

eCore RAC Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2016
University of West Georgia Newnan Campus

Attendees

Jason Huett, eCampus
Melanie Clay, eCampus
Randy Blackmon, eCampus (presenter)
Jon Sizemore, USG
Robert Anderson, USG
Andy Meyer, Dalton State College
Becky da Cruz, Armstrong State Univ
Kokila Ravi, Atlanta Metropolitan
Deltrye Holt, Augusta University
Rodney Carr, Bainbridge State College
Kevin Demmitt, Clayton State University
Lisa McNeal, College of Coastal Georgia
Ellen Roberts, Columbus State University
Tina Butcher, Columbus State University
Dee McKinney, East Georgia State College

Melinda Spencer, Georgia Gwinnett College
Renva Watterson, Georgia Highlands College
Diane Langston, Georgia Highlands College
Bryan Davis, Georgia Southwestern State
University
Richard Baskin, Gordon State College
Judy Abbott, Kennesaw State University
Art Recesso, Middle Georgia State University
Robert Page, South Georgia State College
Irene Kokkala, University of North Georgia
Stephanie Hulsey, University of North Georgia
Cher Hendricks, University of West Georgia
Carol Cohen, Georgia State University
Philip Bishop, Valdosta State University

The Fall 2016 meeting of the eCore Regents Advisory Committee was convened at 10:00am, November 16, 2016. Robert Anderson, from USG, made opening comments by expressing his gratitude and congratulations for everyone's hard work and wants to be informed of any system barriers encountered at the central office.

Committee Business by Dr. Andy Meyer:

Committee Chair, Dr. Andy Meyer, made introductory comments and members introduced themselves. Copies of the Spring 2016 meeting minutes were provided to each member and approved. Minor changes to the Spring 2016 eCore RAC meeting minutes were suggested. Dr. McKinney made a motion to approve minutes, Dr. Baskin seconded, and all approved minutes from Spring 2016. Judy Abbott noticed error in Article V of bylaws; *intution's* needs to be changed to *institution's*. Dr. Carr motioned, Ellen Roberts seconded, and all approved bylaws.

Old Business:

Making evaluations available to department chairs was addressed at RACA meeting and all agreed that chairs should have access to them; however, they will not be considered part of the instructor's annual evaluation.

Dr. Huett discussed course exemptions for institutions. Courses before last spring are grandfathered in and require a system-level exemption. Gen Ed is still working on standardizing course numbers so there are a few exemptions based on discrepancies. Course equivalency charts are available online and everyone needs to check for accuracy. Dr. Demmitt explains there is no Gen Ed Council exemption for commonly numbered courses, such as ENGL 1101, but Dr. Langston pointed out that GHC is trying to phase out ETEC from Area B in their curriculum. The Gen Ed Council would like to see RAC first approve courses before they see and approve those courses.

USG Updates by Dr. Jon Sizemore:

Online enrollment: Current statistics were released at the USG board meeting and are on the USG website under reports and aggregated by institution. Enrollment and credit hour production up; however, Georgia Tech is bringing numbers down slightly due to how they count their online numbers for graduate activity and can possibly be contributed to MOOCs. Office of Research Analysis data should be examined like traditional courses, but as of now, there is no standard. Dr. Demmitt explained that there is nothing to differentiate students in disaggregate online programs versus those on campus for the research office; for example, a student enrolled in a 100% online program does not mean that student takes all their classes online. Dr. McKinney questioned results of MOWR, and Dr. Sizemore replied that it had a significant impact, up to 30%, on enrollment.

