

Meeting Minutes: Committee on Biological Sciences

Academic Advisory Committee for the Biological Sciences

October 15-16, 1999

Clarion Hotel, Jekyll Island, GA

Attendees:

Regents	Dorothy Zinsmeister
Ga. Tech	No Representative
Georgia State	No Representative
MCG	Norris O'Dell
UGA	No Representative
Ga. Southern	John Averett
Valdosta	David Bechler
Albany	No representative
Armstrong Atl	Ron Beumer (Substitute for Kenneth Relyea)
Augusta	Russ Stullken (Substitute for Emil Urban)
Clayton	Rebecca Halyard
Columbus	(Substitute for George Stanton)
Fort Valley	Clinton Dixon
Georgia Coll/St U	William Wall
Georgia Southwestern	Elisabeth Elder
Kennesaw State	Ralph Rascati
North Georgia	Mark Davis
Savannah	Matt Gilligan (Substitute for Harpal Singh)
Southern Polytech	Bill Burnett
State U of West GA	Greg Stewart
ABAC	Leon Benefield
Atlanta Metro	Barbara Morgan
Bainbridge	Nancy Goodyear

Coastal Georgia	Eugene Keferl
Dalton	John Lugthart
Darton	Jeffery Hill
East Georgia	Jimmy Wedincamp
Floyd	Michael Windelspecht
Gainesville	Caywood Chapman
Georgia Perimeter	Betty Molloy
Gordon	Theresa Stanley
Macon	Eric Sun
Middle Georgia	John Pasto
South Georgia	Terry Harrington
Waycross	Andy Madison

The Friday session was called to order by Chairman John Averett at 1:30 pm

Ralph Rascati distributed notes taken at the recent workshop for the Executive Committees of the various Academic Advisory Committees. The workshop was held, September 14 in Macon. Those notes would be the basis for some of the business discussions scheduled for the Saturday morning session of the meeting.

It was decided that we would have a Spring meeting in conjunction with the Georgia Academy of Science meetings to be held in Valdosta in March of 2000. The exact dates and times of the meeting will be communicated at a later date.

The rest of the Friday afternoon session consisted of four presentations on the usage of computer technology in education followed by discussion.

Bill Burnett (SPSU)

Bill summarized his recent experience using WebCT. He uses a number of external links to interesting and fun sites for the students. He also makes use of the Grade Checking/Tracking functions in WebCT. One of the ways he stimulates student exploration of the material on the web site is to plant hidden bonus point opportunities for the students.

Becky Halyard (CCSU)

Becky discussed her experience with teaching Introductory Biology online. Textbook choice was influenced by the availability of ancillary materials useful for online presentation.. Students have limited on-campus meetings (midterm, final, some labs {6 labs on 3 Saturdays}; other labs are done at home or on-line). Experience is that it is

time-consuming to write lessons and grade assignments when each lesson consists of tutorials, key terms, activities, practice tests and assignments. Each activity also consists of many different types of material.

Michael Windelspecht (Floyd)

Michael discussed his experiences using Front Page to design online courses. They built their own server so as not to be dependent on the campus server. Each online course requires an orientation session at which students are told what to expect from an online course. A comprehensive final exam is given on campus to minimize the effects of cheating. Other exams are given using a Front Page Form and are submitted electronically. Each exam contains a statement of honesty. General statements indicated that online courses are more time consuming than on-ground courses because they include more assignments and require more contact time per student.

Alison Morrison-Shetlar (GA Southern U)

Alison (director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning) addressed the issue of whether technology really makes a difference in teaching & learning. Assessment is the key factor in determining effectiveness. She uses a student survey to determine if students are auditory, visual, or kinesthetic learners. She then adjusts teaching style to accommodate these various styles. She addressed problems that can be encountered with the use of technology. She also discussed advantages of using technology. She encouraged us to encourage faculty to write about their experiences as part of the "Scholarship of Teaching".

A panel discussion followed the last presentation. Several issues were discussed including the need not to overwhelm the students and the advantage of collaborative learning even in large classes and in online classes. Workload issues were discussed in terms of how many students could be reasonably handled in an online course and how should total teaching load be allocated when online courses are part of the workload assignment. No specific recommendations were made but it was recognized that this is an issue that many of us are either currently facing, or will soon face, and some common recommendations may need to be developed.

Dorothy Zinsmeister (BOR liaison) then discussed a recent SACS Substantive Change Visit in North Carolina for which she was an observer. The visit was conducted as a system-wide visit looking at online course delivery involving 38 institutions divided into 3 geographic districts. Much of the visit was conducted electronically. She suggested that the University System of Georgia may be involved in a similar visit as early as fall 2000 and that we should be thinking about important issues. Issues raised in the NC visit included quality, testing security, student orientation issues, and faculty development support.

