

## Minutes of the Regents' Learning Support Committee

Meeting of October 30, 2002  
In Macon, Georgia

- I. Janet O'Brien called the meeting to order at ten o'clock and made some opening remarks and led the group to introduce each other. She welcomed the new members of the committee and the visitors.
- II. The opening part of the agenda were questions sent in about various learning support rules and policies.
  - A. The first was regarding some information that various members of the committee had received concerning the Chancellor appointing an ad hoc group of college presidents to review changes in learning support policies. Kathleen Burk, the Regents' liaison to the LS committee, reported that the ad hoc group was mainly reviewing other policies concerning two-year colleges but that learning support rules would be on their agenda.
  - B. There was a lengthy discussion concerning the 20-hour rule regarding learning support students. (This rule requires that students must complete all learning support requirements before earning 20 credit hours. If not completed, the student may only take learning support courses.) Several members of the group felt this rule hurts better students who may have completed two of the requirements and have only one remaining, particularly when math is the one remaining. Various committee members presented strategies that their institutions are using as a result of this rule. Kathleen Burk indicated that some schools could present plans for allowing LS courses to be co-requisite with credit-level courses, but others pointed out that this was not a solution for all schools. The discussion shifted to how to provide meaningful courses for students that don't have learning support prerequisites in order to give the opportunity for LS students to be full-time students. Many schools offer music, communication, photography, physical education, and other courses without LS prerequisites. One of the members presented the viewpoint that it is not the role of the colleges to guarantee a full-time class load to students, particularly LS students. Several school representatives advised the committee that they carefully advise LS students when they cannot achieve a full-course load and they tell the student that this is in their best interest.
  - C. Next was another lengthy discussion regarding the three-attempt limit. Several schools presented their frustrations with this rule, especially with regards to math where many schools have two courses that many students have to complete within the three attempts. The discussion then focused on the students who place into the lowest level math and several schools presented strategies for helping students in this area. Since many who place in the lowest math have severe skill difficulties, some schools offer a course through their Continuing Education area. The course is not for credit and cannot be covered by financial aid, but students who have very low skills have benefitted. Also, some schools indicated that they advise students with poor skills to attend a local Technical College then return. The benefit for the student is that the Technical Colleges start with basic arithmetic. The drawback is that the college sends a student away and the student might not return. The group discussion then diverted to a discussion of the mechanics of COMPASS testing and the possible effects on placement and exit. The

group felt that a true practice test for COMPASS would have a very positive effect. To this end, a recommendation was presented by Vince Postell of Dalton and seconded by Valerie Epps of Atlanta Metro:

Recommendation: The committee recommends that ACT create a practice test for the Windows version of COMPASS. (Unanimously approved by the committee)

Explanation: The group feels that with a practice test that mimics the new COMPASS interface students would get a placement based on their knowledge and skills and not their lack of computer skills. Also, it would help increase the confidence of students before taking the exit exams.

- D. One of the committee members had a question about the additional attempts offered to students with documented disabilities. Kathleen Burk explained that these additional attempts, if granted, are regular attempts and not appeal attempts. Also, students with medical disabilities are granted the same consideration as students with other disabilities.

- III. The next agenda item concerned LS policies and E-core courses. Currently, policy states that all learning support requirements must be met before any courses can be taken through E-core. The committee put forth the following recommendation to change this policy, presented by Tim Floyd of Floyd and seconded by Valerie Epps of Atlanta Metro:

Recommendation: The committee recommends that a student be allowed to take an E-core class if the student has satisfied the learning support prerequisite(s) for that course and as long as the student is concurrently enrolled in any other required learning support courses. The committee further recommends that safeguards be put in place that would not allow the student to withdraw from the LS course and keep the credit-level E-core course. (The recommendation was approved unanimously by the committee.)

- IV. The next item the committee discussed was the progress of implementing the new version of COMPASS. Aside from a few glitches, most schools have had a good experience with the software implementation. Some members expressed concerns that a small number of students were not being properly placed because of mistakes resulting from the new interface and not the content of the test but most felt that if a practice test was created that this would remove these concerns. One member of the committee requested that ACT be asked to revise the button that students click to submit their final answers to not immediately submit the answer but first ask the student if they are sure they are ready to submit.

Kathleen Burk then asked the schools who are not currently using COMPASS if they are ready to convert to COMPASS. Members expressed concerns about not having facilities to do computerized testing and also not having funds to pay for the new software license and test administrations. Kathleen Burk stated the Regents' Testing Office preference to phase out CPE after Fall 2003 placement testing.

- V. Kathleen Burk reported on developments regarding the Quantitative portion of the Regents' Test. She stated that principles regarding the test development and implementation should have final approval soon. Also, some questions are being piloted in classrooms this Fall. She also indicated that the Regents' staff is working to determine an appropriate SAT or

ACT score that would allow a student to exempt the Quantitative exam. This work might be done in the future for the Reading part of the test. She also reported that students who enter as new students to the University System in the Fall of 2003 will be required to pass all three portions of the Regents' Exam. If a student has any University system credit prior to Fall 2003 they will be grandfathered in and required only to pass the Reading and Writing portion. As of Fall 2009, all students would be required to pass all portions of the test in order to graduate regardless of any prior university system credits. The Regents' office is working to have all three parts of the test online by Fall 2003. This will require a window of time for students to take the test instead of the one-day administration currently used. Many details remain to be worked out.