Special Examination of the Cost of Higher Education: Department of Audits performing consultative audit given rising cost of higher education. USG has been in discussions for 6 months with auditors who want to know what the USG is doing to lower cost for affordability and how eTuition rates are determined with undergraduates being their focus. They want data turned over and policies explained. They have visited campuses to talk in detail about innovations and to ask additional questions. John Fuchko advised that we do not want to conceal anything, but we do not want to overstate anything either. Auditors are surveying other state university systems for ideas. Now, policies on eTuition are broad, and although we were represented well, you can expect formalization of eTuition rates and possibly board approval of eTuition rates. Dr. Huett asked about future expectations regarding level of accountability, and Dr. Sizemore replied a higher level is expected. The report from this examination will be released before the end of the year, and recommendations coming out of that report will be used for legislative action.

State Authorization: Forty-three (43) states have joined SARA, and although there is a very high likelihood that Florida will join, Florida students could still be impacted. If there is no reciprocity agreement, have to go through their state office (Higher Ed Commission) to get authorization. Dr. Davis stated that the main trigger is physical presence, and since GSW offers in-state tuition to Florida residents, they have to be licensed through state of Florida. USG is monitoring situation whether Florida will join SARA.

Twenty-eight (28) states that are listed on website are up for first round of renewals. Renewal notifications will be sent out to primary contact at the institution, and electronic and hardcopy submissions accepted. New information, such as a link to website and processes, is requested on the forms. For the reporting process, annual data is required in May to identify student location by state.

Did not meet the November deadline, so there won't be any federal changes for 2017, but still talk among stakeholders for public and private institutions, disclosure requirements, consumer protection, licensure in state of instruction. Issues and changes surrounding student complaints under SARA and misrepresentation rule. Current misinterpretation rule would allow students to make a case of substantial misrepresentation and be forgiven of student debt, and you do not have to intend to deceive them. Definition could be changed by new rules so that all that would have to be proven is misrepresentation and that misrepresentation could be to anyone, including students, parents, loan officers, etc. Dr. Huett inquired as to how this would affect online education, citing the term *100% online program* as an example. Dr. Davis said the definition is broad considering you could ask *can they take it 100% online?* and/or *will they take it 100% online?* We need to be careful in the wording of all marketing material and how institutions relay this information to students. Also troublesome is the term *accelerated program*. The DOE will have stricter enforcement of this, and the loan could potentially be discharged due to omissions and positive statements that could be held against institutions. There are structured suggestions, such as scripts for recruiters and forcing printed materials to go through multiple reviews to check for problem language before being published. Dr. Roberts requested that Dr. Sizemore share his presentation with members.

eCore Updates by Dr. Melanie Clay:

Old Business: Dr. Clay stressed the importance of making improvements and providing feedback. We posted Course Equivalencies to the website to provide clarity regarding where all courses fit into the curriculum at all institutions. Dr. Huett has kept on top of the situation, but please report any errors you see so that we can make corrections. Dr. Davis inquired when new courses will be posted, and since Biology begins this spring, they need to be posted within the next few days.

Academic Honesty Policy: Plagiarism policy was the general focus during the Philosophy RAC meeting; members wanted to know eCore history, who our faculty are, and some wanted to know if the courses were rigorous enough. We made changes to the amount of readings to make sure students were getting enough. We need to engage faculty as partners in the online environment. They thought Academic Honesty policy needed to be reviewed. Wording currently gives instructors flexibility in the reporting process; however, Philosophy RAC members think verbiage needs to be changed to state that incidents of academic dishonesty **must** be reported to the judicial officer at the student's home institution. Furthermore, under our current policy, instructor level reports do not get escalated to an administrator, who reports and adds to database and then reports the offending student to their home institution; therefore, they want it brought down to instructor level to monitor for repeat offenders. There was discussion among members about procedures going through review from the system office that ended with requests to make changes to certain policies, but those reviews focused on due process and not academic dishonesty. Also, why this issue is policed by Academic Affairs as opposed to Student Affairs was discussed.

