

Academic Advisory Committee on English

Annual Meeting, March 5, 2010
Troy Moore Library, Georgia State University

Attending

Robert Vaughan	BOR liaison
Leslie Caldwell	Director, Regents' Testing Program
Curtis Ricker, chair	Georgia Southern University
Sandy Matthews,	
Ted Wadley, secretary and chair-elect	Georgia Perimeter College
James L. Hill	Albany State University
Berverly H. Head,	
Lisa Mallory	Atlanta Metropolitan College
Barbara Murray	Dalton State College
Courtney Danforth	Darton College
Joyce Jenkins	Fort Valley State University
Elaine Whitaker	Georgia College & State University
Jennifer Wunder	Georgia Gwinnett College
Jesse Bishop	Georgia Highlands College
Rebecca Burnett	Georgia Institute of Technology
Baotong Gu	Georgia State University
Ed Whitlock	Gordon College
Bill Rice, Bob Barrier	Kennesaw State University
Debra Matthews, past chair	Macon State College
Steve Brehe	North Georgia College & SU
April Gentry	Savannah State University
Mark Nunes	Southern Polytechnic SU
Randy Hendricks	University of Georgia
Mark Smith	Valdosta State University

9:30

Curtis Ricker called the meeting to order, welcomed members, and asked for approval of the minutes of the previous meeting. Jennifer Wunder motioned for approval, Elaine Whitaker seconded.

Dr. Ricker introduced Dr. Robert Vaughan, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Campus-Based Initiatives, who addressed key concerns and took questions.

Regents Exam

Institutions interested in opting out of the Regents' Test must make an application to the BOR. The application has been sent to the chief academic officers of the institutions. The application asks for schools to provide information such as:

- The number of students who exempt the reading and writing tests
- The institution's graduation rate

- The proposed method of assessing reading and writing competency
- The cut-off scores for Learning Support

At the time of the meeting, six institutions have applied. Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia have been approved so far, and four institutions are undergoing the review process. An advisory committee of retired university presidents will review each application and make a recommendation. The application then passes to Dr. Susan Herbst, to the Chancellor, and then to the chair of the BOR's Academic Committee. [Since the meeting additional requests have been approved.]

Georgia Tech's process involves a pre-test for incoming freshmen and ultimately a portfolio which measures communication skills. Tech's five key components include written, oral, visual, electronic, and non-verbal communication.

Question: Can other institutions see these applications? Dr. Vaughan responded that he would check into that possibility, but the applicant would have to agree to allow other institutions to view its application.

Question: What strategies have been deemed adequate, which ones inadequate? Dr. Vaughan said he has seen an exit essay or a portfolio, but simply passing Engl 1101 and 1102 would not be enough. He suggested pre-testing and post-testing models were a good idea.

Question: If the application is unacceptable at the first level, does it go on? Dr Vaughan answered that the application would go on to Dr. Herbst, but he was unsure what would happen after that. He did assure institutions that they would get feedback and be offered suggestions to improve their proposals.

Question: Have you denied any applications so far? If so, why? Dr. Vaughan said no applications have been denied so far, but he feels that some probably will. He offered other insights into the process. The BOR believed that only a few institutions would apply to begin with; however, far more than the BOR had anticipated are planning to pursue exemption. The BOR believed most institutions would continue with the Regents' Test for a while. He recommends that institutions give themselves some time and see what happens to those who have applied thus far.

Question: Do schools seem to be going beyond what they would need to do for the new core curriculum? Dr. Vaughan's answer was no. Those approved so far have processes that were already in place or have been in the process of development. The processes developed should not be something just created to get out of the Regents' Exam. Each institution's process should reflect its mission. Georgia Tech's plan, for instance, reflects the elements emphasized in Tech's classrooms.

Mark Nunes commented that his institution had just satisfactorily completed its SACS review. If the SACS found that his institution was doing enough in the communication area, would his institution's process be enough for a successful application? Dr. Vaughan answered that it should be, depending on what his institution was doing.

Question: Four-year institutions will have transfer students, but the four-year institution would have no control over what happened in those students' first and second years. How might this potential problem be addressed? Dr. Vaughan remarked that four year institutions would need to make sure they had successful plans which would close this hole.

Discussion arose about what the Regents' Exam was originally designed to do in contrast to the many different plans being designed to assess competency. Dr. Vaughan commented that the new core curriculum was designed to allow institutions the flexibility to develop processes that would reflect their different missions. Some believe that when the new core curriculum is in place, the Regents' Exam will be superfluous; others, however, disagree. More discussion will probably arise when that time comes. Those who see value in the Regents' Test should let their college administrators know.

Core Curriculum Implementation

The website is active: core.usg.edu.

The site has a list of questions and answers. Also, there is a listserv.

There are three steps for implementation. Troublesome issues still exist, such as what happens if students go beyond 60 hours and have not completed Area A.

