgia Gwinnett College), Patrizia Stahle (College of Coastal Georgia), Reid Derr (East Georgia State College), Scott McDermott (Albany State University), Scott McDermott (Albany State University)

Meeting was called to order at 9:05 am

Chair Craig Pascoe, Presiding

Report from the Annual Meeting of the Regents' Academic Advisory Committee on History (RAACH):

Introductions

Mark Vickrey was introduced as the representative who reports to the Georgia Association of Historians (GAH) board. Kenja McCray was introduced as the RAACH Chair-Elect who will begin July 1, 2018. Board of Regents (BOR) Liaison, Jon Sizemore, could not attend meeting. The BOR has another critical meeting. Dr. Pascoe emphasized that Mr. Sizemore wants to stay connected with the RAACH, suggesting he may be able to join future RAACH meetings via Skype.

Approval of Minutes

Dr. Pascoe opened floor for motion to approve last year's RAACH meeting minutes. The motion carried, and minutes from the 2017 meeting were approved.

Discussion

There will be changes, which call for more eCore online and fewer courses taught and designed by individual faculty members. Technology innovations are also coming down the pipeline.

Mary Ellen Dallman is lobbying to accept a score of 3 on Advanced Placement Exams in history be more inclusive of low-income and minority students. An issue was raised that, when students are not in the classroom, the bottom line in our divisions and programs is impacted.

A question was raised about Momentum Year initiatives. A comment was made about having students take history classes within their first year to help them develop academic focus areas. The assertion was made that history majors should get into their courses during the first year.

In a discussion about Affordable Learning Georgia, RAACH members noted that faculty members must make note if instructional materials in a given class are free or less than \$40.

An initiative for Greater Learning Courses was considered. It was announced that the Chancellor might provide \$1 million to create a co-requisite course format in gateway courses. Examples of co-requisite course formats include Learning Support lectures and labs offered at certain USG institutions in ways that provide [supplemental "just-in-time" support for college level English and mathematics](#).

Attendees discussed the new USG emphasis on a Nexus Degree, which is being developed in concert with the public sphere to make students more marketable. RAACH members posed questions about where history fits into the Nexus Degree, since the focus seems more on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Members raised concerns about whether a technical college approach might be applied to the liberal arts and humanities. Many stressed that the USG seems to be moving toward training but away from important aspects of holistic education such as communicative skills/soft skills.

One member posed a question about whether the Nexus Degree might be a method for offering certificates in a degree format that would make certificate seekers eligible for financial aid. Others wondered if the Nexus Degree can be made into a minor and whether stackable credentials signal that general or core education is dying. Some participants thought the positive aspects included the fact that Veterans might benefit from life skills exemptions in such a program.

It was noted that a past worry was technical colleges would be taken over by USG. Now historians wonder whether the USG is taking on too many tech sensibilities. An individual expressed the hope that the Nexus Degree is not a marketing strategy to increase the numbers of degree-holding GA citizens. Some attendees acknowledged this could be a response to the desires of Georgians in terms of creating greater opportunity and the best use of tax dollars.

A discussion ensued about the value of a history degree. The American Historical Association's "[History is not a Useless Major](#)" preliminary notes were passed out to provide a framework for thinking about the topic. Historians emphasized the use of the *longue duree* to see the value of a history degree. Dr. Goss mentioned the AHA is in process of writing a book on the topic. Although it is unfinished, Dr. Goss informed the group that he has drafts of all the essays. Goss pointed out a recent report from American Academy of Arts and Sciences, which has data on history majors including median income.

The RAACH was informed that the BOR is requesting similar info from the committee. Dr. Goss suggested there might be two approaches-

- Expeditiously producing a handout or brochure for quick reading.
- Forming a RAACH sub-committee to produce a longer, more in-depth USG document.

One member offered wording for the title, explaining experts titled a study "The Value of a Sociology *Graduate*" to emphasize degree completion. The sociology document is an [official statement available online](#). One person emphasized the importance of including testimonials from GA students. Another commented that this document would be good for giving to deans who are interested in cutting program offerings. It could support entities seeking to make strong arguments for keeping history degree programs.

The conversation about the value of a history degree continued. One person wondered whether the document will be put online. Another asked that the RAACH alert the media about the document, including the AJC, and announce it at conferences as Texas has done. The document should be useful to

the RAACH, the BOR, and the state of Georgia. Members asked about a deadline for the document, which was requested several months ago.

More discussion about the wording of the request and the document followed. One member asked about the specific wording of the query, wondering what was meant by the subjective term “value.” The suggestion was made that the RAACH document needs to provide information about skills history majors gain. Dr. Stahle emphasized the importance of humanities degrees, provided ideas about value of history graduates, and lauded the skills they possess. She stressed that the document should focus on skills students will develop. She suggested that history departments do not have to open the door for jobs, well-rounded and capable students will be able to get jobs. Dr. Galt-Brown added that learning outcomes must be skills driven and quantifiable. He challenged the idea of simply producing “well rounded” students, highlighting that USG history departments should want students to be “well-prepared.”