Dr. Clay explained that eCore Academic Honesty policy is reflective of UWG policy but may need to be revised due to recent changes. Dr. Huett explained the current process for students to appeal a

grade/decision: first appeal to the professor of the course in writing (letter of appeal); then, they can submit a written appeal to eCore Associate Dean, Dr. Huett, at which point our team moves to contact institution and Dr. Huett makes a ruling. If Dr. Huett finds in the student's favor, the process ends, but if not, they can appeal to ad hoc committee, which makes a recommendation to the Dean of eCore, Dr. Clay. Dr. Baskin questioned whether or not the faculty member is brought into the process, to which Dr. Huett replied that he makes multiple points of contact with the professors to gather more detailed information. Dr. Clay pointed out that we need to train faculty, and Dr. Baskin confirmed that faculty training is needed since they do not know what information to report and what all is needed to make a decision on the appeal. There was continued discussion on consequences of the eCore process and that the information is then turned over to the home institution for their consequences as well. Dr. Davis questioned whether students can ultimately appeal to the BOR and at what point. Dr. Demmitt suggested that we create a statement for institutions to agree to accept eCore policy and procedure for Academic Honesty issues. Dr. Clay then stressed importance of adding *must* to the procedure verbiage, and Dr. McKinney confirmed the addition of *must* will help keep institutions informed. However, we need to be aware of the operational issue that the student not be entered into the database until they accept consequences for their academic dishonesty. Again, Dr. Demmitt suggested we add a statement to the eCore Affiliate Agreement that each institution accepts eCore policy for the Academic Honesty process and procedure. Dr. Langston expressed concern over eCore cutting off levels of recourse that a typical student attending on campus would have access to. More discussion addressed whether or not appeals will increase and if institutional policies would have to be changed if eCore referred students back to their home institution if the student did not agree with the eCore consequences. Dr. Sizemore stated that the most efficient way to serve students is to have eCore handle cases of academic dishonesty, and when they exhaust all policies, then they can make a final appeal to the President of their home institution and BOR, so the process does not necessarily end with the Dr. Clay. There was talk of changing the grievance policy at each institution, and Dr. Davis suggested having separate grievance policies and academic integrity policies, leading Dr. Demmitt to recommend that the issue be sent to RACA. The group wanted to take this to RACA and ask for advice on where to go after Dr. Clay in the process. Dr. Clay requested a couple of weeks to come up with alternative wording, and Dr. Carr will work with Dr. Huett on wording. Dr. Demmitt stated all institutions will need to approve through SLA and advise institutions to add their President as the final arbiter. Dr. McKinney made a motion to add *must* to the eCore academic honesty statement, Dr. Demmitt seconded, and all agreed, passing the motion.

Marketing Materials: Dr. Clay showed all the new 2016 Fact Book, which all members received as a hard copy, and highlighted the fact that it is always a work in progress and can be viewed online for the latest updates. Dr. Clay mentioned learning outcome folders provided to each institution and pointed out that the jump this year was not as high, but it stabilized, allowing us to focus on other matters. Infographs were provided, and Dr. Clay revealed that eCore will be hiring graphic artists to enhance OERs.

Course Development and Revisions: Course development and revisions are progressing, and we are almost finished with course approval for the new courses coming out. It was questioned why eCore does not offer 1000-level Spanish. Spanish I is changing to allow 1001 and 1002 in area C, and Dr. Davis thinks those changes have been approved. Dr. Clay stated that foreign languages are the most challenging in terms of quality, cost of development, and maintenance, but we can do it if we need to, possibly through the use of grant money. Dr. Meyer stated that eMajor would appreciate the addition.

Dr. Huett briefly discussed the use of electronic documents to make paperwork more efficient.

