

MEETING MINUTES:**Annual Meeting of the Board of Regents' Academic Advisory Committee on English
January 26-27, 2006****ACE Members in Attendance:**

Bobbie Robinson, ABAC; Charles Heglar, Albany State University; Beverly Head and Lisa Mallory, Atlanta Metropolitan College; Lillie Johnson, Augusta State University; Stan Webb, Bainbridge College; Susan Hunter, Clayton State University; Michael Hannaford, Coastal Georgia Community College; Ken Harrelson (rep. Mary Neilson), Dalton State College; Ulf Kirchdorfer (rep. Elizabeth Ragsdale); Dana Nevil, East Georgia College; Joyce Jenkins, Fort Valley State; Anita Turlington, Gainesville State College; John Cox, Georgia College & State University; Carol Senf, Georgia Institute of Technology; Ted Wadley, Georgia Perimeter College; Curtis Ricker, Georgia Southern University; Bryan Davis, Georgia Southwestern State University; Marti Singer, Georgia State University; Richard Baskin, Gordon College; Bob Barrier (rep. Barbara Stevensen), Kennesaw State University; Debra Matthews, Macon State College; Carmine Palumbo (Chair), Middle Georgia College; Tanya Bennett, North Georgia College & State University; Michael Fisher, South Georgia College; H. Nelson Hilton, University of Georgia; Mark Smith, Valdosta State University; Gary Simmers, Waycross College
Georgia Board of Regents/Central Office: Leslie Caldwell and Bettie Horne

Thursday, January 26, 1:00 pm

Middle Georgia College President Federinko was scheduled to officially welcome the ACE Committee members; however, he was called away. Carmine Palumbo, ACE Chair, welcomed the group and continued with a "logistics briefing." He introduced chair-elect, Dana Nevil, and noted that we needed a replacement for David Evans to serve on the ACE Executive Committee.

Carmine introduced the speakers for the committee's General Session: Bettie Horne and Leslie Caldwell. Dr. Horne addressed the group with a message concerning our mission as educators. Dr. Horne stated that educating students is what we're all about. She pointed out that the Central Office is devoid of the student element and emphasized that what happens in the classrooms across Georgia is most important: "If it doesn't happen in the classroom, we are less than we need to be."

Dr. Horne briefly addressed the following initiatives/projects:

- Retention/Progression/Graduation
- Review of General Education
- ADP (American Diploma Project)
- P-16 Initiative (in 3rd year of a 6-year grant)
- Regents' Exam
- AP discrepancy

Dr. Caldwell, having traveled to Cochran via Eastman, was introduced by Carmine Palumbo. Dr. Caldwell gave the group a history of the Regents' Exam (as the committee had been asked to consider possible alternatives to the exam).

Regents' Exam: History and Committee Discussion:

Dr. Caldwell's history of the Regents' exam included the following points:

The Regents' Exam has been administered for 35 years, producing approximately 1,250,000 essays. There have been over 3 million "readings" of essays in these years. Dr. Caldwell noted that the last time he checked ten ACE committee members were actively participating in the grading of Regents' essay exams. Developed in 1972, the Regents' exam was to assess knowledge of core courses. It was narrowed to reading comprehension and writing skills (essay exam). The essay exam began as a 30-minute writing assessment. In future years, the writing assessment was extended to 45 minutes and from 1 topic to 2 topics. Next, the exam was extended to one hour. Dictionary use was added, then a choice of 4 topics. Summer 2003 marked some significant changes. Dr. Caldwell explained the results of the policies concerning student exemptions (grade combined with SAT): number of essays = down 25% and number of reading tests administered dropped almost 50% (since 2003).

Dr. Caldwell explained that 600 students had been tested online Fall 2005 (all but 8 schools participated and the process went smoothly). Some rater comments: "easy/clean grading process." Raters were able to assess Regents' essays from their offices or homes.

Dr. Caldwell reported on the new grading scale (from a scale of 4 to 3), saying that the evaluators' instructions had been revised and that the web site and the model essays were being updated. He mentioned the 2 being "recast" and that graders had been reminded that the test is only one hour and the students' essays should be considered "drafts."