Dr. Goss reminded attendees that there is a wealth of material on the value of a humanities degree. The RAACH, however, must be focused on explaining the history degree’s value. This might partially be because the subject straddles the line between humanities and social sciences. The BOR is the target audience for the report; however, it was suggested that it should be made accessible for other readers. Dr. Galt-Brown asked whether the RAACH was ultimately writing for the state legislature. Raising the previously-discussed issue of constituents’ desires, Dr. Goss pointed out that the BOR anecdotally provided instances of concerned mothers and fathers who did not want their children to take history because parents viewed the subject as “useless.” Dr. Bryant pointed out that the RAACH’s audience might include commission members of [College 2025](#) and not necessarily the public at this time. He stressed that the advisory committee should include aspects that can be shared with everyone. It was decided that Drs. Gerona, Stahle, and Goss will remain involved in drafting the report. Drs. Dunn and McCray will revise the document once it has been completed.

The RAACH next discussed the BOR College 2025 Initiative. One member expressed concern over the make-up of the College 2025 Initiative committee. The group is comprised of business leaders, but college representation is not transparent or clear. The member was particularly concerned about whether there was representation from the humanities. The advisement committee raised this concern about College 2025 but also other initiatives such as Momentum Year. Members wondered whether skills will need to be assessed in addition to learning outcomes, how much of an impact these initiatives will have on classroom teaching.

RAACH members pointed out that, with mergers, history has been moved to various departments and divisions and faces fragmentation. Some participants were concerned that professors now function more as managers whose positions do not exist in institutional flow charts. When these unofficial management positions do not formally exist, who holds liability? Some also expressed concern that the focus is now more on credentialing than education. This group of USG history professors pointed out their interest in students’ education, but worried that this is contrasted by administrators’ preoccupation with credentialing and finances.

Advisory committee members presented concerns about DFWI rates. They highlighted that faculty are being flagged in such processes as annual reviews for having too many DFWIs. Some are being sent for professional development. Others were worried that the Early Alert system may be a way of hiring more advisors and fewer professors. Some RAACH members wonder about the longevity of recent initiatives

when administrator turnover is high (Tristan Denley replaced Houston Davis who served as chief academic officer five years from 2012-2017). While the focus is RPG (retention, progression, and graduation), administrators want verifiable data on 4 and 6 year graduation rates to document success. Dr. Goss presented the idea that historians are in a position to lead initiatives in developing a cutting-edge vision for higher education in Georgia.

The Coastal College of Georgia (CCGA) Bachelor of Arts in History degree proposal was discussed. Dr. Stahle of CCGA has been working on the proposal for 3 years, but the initiative has been tabled. CCGA had a president with a strong liberal arts background who gave internal permission to move forward with the program, but she will not be staying. Now, CCGA historians are being told they have to perform financial forecast analyses. CCGA has several history tracks within the American Studies BA, but historians have trouble scheduling enough courses because they must compete with other disciplines. Dr. Stahle asked RAACH for support in looking at proposal.

Members made several suggestions and raised questions for Dr. Stahle to consider-

- Think about allying with another initiative with traction, such as one that educates and trains public school teachers.
- Consider historians' relationship with the tourism industry as a draw for students.
- Remember new programs must be put on a specific USG Academic Proposal Form. Consolidation opened space for new programs; however, they cannot be approved if they are not on the correct form.
- Keep in mind teacher education, American Studies & interdisciplinary studies degrees will not be desirable because they do not count for teachers in terms of certification. Additionally, Kennesaw State does not attract many history BA students to the American Studies MA.
- Get data on how many students transfer to four-year history programs, argue that a bachelor's at your institution will retain those students.
- Ask yourself whether your institution can satisfy the needs of a bachelor's program with the number of faculty members on staff.
- Others brought up issues such as how Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) would see the department's ability to teach the breadth of courses required for a bachelor's program.

Dr. Burnham moved to open the floor for elections. The motion carried. Alice Pate and Jonathan Bryant were elected for At-Large Positions. Carla Gerona was elected RAACH Chair-Elect for 2018-2019. Dr. Gerona requested removal from the Graduate Program Committee. The floor was opened for appointments. Dr. Pascoe was nominated chair of the Graduate Program Committee. Mark Vickrey is Ex Officio GAH Committee Member for RAACH.

The issue of dual representation from Albany State University was raised. RAACH members should be appointed by their institution's Provost to the Committee. Albany State members were advised to check with their Provost. If dual membership remains, they were reminded that the institution only gets one vote. The USG will not appoint members and must contact the institution for Provost's approval. Savannah State University's representative no longer works at the institution. SSU's new RAACH representative is Kazuo Yagami.

Dr. Pate moved to thank Dr. Pascoe for his service. The motion was carried.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed. The 2018 RAACH meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Kenja McCray.