The group was informed that practice tutorials were being developed for the quantitative exam. The committee expressed many concerns about the new test and among these were a lack of facilities to give a computerized test, the need for additional proctors if the test administrations are spread out over 8 to 12 weeks in the semester, the scheduling of the reading and writing portion if they are not computerized, and how the remediation courses might change. The committee also expressed concern about who would be responsible for remediating the quantitative part of the test and how this might lead to changes in College Algebra. Kathleen Burk also reported that some consideration was being given to the Quantitative and Reading portions of the test not being timed tests. The writing portion would remain a timed test.

Another issue regarding the Regents' exam was brought forward by a member of the committee regarding the 45-hour rule for requiring remediation. After discussion, the group members were encouraged to put stronger warnings and holds at the 30-hour level so students would not be caught off-guard by the 45-hour rule. During this discussion, some of the schools informed the committee about their procedures for registering for the test. Some schools have online registration, some give out registration cards through courses, and a few schools automatically register the student for the test and inform them that they have to come take it.

- VI. The next agenda item was information about the computerized degree audit program being installed in schools around the system, CAPP. One member reported that CAPP would not review a student's progress toward satisfying LS requirements without special programming. CAPP was not designed to look at these requirements. Also, schools were asked to report how they kept up with LS progress and attempts. Most schools indicated that they were using BANNER routines to keep up with these areas or reports that work with BANNER data.
- VII. There was a brief discussion about the Minicore relationship between the BOR and DTAE. It has been implemented and some schools are getting students who have taken courses in the minicore. One member recommended that the Regents' exam could be used as a barometer for the quality of the work in the minicore. The group also reviewed the tabled proposal from the spring meeting that would allow a student to shorten the three-year suspension period after satisfying LS requirements at a DTAE minicore institution and completing the first core curriculum course with a grade of C or better.
- VIII. The committee had a discussion recommending that first-year-experience courses be allowed into Area B. Many in the group supported the idea and presented information as to

the benefits to retention provided by these courses. The implication is that if the course can be allowed into Area B of the core, more students would take the course. Some in the group were concerned that since these courses dealt with skills that were somewhat remedial in nature (i.e., these are skills we would hope that students would possess before being admitted to college and in fact many already do. The course “prepares” an unprepared student to be a better college student.) that the course would be better situated in the “institutional requirements” section and not in the core. After further discussion, Larry Fennelly of Macon State made a motion that was seconded by Tim Floyd of Floyd that the committee make the following recommendation:

Recommendation: The Committee recommends that courses commonly referred to as “first-year experience”, or FYE, courses be considered as a permissible option into Area B of the USG Core Curriculum. (The motion passed with 16 for, 4 against, and 3 abstentions.)

Explanation: Chancellor Meredith has declared improved student retention to be one of his priorities, and it was not long ago (Jan 2001) that the Board of Regents invited the well-known John Gardner to make a presentation on the role of First-Year Experience programs in the retention effort. While FYE courses can currently be offered outside the Core Curriculum, the option of placing them in Area B would reduce problems with faculty workload, transfer of credit, and the calculation of student load for financial aid eligibility. The proposal would in no way require institutions to offer FYE courses in Area B, but it would do much to encourage them to establish comprehensive courses and/or programs to the benefit of the USG's retention efforts.

- IX. Terri Irvin, who is putting together the Spring 2003 LS Conference at Callaway, talked about plans for the conference and handed out some information about the conference and events that would be going on at Callaway during the time we are at the conference. The conference theme is “Learning Support: Pathways to the Future.” We expect a good turnout for the conference even with another season of tight budgets. Every school should have received information about the conference by e-mail and forms to submit proposals for conference presentations. If anyone has not received these e-mails, contact Terry Irvin at Columbus State.
- X. Tim Floyd requested ideas from the committee for sites for the 2004 conference. Leading contenders are Callaway, Jekyll Island, and Augusta, with some mention of Atlanta, Savannah, and some new conference sites at Stone Mountain, Marietta, and Lake Lanier. If anyone has suggestions, contact Tim Floyd at Floyd College.
- XI. With no other items to be discussed, Janet O’Brien adjourned the meeting at 3:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tim Floyd, secretary, LS Advisory Committee

Attendance Roster:

Institution

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College  
Albany State University  
Armstrong Atlantic State University  
Atlanta Metropolitan College  
Augusta State University  
Bainbridge College  
Clayton State College and University  
Columbus State University  
Coastal Georgia Community College  
Dalton College  
Darton College  
East Georgia College  
Floyd College  
Fort Valley State University  
Gainesville College  
Georgia College and State University  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Georgia Perimeter College  
Georgia Southern University  
Georgia Southwestern State University  
Georgia State University  
Gordon College  
Kennesaw State University  
Macon State College  
Middle Georgia College  
North Georgia College and State University  
Savannah State University  
South Georgia College  
Southern Polytechnic State University  
State University of West Georgia  
University of Georgia  
Valdosta State University  
Waycross College  
Regents' Office  
NADE/Georgia

Representative

Phyllis Bennett  
Rosalyn Jones  
Lottie Scott  
Valerie Epps  
Cindy Craig  
Carol Adams  
Rick Reynolds  
Terry Irvin  
Ricky Ann Weaver  
Vince Postell  
Elizabeth Ragsdale  
Sandra Sharman  
Tim Floyd  
Rosie Petties  
Judy Forbes  
Sherry Jones  
Tabitha Barnette  
Coletta Hassell & Bari Haskins-Jackson  
Janet O'Brien  
Kris Lawson  
James Spencer  
Mary Alice Money  
Rebecca Casey  
Laurence Fennelly  
Shirley Hall  
Carmen Mas  
Joan Maynor  
  
Jeff Orr  
Francesca Taylor  
Sherrie Nist  
Pat Burns  
Sara Selby  
Kathleen Burk