BREAK for lunch

MOWR Partnership Efforts by Randy Blackmon:

The terms MOWR (money) and dual enrollment (students) are used interchangeably. Randy discussed trigger events, such as the gas shortage in the early 1970s that changed car sales forever since Toyota now makes more than GMC. The trigger events that changed the trajectory of eCore student enrollment are 2015 MOWR initiative and 2014 when our affiliates drastically increased. Randy showed county map of Georgia and explained the smaller counties have less college graduates since population and high school graduation rates have an overall effect on college attendance. Dr. Page asked for definition of rural county, and Randy explained he pulled it directly from the Georgia Department of Health, which defines rural as less than 35000. eCore helps these campuses gain more of the surrounding rural counties that have less access, and homeschool is one of our markets too. Randy and Karen go to conferences to distribute information regarding MOWR to teachers, principals, parents, etc. MOWR student performance is outstanding, with 9 out of 10 of dual enrollment students earning college credit, and the chances of gaining credits are the same across the board whether you are from Fulton or a rural county. We are aiming to enroll 1000 students per semester and to extend range and access for students. There is a need to build relationships between colleges and high school counselors; since no one says that they want to go to eCore, the institutions have the influence. Some students are disadvantaged, and Judy Abbott questioned that if they are so disadvantaged, how do we make sure they have computer access to take eCore classes. Randy explained that, although that is an issue, some high schools will allow students to use their facilities to take the courses, and Dr. Page confirmed that they allow students at his daughter's high school to use the computer labs there to take their online courses. Dr. Huett briefly discussed the homeschool market and those parents taking shifts to watch the group while completing their course work. Dr. Meyer questioned whether some institutions catered to bonding on campus, and while Randy pointed out that these are college courses, Dr. Huett explained the benefit to these institutions offering eCore courses as it increases the chances of these high school students matriculating to the institution once they graduate and formally enter college. Dr. Baskin referenced the fact that some students do need a transitional step into college that dual enrollment provides.

Student Evaluation of Instruction by Dr. Jason Huett:

Review of new Evaluation items: Dr. Huett showed members copies of the questions used for student evaluation of instruction and support services. Our goal is to get over 50% participation over the next year. We revised questions based on research in order to get more participation, and these evaluations will be delivered via Qualtrics for institution-level reports that can be mined for data for specific reports, such as how students at a certain institution are doing in ENGL 1101, for example. We are working on a 2-minute video appeal from eCor administrators to encourage student participation and tick up the response rate. Also, we will be transparent and share with any department chairs who request them since they are closest to the faculty members.

eCore and the General Education Core Curriculum by Dr. Jason Huett and Dr. Kevin Demmitt:

Process for Approval of eCore Courses Forms were handed out to all members. Dr. Demmitt confirmed that the General Ed Council recognizes that eCore is important. The process of approval of new eCore courses in compliance with SACS policy results in more paperwork, and Dr. Huett urged everyone to look over it. On page 4, Dr. Huett and eCore administrators need a definition for “develops the course” because, although eCore can provide a syllabus and other course materials, the cost is substantial to develop a full course, and it is not cost effective to develop it and then have it rejected. Dr. Baskin stated that you would need a prospectus and wording would need to reflect “proposes a course” to avoid having to completely develop it. Dr. Demmitt stated that the process can include a general syllabus and variations can be made to the course as long as the course outcomes do not change. Dr. Page suggested the wording of the first sentence be changed. Since it is a draft at this point, no vote is needed to change the wording of the document, so Dr. Demmitt will advise the General Ed Council that it needs to be changed on the draft.

Dr. Huett explained that it is merely a notification process if a commonly numbered course is added to a typical area; however, Dr. Davis added that it can depend on the area in which the course is placed at the institution. For example, if the institution is proposing to place the course in a new area, then it would be treated as a new proposal.

Dr. Huett discussed the issues surrounding ARTS 1100 and the Summer 2017 target date given that it is, as a new course, caught between the old and new policies, and since it is not a commonly numbered course, it must go through the General Ed process. Dr. Davis moved to approve ARTS 1100 through eCore RAC, Dr. Kokkala seconded, and all approved. Dr. Demmitt does not foresee an issue with the General Ed Council on the change of wording or the approval of ARTS 1100. If the eCore RAC agrees that a certain course needs to be developed, please let us know so that eCore can begin the conversation to propose a course and approve it by the eCore RAC before it moves forward to the General Ed Council.