After some additional discussion the session was adjourned at 5:25 pm.

The Saturday morning session was called to order by Chairman John Averett at 8:30 am.

Dorothy Zinsmeister discussed the forthcoming SOTAB meeting. The Friday afternoon session will focus on plant/animal interactions and defenses. The Saturday morning session will focus on neurological interactions. Jim Muyskens (CEO and Dean of Faculty at the new Gwinnett Center) will be invited to be the after-dinner speaker Friday and to talk about his vision for the Center and consequently for faculty in the University System.

Program notification and registration information will be distributed soon. Because of its success last year, their will again be a poster session at this year's SOTAB meeting. Faculty will be encouraged to develop presentations on the scholarship of teaching as well as on the traditional scholarship of discovery. Vendors are being contacted but so far only a limited number have indicated an interest. Betty Molloy encouraged us to contact vendors who might be interested and to communicate those contacts to her.

The next item of discussion involved putting Area F on-line and also Teacher Preparation issues. One problem with putting Area F online is whether labs can effectively be done on-line. One alternative suggested by Dorothy is to have an agreement that a student taking a course online from any institution in the state could do labs on any campus and those labs would count for the Biology Area F requirement. This will work if we can agree on a common set of Learning Outcomes (see additional discussion below).

A discussion of Teacher Preparation issues was then initiated by Dave Bechler from Valdosta State University. He distributed the QCCs for Early Childhood Education grades 1-5 for Life Science and Inquiry areas. Discussion included several individuals. Greg Stewart from West Georgia talked about redesigning their secondary education program and that the College of Education on his campus wanted 33 hours in their Profession Core Sequence. This would make it impossible to have discipline courses that would address all of the required QCCs. Other campuses are, or soon will be, facing similar problems. Resolution of those problems will depend on the degree of cooperation (or lack of cooperation) between the Arts & Science departments and the various Colleges of Education. The merits of 5 year programs where students would get a B.S. (or B.A.) in a discipline in a 4-year program followed by a 5th year to get their education courses (culminating in a Master's of Art in Teaching [MAT] degree) were discussed. While the general consensus was that this is a better approach it probably will not happen on a system-wide basis.

A motion was made to look at this further and to make recommendations at the Spring meeting.

Several announcements and mini-surveys were then made. John Pasto (Middle Georgia) announced a 10 day trip/course to the Galapagos Islands and distributed flyers to anyone interested.

A survey was then taken about Honors programs housed in a department rather than in the Institution as a whole. This appeared to be unique to Armstrong Atlantic State University among the institutions surveyed. Another survey was taken indicating that 13 institutions had at least one core Biology course without a lab while 12 required labs for all of their core Biology courses.

Ralph Rascati then made a brief report based on the meeting held in Macon for the Executive Committees of the various Academic Advisory Committees. Notes from that meeting are attached to these minutes and copies of handouts from the meeting were distributed. *{Anyone not receiving these handouts should contact Ralph at rascati@kennesaw.edu for a copy}*

Major items for discussion were:

1. The system is considering expanding the technology fee to all institutions and making it HOPE-eligible. However, inclusion of any new fee in the HOPE scholarships means that more money must be available to

serve the same number of students or that fewer students can be served. One alternative the USG is considering is removing non-academic fees from HOPE eligibility and substituting the technology fee.

Consequences are unclear. A motion was made and seconded to support the inclusion of the technology fee as HOPE-eligible and remove certain non-academic fees. After some discussion about the potential consequences to students of this action the motion was tabled.

A motion was made and seconded as follows: The Academic Advisory Committee for the Biological Sciences recommends that no changes be made to HOPE eligible fees until the System Office identifies and prioritizes those fees to be covered by HOPE and those fees to be eliminated and determines the consequences of those recommendations. Furthermore, no action should be taken until the system office solicits and receives input from the various Academic Advisory Committees.

This motion passed unanimously.