Dr. Caldwell announced that the Executive Committee of the Board of Regents had directed System Staff to come up with alternative structures for the current Regents' exam, although this request did not mean that the system was "backing off" the skills required to pass the exam. Further comments were that the BOR wanted more alternatives. "There is a possibility of restructuring, testing closer to entrance," Dr. Caldwell noted; "All doors are open at the moment." He mentioned that Dr. Butler would address the VPAA's and that they might contact us for ideas.

A committee member asked Dr. Caldwell, "Have you been told we're getting rid of the Regents' Test?"

Answer: Maybe not "getting rid of the test" but maybe moving the Regents' exam at placement or as close as possible. Dr. Caldwell mentioned certain "issues": returning/non-traditional students, two-year institutions (large increase in COMPASS exam), two-year colleges not getting SAT writing samples.

Joyce Jenkins asked, "Is there a timeline for looking at alternatives?"

Dr. Caldwell mentioned April as a possibility. Dr. Horne mentioned that the Executive Committee wished to see a recommendation in April. She commented that the ambivalence toward the exam was not restricted to the Board or to English faculty – "there are others who feel it is a dated test." She asked ACE members to consider the following questions:

- Is there a better way to document or quantify students' progress in our classes?
- Should the exam be less high stakes?
- Are there alternatives?
- Can the exam be improved?

Dr. Horne commented -- concerning "throwing out the baby with the bath water" -- that we would be going against the trend to measure academic growth. She encouraged the ACE committee to be proactive.

A committee member commented that there previously had been discussion of adding a quantitative portion to the Regents' exam. Drs. Caldwell and Horne were asked for an update. Dr. Caldwell answered that he had heard nothing in his circles, that he believed the push for a math section died a couple of years ago. Dr. Caldwell further commented that he was not certain of the motivation for possible changes to the exam. He suggested that ACE members discuss the Regents' exam with their VPAA's. He asked the group to consider the following question: "What would you like to see happen with the Regents' test?"

Carmine Palumbo reminded the committee of a previous ACE committee meeting (2003) where ACE committee members voted to abolish the Regents' exam. He added that the motion was procedurally out of order. He asked the group if anyone had ideas.

Joyce Jenkins asked, "How much research has been done concerning the Regents' exam?" She added that she wished to see more research -- to make decisions based on data. Dr. Caldwell commented that he had done some unofficial gathering of data during the holidays (a descriptive study). He added that it is very clear that students with A's in English 1101 do better on the Regents' exam than those with B's. Those with C's, in general, have better than 50% chance of passing the exam.

A committee member asked if the number of 3 and 4 ratings had gone down following student exemptions. Curtis Ricker mentioned, as an anecdote, that graders at GSU had mentioned that they were not giving as many 3's and 4's. He commented further that the essay exam is often viewed as a "quick and dirty" assessment and that student performance in composition courses doesn't match student performance on exam.

Dr. Caldwell responded: "What has not been said at the Board level is that we don't care about skills. They do have interest in skill level of students' reading and writing. He added that they may be looking for a test that is easier to manage -- maybe something at the placement level.

Bobbie Robinson reiterated the problem that the Regents' test results do not match what is happening in classrooms -- and that Regents' skills are not restricted to just "our" discipline.

Leslie Caldwell responded that he wanted to see something [writing] done purely by students (not by roommates, teachers, writing centers). He feels that portfolios are not the answer. He mentioned that someone told him, "All writing is collaborative," but he doesn't agree. He added that <emma> (Electronic Mark-Up and Management Application) allows students to type essays, store them, and return (to the computer) to complete 2nd and 3rd drafts.

Curtis Ricker commented, "If Regents' skills were matched and expressed as outcomes, it might be easier to match assessment and outcomes." Carmine Palumbo agreed. Ricker added that if we are exempting students from the Regents' exam, we are saying that entrance exams show the same skills as the Regents' exam. Carmine Palumbo asked, "Is there anything more cost

effective? Are we considering signing up with a different exam? Leslie Caldwell answered that he believed if the exam wasn't cut last year because of cost, he seriously doubted this was now the issue. Curtis Ricker asked Leslie Caldwell if he believed that this movement for change in the test signals a trend towards decentralization of assessment – if we might soon be doing individual assessment on individual campuses. Marti Singer commented, "You can have standards without this test." Curtis Ricker added, "This could lead to an increase in standards. Some consider the Regents' standards too minimal."