Questions arose about the place of foreign language in the core and the issue of competence in ethics. Dr. Vaughan said that individual institutions could choose for foreign languages to have an increased role. A course in philosophy/ethics would be one method for addressing competence in the ethics area.

Dr. Vaughan addressed some of the differences between the new core and the old core. Some institutions wanted to explore new ways to educate in the 21st century. Consequently, the new core provides more freedom for institutions to innovate and explore new approaches. Because institutions' missions differ, one institution will be able to require particular courses that another college does not require. Thus, seamless transfers will be challenging. The main goal is for the students not to be at a disadvantage.

Mark Nunes asked if a letter of intent is still needed for new programs. Dr. Vaughan said that new programs in English will still come to the ACE.

Dr. Vaughan explained that the mini-core now contains five new courses: American Literature, Introduction to Economics, Introduction to Psychology, Sociology, and Public Speaking. Institutions can place them where they choose, but all institutions must accept them.

The projected date for implementing the new mini-core is this summer.

Commenting on tech schools, Dr. Vaughan said that many are intent on having Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees.

Offering an example of a former tech student attempting to transfer English 1101 credit, Jesse Bishop asked about handling situations in which a tech school's 1101 does not seem to be

equivalent to another institution's 1101. Dr. Vaughan said that an institution is able to view an 1101 course from one school as not equivalent to its 1101. He asked to be informed in situations like these because course outlines for 1101 should be uniform across the state.

Learning Support Task Force

Dr. Vaughan is the chair of this task force. Two recommendations of the committee are:

1. In the case of the 20 hr. requirement, 20 hrs. will become 30 hrs.
2. With the three-year suspension rule, three years is becoming one year.

Fall is the implementation date.

Leslie Caldwell informed the group that effective in fall of 2010, colleges will begin accepting certain scores on the high school graduation test in lieu of Compass scores.

11:30 – Adjourn for lunch

1:00 – Subcommittee meetings

2:00 – General Session

Subcommittee reports

Testing Assessment Since SACS and the BOR are both asking us to assess courses and learning outcomes, perhaps we should change the name of the subcommittee to “assessment.” A motion to this effect was made, seconded, and approved by acclamation.

A question was asked about students who satisfied RT requirements at one institution and transferred to another. It seems the system thinks of students transferring “up” from a two-year college to a four-year university, but there are students who transfer “down” from four-year to two-year institutions. We don't have answers yet.

In a discussion of opting out of the RT, portfolios were mentioned as a means of assessment. Could the fact that we now have common outcomes for core courses lead to common assignments in those courses (to put in portfolios)?

Some institutions may decide to keep using the RT because it would be cheaper than alternate assessment.

Curtis asked that institutions who apply to opt out of the RT post an executive summary of their proposal to the ACE listsrv.

Freshman English The committee discussed the importance of keeping English 1102 in area A of the core curriculum.

Georgia Gwinnett is considering making 1102 discipline-specific. For example, psychology majors would learn to write research papers in psychology. Although an English teacher might be involved, it would be a psychology course, not an English course.

English 1102 would not be an introduction to literature.

Kennesaw is considering adding communication to area A of the core curriculum.

The consensus was to put the matter on our ACE listsrv, to come up with a recommendation to keep English 1102 in area A and reasons for it.

Sophomore English The subcommittee looked at the American literature syllabi from TCSG institutions. The course is one-semester survey (English 2130).

- The syllabi are inconsistent and there are different textbooks, but Dr. Vaughan had said that there would be one (custom) textbook for TCSG, with common syllabi. These were conditions for the original mini-core, and should be of the new larger version.
- The amount of reading in some cases is ambitious for an academic quarter.
- The course is capped at 50 students. How can there be the kind of writing assignments and papers USG institutions have in literature courses?
- Given the current emphasis on internationalization and the preferences of some transfer institutions, why did they choose American literature, not world literature?

We need further information.

Major Programs The subcommittee discussed changes in core curriculum and American literature in the mini-core (but did not have the syllabi).

Regarding a foreign-language requirement for English majors, many non-traditional students claim they are too old to learn a foreign language, and may be offered a linguistics course instead (learning about foreign languages). But how would we not have to do the same for “younger” students? Will sign-language count as a foreign language? Computer languages? Reading music?

Business meeting

The committee thanked Curtis for his years of service, especially as chair.

Jennifer Wunder was elected secretary and chair-elect.

The new chair is Ted Wadley, who proposed January 27-28, 2011 for next year’s meeting. If a one-day meeting is necessary or desirable, it will be held on Friday, January 28. He offered a choice of locations: GPC’s Dunwoody campus (where he works) or its Newton campus (in Social Circle, off I-20E, away from Atlanta). The committee chose Dunwoody. We’ll see about accommodations, restaurants, theater....

Minutes were taken by Sandy Matthews and Ted Wadley.