2. One item under consideration by the BOR is to have students pay for each credit hour taken rather than capping payment at 12 hours. Discussion of this resulted in no specific recommendation although several options were mentioned. A thorough analysis of potential financial consequences needs to be done before any changes are implemented. This may again be discussed at the Spring meeting if more information is available.
3. The Georgia G.L.O.B.E. initiative (presented by Rick Skinner at the Macon meeting) was discussed. The consequences of "anywhere/anytime" access (as proposed for the program) on faculty workload and workload management were discussed. As participation in this program is voluntary (on an institution by institution basis) no specific recommendations were made. However, chairs should be aware that if their particular institution decides to participate, workload management problems may arise that will need to be resolved.
4. A brief discussion of workloads took place. A memo from Dorothy Zinsmeister (that was distributed at the Macon meeting) indicated that the System Office is taking a "hands-off" approach to workload and leaving that to individual institutions. A brief survey of practices at various institutions was taken. It was suggested that the results of the survey be grouped by type of institution (2-yr, 4-yr, university, etc.) and extent of research commitment in order to more effectively analyze the results and make recommendations (if that is found to be desirable). Further discussion of this may take place at the Spring meeting.

In partial response to Muysken's challenges to the Academic Advisory Committees (see attached notes from the Macon meeting) several goals were set for the coming year. These include being pro-active as well as reactive, determining common learning objectives for Area D1 and Area F biology courses, and examining these courses for possible distance delivery.

In order to establish common learning objectives the following actions will be taken:

1. Becky Halyard (Clayton College & State University) will collect from each of the chairs the learning objectives associated with core biology courses. These should be in Word or HTML format and should include learning objectives that are based in the lab experiences for those courses as well as in the classroom experience.
2. Michael Windelspecht (Floyd) will establish a web page and discussion board for the AAC onto which these learning objectives can be posted and discussed. All of this will be done by Thanksgiving.
3. A committee consisting of Betty Halyard, Mike Windelspecht, Betty Molloy, and Greg Stewart will examine these, and distill from them, a set of common learning objectives and report on these at the Spring meeting.

These common learning objectives may well form the foundation for an e-core in biology appropriate for distance delivery as part of GLOBE or in some other delivery mode.

Finally, a discussion of the availability (and pursuit) of funding for AAC activities was discussed. BOR (System Office) funding will be investigated to fund a web site and other activities necessary to determine common learning objectives for core biology courses and investigate the possibility of distance delivery of these courses on a system-wide basis. Ideas for external funding will be discussed that may be used primarily to bring in external speakers for development purposes will also be generated. Other ideas for external funding will also be considered. These will be discussed via email before any proposal is developed and submitted.

The meeting was adjourned by John Averett at 12:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Ralph J. Rascati, Chair Elect
Kennesaw State University

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Content Source: Academic Affairs

Committee on Biological Sciences

Notes from the "Workshop of the Executive Committees of the Academic Advisory Committees"

After a brief introduction Dorothy Zinsmeister discussed several handouts including the following:

1. Goals & Objectives (Priorities) of the USG Office of Academic Affairs
2. FY 2000 Faculty Development Calendar
3. Web pages for Faculty Development & Academic Committees
 - <http://deai.peachnet.edu/calendars/>
 - <http://www.usg.edu/admin/comm/>
4. Electronic Submission of AAC meeting minutes
5. Position statement of faculty teaching loads/workloads

We were encouraged to send our meeting dates to Dorothy so they could be posted to the web site.

Teaching & Learning Grants have been suspended for this year. Money will be spent in other ways.

Dr. Muyskens then talked and challenged the Advisory Committees to do the following:

1. Expand to a cross-discipline view
2. Look for ways to promote the Professional Growth & Development of the faculty in our discipline; perhaps through the grants to the AAC's
3. Become a united voice for the profession
4. Develop discipline-specific reactions to the current and future changes in education
5. Address Workload Issues in the face of pedagogical innovations (e.g. distance learning)
6. Examine Area F for the following:
 - Appropriate mix of competencies
 - Distance delivery of all or part
7. Examine the major requirements
8. Foster the Scholarship of Teaching by looking for "exemplars"; modules of activities, concepts, materials, etc. that could be made available electronically for all to use; these would not be whole courses but rather individual "concept modules"

A question was raised about development of a new funding formula since the old one was based on quarter credit hours. This is being worked on. However, first priority is a hybrid formula that does not penalize us for the enrollment drop experienced as a result of semester conversion.

A focus group of faculty that have used banner extensively is being formed to discuss issues related to that program. The group will be small (8-12 faculty) but there will be a listserv (or bulletin board) to which others can direct comments and suggestions.

The System Office is considering extending the technology fee to all institutions. The potential issue is how this will affect HOPE scholarships since they pay all mandatory fees. Some thought is being given to taking non-education related fees (e.g. athletic fees) out of HOPE-eligible status in exchange for the technology fee.

The System Office is also considering whether or not to have students pay for all credit hours taken rather than give them a free ride after 12 hours. There are pros & cons to this and they are looking for input.

Muyskens then talked about the new Gwinnett Center and how it will operate.

Rick Skinner then talked about the Georgia G.L.O.B.E.

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