At 2:30, the attendees took their scheduled "break." Upon returning, Carmine Palumbo polled the members in attendance concerning who would wish to abolish the Regents' exam. Some hands were raised; there was no common view expressed by the committee as a whole.

Compensation: Part-time and full-time temporary faculty:

The committee moved to the next item/topic of discussion on the agenda: Compensation for part-time and full-time temporary faculty at various institutions. All committee members reported (to their best knowledge) the compensation for English part-time faculty and for full-time, temporary faculty. The numbers revealed that there is no real consistency within the system concerning compensation. While there were similarities, the compensation for adjuncts varied, sometimes notably. Concerning full-time temporary faculty, yearly salaries averaged in the "mid-thirties," with some institutions reporting low-thirties and others reporting high-thirties. A couple of institutions mention forty as their high-end. Dana Nevil recorded this information in order to make it available to ACE members.

Class size/enrollment caps:

Next, committee members reported concerning class size/enrollment caps for English composition and sophomore literature courses. Some institutions reported this data for online courses as well. The information below is recorded in the order that it was presented to the committee (*any institution's class size that is not reported = representative not present at the time the data was gathered*). Freshman Composition numbers are presented first, followed by literature enrollment numbers. All members stated enrollment caps but many institutions reported caps being overridden because of student demand for courses. These numbers are reported in parentheses.

Atlanta Metropolitan: Comp: 25 (sometimes 26, 27: never 30) ---- Lit: 30

Darton: Comp 25 (possible override by 2) --- Lit: 35 (wishes it were lower) – Online courses = same

Georgia Southwestern: Comp: 25 (up to 28) – Lit: 30

Macon State: Eng 1101: 24 (computer lab); Eng 1102 28 – Lit: 30 – Online Courses capped at 17

Fort Valley: Eng 1101: 25 (up to 28); Eng 1102: 25 (up to 30) ---- Lit: 35 (sometimes 40).

Albany State: Comp: 25 --- Lit: 30

Georgia Perimeter: Comp: 20-24 (depending on campus site) --- Lit: 30-35

West Georgia: Comp: 23 (firm) – Lit: 30 (no online courses; Honors' Lit capped at 16)

Valdosta: Comp 25 – Lit: 45

Augusta State: 25 (26=crisis) – Lit 35 (students beg to 40)

Georgia Tech: Comp: 25 – Lit: 35

Gainesville: Comp: 25 – Lit: 28

Bainbridge: Comp: 24 – Lit: 24

Kennesaw: Comp: 25 (previously 21 before 4 more computers were added to lab)-- Lit: 35 (sometimes 36-37)

Clayton State: Comp: 24 (all students have laptops; 24 stations) – Lit: 28
North Georgia: Eng 1101 24; Eng 1102 28 – Lit: 40
Gordon: Eng 1101 24; Eng 1102 23 – Lit 35 (VPAA firm; tries not to override at all)
South Georgia: Comp: 25 – Lit: 30
Coastal Georgia: Eng 1101: 22; Eng 1102: 25 – Lit: 30
Dalton: Comp: Previously 25 but now 28 – Lit: 35
Waycross: Comp: 25 (officially, but remodeled comp. lab now holds 28) – Lit: 30 (up to 35).
Georgia College/State U: Comp: 22 (but 24 at moment) – Lit: 25 (sometimes 27).
GSU: Comp: Just lowered from 24 to 22 (16 in Honor's) – Lit: 36-40
ABAC: Comp: 24 – Lit: 35 (to 37 and pressure to go to 40)
Georgia State: Comp: 25 – Lit: 35
Middle Georgia: Comp: 24 – Lit: 30
East Georgia: Comp: 24 (often 25-28 in courses not held in computer labs) – Lit: 35 (online courses capped at 25; overrides sometimes granted by instructors)

Committee discussion of assessment: students and programs

Some individual members shared the status/procedures for assessment at their institutions:

