

**Joint Meeting of the Biology, Geology/Geography, and
Physics/Astronomy Academic Advisory Committees**

Macon State College

April 5, 2008

10:00 am

Dorothy Zinsmeister from the Board of Regents spoke about the upcoming changes to the core curriculum. She first directed us to the place on the BOR website where information related to the changes and proposed "models" for what the new core will look like. She also described the composition of the committee(s) making the changes to the core and emphasized that members of the committee(s) were chosen System-wide, not based on discipline. Each System school has a representative on one of the committees that is studying and proposing changes, and this person has the charge to keep the faculty on their campuses informed. Additionally, the BOR website has a place for feedback about the proposed models although the deadline for submitting comments appeared to be March 31. She indicated that communication about the changes to the core to the faculty on the individual campuses needed improvement since it seemed that many people at our BAAC meeting had very little information about what was happening.

Additionally, there were 2 other members from the committee(s) charged with reviewing and possibly changing the core curriculum - Chad Davis from Gordon College, and Tom Mundie from Georgia Gwinnett College. They provided input as they saw fit.

Much discussion ensued...

It was pointed out that there is only a place to provide feedback about the proposed changes to the core (the proposed models of the new core), but no way to provide feedback about the current core. Further, the trigger for revising the current core is unclear, although it seems that Board members may have received feedback from the business community about the poor preparation of USG students for actual employment. Dorothy reminded the group that the BOR is charged with reviewing the core curriculum just as any accrediting body would review member institutions (such as SACS).

It was also pointed out that the initial proposed timeline for implementing changes to the core has been pushed back at this point - possibly as long as 5 years from now.

Identifying learning outcomes and determining the means of assessment as a basis for changing the core curriculum was a common thread. Several people suggested that identifying the learning outcomes and assessing them appropriately should be the very first step. Dr. Zinsmeister reminded the group that it

could be determined that no changes to the core were needed.

At present, 2 models for a new core curriculum have been proposed but more models may be under consideration.

There was also discussion related to the alternative website - georgiacurriculum.org - which has been created by faculty members who are challenging the proposed changes to the core curriculum. (Interestingly, this website is linked to the BOR website and the survey therein.) It appears that this website is also being used as a means of communication from BOR to faculty members.

Following the discussion related to the core curriculum, there was a brief discussion about the policy of the University system and the acceptance of AP credit from high schools. It seems that a System-wide policy would be helpful.

Joint meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm

We broke for lunch, then met separately as the Biology Academic Advisory Committee at 1:00 pm.

More discussion related to the core curriculum changes ensued. I think the major points of this discipline-specific discussion were:

1. Sciences faculty should be attentive to the changes
2. The BAAC will generate a response as a discipline (as other academic disciplines have done)
3. Workload issues related to the "blended" or interdisciplinary nature of many of the proposed courses that could result from the changes to the core are significant - which faculty members will receive credit for teaching these blended courses, and how much credit will each receive?
4. Science content should not be diluted as part of the blended or interdisciplinary nature of these proposed new courses

The group also discussed the issue of lab fees at individual institutions.

Lastly, there was discussion of the mandated ISCI courses for pre-service elementary teachers. These courses fall outside the core curriculum. Several members discussed how these courses were being implemented on their campuses and successes / challenges associated with them.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm

Submitted by Dr. Ann Massey
Georgia State University