STEMcore by Jason Huett and Art Recesso:

Dr. Huett discussed STEMcore, which is proposal for 5-6 core-level science and math courses developed by Georgia Tech/eCore for pre-engineering majors, but Dr. Huett suggested we broaden the range to include *all* STEM students. These are pre-engineering branded courses to help students who do not have an engineering program around them to get their feet wet and determine if the program suits their needs. It is likely a MOOC-based design and similar to Regents' Engineering Pathway Program (REPP); there is currently no timeline or funding information, and we are not sure of eCore's role.

Dr. Recesso discussed the High Demand Career Initiative and our focus on FinTech, offering an AS and developing a BS for the program. Priority areas include data analytics, app development, fraud prevention, and compliance. We are at the point of asking employers about funding for employees interested in the program due to the fact that they can retain working adults who are already working in the call centers and early sales job and develop them into what they need in order to invest in workers and ultimately lower the cost for themselves and increase their own value propositions. As part of HDCl,

managed by Jamie Jordan, the Department of Economic Development offers regions up to \$250,000 in grant money to create effective sector partnerships within their respective regions, and additional information is provided on the HDCI website at [HDCI Sector Partnerships and Grants](#). Dr. Huett suggested Dr. Carr work on an articulation agreement for associate level degree programs at institutions that can funnel students into the bachelor's degree program.

SACSCOC on eCore by Robert Page:

Everyone was provided a copy of the detailed letter sent to South Georgia State College from SACSCOC. Dr. Page described the circumstances and his response to questions SACS had regarding South Georgia's consortial agreement with eCore. Dr. Page's strategy was to make the case that eCore courses were South Georgia's courses and explaining how South Georgia owns the arrangement by emphasizing their active role with a narrative explaining that South Georgia worked closely with eCore to create policies regarding faculty and processes, and since the eCore courses match South Georgia's courses, they are comparable. Dr. Sizemore explained that South Georgia had very few online courses, and since this was their first online degree program, SACS wanted to see more information than they are merely participating in the consortium. We wanted to share the letter as an example of detailed, expressive communication with SACS that was very positive about eCore and how it is run.

New Business:

Judy Abbott disclosed that KSU had issues with the eCore New Student Introduction Quiz as a prerequisite in Banner. The Registrar's Office has found it is a deterrent to students, so they removed it as a prereq and suggested that there may be some way in GoVIEW to block student access to the course until the quiz is complete. There was some discussion regarding students obtaining their credentials to log into the course. Dr. Huett indicated that there are issues due to the fact that eCore is on a collaborative server. Judy suggested that we change the name to eCore Orientation. Dr. Huett stated that if we take gatekeeping down to course level, students would have to complete the eCore New Student Quiz for every course in which they are enrolled and that specific course requirements have to be presented before students register for eCore courses, which Dr. Davis mentioned would be a problem for SACS. Stephanie Hulsey discussed the fact that UNG had to coach their advisors to not override the prerequisite. Dr. Spencer indicated that the frustration that students experience attempting to complete the eCore New Student Quiz may be a good gatekeeping measure to make sure students possess the skills to be successful in an online course.

Dr. McKinney inquired about virtual testing, and Dr. Huett explained that our student exam participation rates have gone up and the number of students missing exams has decreased with the use of SmarterProctoring. It makes the process easier for both faculty and students, and there is a virtual proctoring option available in SmarterProctoring. Additionally, we have added a call cycle for testing now, and there will soon be piloting for text reminders. Dr. Huett recommended that we initially try to get students to register at a local testing center in order to help generate revenue for them but always be

willing to work with virtual testing as well. Dr. Baskin pointed out the PR opportunity of the proctoring situations with the long-haul trucker and on a battleship.

Tentative Meeting Dates

Friday, April 7th (USG Teaching and Learning Conference)

Wednesday, April 12th at Middle Georgia

Dr. Kokkala motioned to adjourn with numerous seconds and meeting adjourned.