- ABAC uses an assessment tool tied to their course outcomes (Eng 0099,1101, 1102). They assess 1 course every year (in sequence). Ex: Eng 1102 instructors (including part-time faculty) each turn in 3-5 passing portfolios. At year's end, each instructor assesses 10-11 portfolios. They formally tabulate (using assessment measure tied to course outcomes) to see if students meet outcomes. Bobbie Robinson adds that the task is a huge, ongoing process, if you want to make it meaningful, to improve instruction. She described the process of doing a bit, backing up, rethinking, moving forward again, etc.
- Waycross, MGC, East Georgia, and GSU reported using Regents' data for program assessment. Otherwise, individual instructors design their own assessments.
- North Georgia: in sophomore literature, one question is taken to see if students meet the outcome.
- MGC reported the use of one question to assess whether outcomes are met in their foreign language and art courses
- Georgia State reported that for several years they have been working on their general education learning outcomes. In the TA's teaching portfolio, the TA measures outcomes by percentage. The percentage is determined by the students' grades. Method is not working so well; Provost wants Likert Scale. TA's are good at describing activity and how they assessed it. Some general ed. outcomes are assessed in 1101/1102. Writing is assessed through political science courses.
- Fort Valley uses pre and post-test assessment using an outside evaluator.
- Macon State: 1101 students must pass an end-of-course departmental grammar exam to exit English 1101
- Augusta State assesses English 1101: Students must pass end-of-course grammar test and they must pass an exit essay (graded by 3).

IB and AP Policies concerning awarding credit

The comment was made that UGA has a written policy concerning IB credits and that someone would email these policies. Concerning AP credits: Lillie Johnson recalled that several years ago, ACE recommended not to give credit for Eng 1102 because of the course's research component. ABAC, Georgia State, GSU commented that their English 1102 courses focus on argumentation

rather than literary analysis. Marti Singer, Georgia State, commented that if a student comes from an institution that awarded AP credit, Georgia State accepts this. It is explained that the reason the Central Office is most interested in AP credits and that Academic Committees have been asked to look at "narrowing." It is noted that private colleges accept AP credits more readily and use this awarding of credit as a recruiting tool. Lillie Johnson pointed out that data concerning students with 3's showed that they were not faring well. Gary Simmers commented that individual AP classes are conducted differently; therefore, students who exempt college-level English may lack skills. ACE Chair, Carmine Palumbo asks the Freshman Subcommittee to handle the AP issue, to form a committee within the committee.

Friday, January 27, 2006

Reports from Subcommittees/Review of AP and Regents' issues

The Freshman Committee reported concerning awarding AP credits that they support the right of individual institutions to do what's best for their individual institution and their students and have no problems with accepting credit. The committee feels that exemptions should be awarded *credit* to make it easier for students to transfer.

A committee member asked how we will handle out-of-state credits. Some committee members report the AP scores for which they award English credit/exemptions: Augusta State reports credit given only for 4's; exemption given for 3's. Georgia College only accepts 3's, no 4's. Coastal reports that no credit is given for World Literature under any circumstances. Waycross reports that students in AA program with 3's get credit toward finishing their degrees [this statement concerning Waycross needs to be confirmed; chair-elect may have misinterpreted notes]. Lillie Johnson comments that we want to give students our best academic advice. She notes that as a system, if we choose to do that, we must also respect other institutions' best advice; therefore, if credit is awarded by a sister institution, Augusta State accepts that credit. Michael Hannaford reports concerning the Freshman Subcommittee's decision – that students be exempted or awarded credit with an AP score of 3 or better, unless the institution has a more stringent policy. Lillie Johnson points out that this will make it almost impossible for her institution to hold to its standard of 4. She feels that we do students a disservice by exempting them from both composition courses. Michael Hannaford suggests policy of 3 or better for 1101 and 5 for 1102, unless institution has more stringent policy. Curtis Ricker comments that if an institution allows 1102 credit, it must be with a score of 5. The point concerning recruitment policies is again made. Leslie Caldwell addresses the group with the following question: "Is it reasonable to not give credit for a score of 3? Is it reasonable not to exempt for AP?" He asks ACE to consider reducing the range and to develop a statement concerning the range and transfer policy.

Regents' revisited:

Carmine Palumbo announced that he had received a message from Bettie Horne that the full Board would be meeting concerning the Regents' exam in February. Leslie Caldwell commented that the VPAA's were to meet next week and the Regents' exam would be on the agenda. He noted that if the full Board was meeting February 10th, they would want reactions [concerning Regents' exam]. Bobbie Robinson asked, "Who is talking to whom?" Leslie Caldwell answered that he didn't know but that the Board had asked for alternatives to the Regents' exam. Carmine Palumbo announced that it was time for our break and that those from UGA needed to set up their

presentation of <emma>. He asked the committee members to think about ideas concerning the Regents' exam during the break.

<emma> Presentation

10:00 a.m., Friday January 27

Carmine Palumbo introduced Nelson Hilton from the University of Georgia and noted his new position as Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at UGA. Nelson Hilton introduced the team who would present information and detailed demonstrations of <emma>, which had led to a change of pedagogy for many English instructors at UGA. It was reported that instead of writing 4 essays and a final exam during the semester, those using <emma> had moved to a system of Final Portfolios (e-portfolios) evaluated by 2 instructors. It was stressed that the process included revision, peer review, and reflection, and emphasized both process and product. The ePortfolios were praised for their portability (between students, between students and teachers, and between courses) and for allowing easy access for multiple audiences (teachers, peers, second readers). <emma> was praised for creating a "community of writers" and for promoting student introspection and metacognition. Ron Balthazor noted that over 125,000 documents had been uploaded to <emma> during fall semester and offered the use of <emma> to any institution (free of charge). Nelson Hilton distributed handouts announcing an <emma> Workshop being held at UGA on May 16-17 that would cover both technical and pedagogical aspects of teaching composition with <emma>. The workshop would prepare participants to begin using the application immediately.

11:15 a.m., Friday January 27

Further Discussion of request for ideas concerning alternatives to Regents' Exam:

After the break, Carmine Palumbo addressed the group, asking if anyone had ideas concerning alternatives to the Regents' exam. Joyce Jenkins asked, "Can we ask what the concerns are and what is prompting this? Is this a request or a concern?" Leslie Caldwell answered that they had nothing in writing. He commented that the felt one problem might be students who cannot graduate and another problem was that the essay doesn't match what we're teaching.

Curtis Ricker made a motion for ACE to draft a formal statement concerning our thoughts about the Regents' exam and the request for alternatives. The motion passed with no opposition. The committee worked on a formal statement and all committee members accepted the written statement (The formal statement was sent to Leslie Caldwell in February 2006 and is attached). Richard Baskin recommended that we all discuss the issue with our VPAA's.

Committee Business/Elections

Carmine Palumbo headed the Business Meeting/Election portion of the meeting. Lillie Johnson recommended for nomination Bob Barrier/Kennesaw for the position of Chair-Elect. The motion was seconded by Carol Senf. The committee elected Bob Barrier to the position of chair-elect for the 2006-2007 academic year. Joyce Jenkins extended thanks to Carmine Palumbo for his many hours of hard work serving as ACE Chair and for hosting ACE's annual meeting at Middle Georgia College. Carmine Palumbo asked upcoming Chair, Dana Nevil, to adjourn the meeting.

2006 ACE Annual Meeting Minutes respectfully submitted by Dr. Dana Nevil (dnevil@ega.edu).

ATTACHMENT: Official Statement composed during 2006 Annual Meeting.

**RECOMMENDATION
FROM THE
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA ACADEMIC COMMITTEE**

COMMITTEE ON: (ACADEMIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON) ENGLISH

CHAIRPERSON: DANA NEVIL, EAST GEORGIA COLLEGE DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2006

RECOMMENDATION

The Academic Advisory Committee on English believes the Regents' skills requirements are essential and that the level required is appropriate for students graduating from the University System of Georgia.

We welcome the opportunity to examine the current assessment of these skills and possible alternatives to these assessments.

Because any changes to the current practices will have a major impact on students and programs, we respectfully request the following:

- *Additional time – until August 2007*
- *Resources to facilitate analysis*

RATIONALE

Because any changes to the current practices will have a major impact on students and programs, we request additional time and resources to examine the current practices and possible alternatives.