

LEARNING SUPPORT DIRECTORS' MEETING  
MACON STATE COLLEGE  
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2007

MINUTES

The fall meeting of the Learning Support Directors of the University System of Georgia was called to order by chair, Francesca Taylor, University of West Georgia. Francie welcomed the directors and asked them to sign an attendance sheet. She distributed a list of LS liaisons for each institutions and asked attendees to update it. Attendees then introduced themselves to the group.

Francie provided a brief summary of the October 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Academic Committees Meeting.

- Spellings Report – greater focus on accountability at the high school level so that Learning Support will not be needed at the college level in the future.
- Fixed for 4 tuition – This policy is a work in progress due to stop-outs and high withdrawal rates for Learning Support students. Also Financial Aid requires students to take full loads and this causes many students to be in over there heads.
- Georgia Gwinnett College – Beginning Fall 2007, they will pick up Learning Support when Georgia Perimeter College leaves. They already have someone in charge of “academic support” according to Leslie Caldwell.
- Regents’ Test – This issue has been tabled until a later BOR meeting. Leslie Caldwell said there will be no online version of the Regents’ Test. At present, there are four possible alternatives to the current Regents’ Test:
  - 1) No test at all.
  - 2) Students who earn an A or B in ENGL 1101 and 1102 may exempt both parts of the Regents’ Test.
  - 3) Keep the current Regents’ Test and policies.
  - 4) Provide each institution a limited number of exceptions to passing the Regents’ Test. This may include, for example, students who failed the current test several times. Students would appeal for an exception at the institution level and the appeal would be passed on to a system level committee who would make the decision to waive the test or not.
- The Chancellor is doing away with entitlement funding. Funding will be tied to RPG and program success.

Francie provided highlights and lowlights of the 2006 LS Conference.

- The 2006 LS Conference had 253 attendees. 101 were from USG institutions; 20 form non-system, non-DTAE institutions in Georgia; 34 were from DTAE institutions; 5 were from out-of-state. The remaining were exhibitors, representatives from the BOR, etc.
- Comments about the conference ranged from the good, the bad and the ugly.

Jackie Thornberry, Georgia Perimeter College provided and update of the 2007 LS Conference.

- The Call for Proposals for the 2007 LS Conference was distributed to attendees along with a request for all Directors to distribute this to their faculty and staff. The Call for Proposals will be available online soon.
- All Directors were requested to encourage their faculty and staff to submit at least one proposal from their institutions.
- The theme of the conference was announced: Learning Support: Unlocking Potential – Promoting Success. The winning theme was submitted by Elise Rhodes from Clayton State University. Elise will receive a free registration to the 2007 LS Conference. (25 theme suggestions were submitted.)
- The Executive Committee of the LS Directors will meet January 21 and 22 at Sea Palms Resort at St. Simons Island, GA. The meeting will begin at 1pm on January 21.

Francie led a discussion of the following topics:

- Updated version of LS comparison grid.
  - Jackie distributed the most current copy of the LS Equivalency Chart. Attendees noted corrections. The revised copy of this chart is attached to these minutes.
- Who is using web version of COMPASS? Problems? Suggestions? Advice?
  - Georgia Perimeter College, Albany State University, and Columbus State University are using the web version of COMPASS. Discussion followed.
- Current COMPASS scores in effect at institutions; any plans to increase them?
  - Several institutions intend to raise cut offs for college level courses: Columbus – Reading to 78; Gordon – all areas; Coastal GA – Reading; Gainesville – studying scores, proposal coming down; Darton – English to 66; GA Southwestern – Reading drop from 82 to 80; Augusta – maybe raise Mathematics to 48.
  - Leslie Caldwell noted that the score that predicts passing the Regents’ Test is a score in the 80s on COMR.
- SAT/ACT scores which trigger placement testing? 4-year colleges only?
  - See equivalency chart for summary of this information.
- Which institutions are offering MATH 1001?
  - Six institutions are currently offering MATH 1001: Georgia Highlands, Coastal Georgia, Gainesville, West Georgia, Gordon, Bainbridge. It is on the books at Dalton, but is not offered.
- Effectiveness of two mathematics courses versus only one?
  - Most institutions have two courses in each area, especially mathematics. See equivalency chart for a summary.
- Benign neglect of LS Programs by System Office (in spite of retention talk)?
  - A discussion of the importance of letting the system and our colleagues know how important LS students and the LS Program are at each institution and in the USG. Directors need to do some marketing of this idea.

- COMPASS Retest policy – Updates from institutions. How many are retesting and how are the examinees doing?
  - Example: At Gainesville, 884 students were retested for placement. 61% exempted Reading on the retest; 44% exempted LS English on the retest; and 32.5% exempted LS mathematics on the retest.
- LS courses – breakdown of institutions offering 3, 3+1, or 4 credits per course. Any plans to change credit hours for LS courses?
  - Of the institutions present, 9 offer 3-hour LS courses and 13 offer 4-hour LS courses. None of the institutions present offer a separate lab component. One institution offers all 4-hour courses and a 6-hour MATH 0096 course. One institution offers all 4 hour courses and one 5-hour course.
  - East Georgia is planning to go from 4-hour courses to 3-hour courses. Gordon is planning to go from 3-hour courses to 4-hour courses.
  - Only one 2-year college has 3-hour LS courses.
- Any institutions with online Regents' Test remediation courses? Details needed.
  - Ten institutions offer online Regents' Test remediation courses.
- Institutions with ESL programs: Are these parts of Learning Support or are the ESL courses offered through Continuing Education?
  - ESL under Continuing Education – 1 institution
  - ESL under Learning Support – 5 institutions
  - ESL separate – 6 institutions
  - ESL under both LS and Continuing Education – 2 institutions
- LS advising and insuring students end up in required Learning Support classes.
  - Some institutions put holds on students requiring that they be advised and registered by specific advisors. Other institutions allow students to register on the Web and then someone checks their registration for correct placement.
- COMPASS vs. Accuplacer?
  - Leslie Caldwell addressed this issue. There is currently a pilot project at Georgia Perimeter College and Clayton State to look at Accuplacer. The USG is developing a concordance table this semester based on data collected at these two institutions. GPC and Clayton can use Accuplacer for placement and exit with having COMPASS as a back up beginning spring 2007. A decision for the rest of the System may be made for fall 2007.
  - Accuplacer is web-based. It also has a paper-and-pencil counterpart and a Braille counterpart. It should be easier to distribute since it is purely Internet-based (COMPASS requires some software installation.).
  - Leslie will check with Accuplacer to see if the LS Directors can review it.
  - Each area has a minimum number of questions: 12 in mathematics, 20 in reading, and 20 (?) in English.
  - Accuplacer does not allow general calculator use for the mathematics test. If a calculator is required, one pops up for the student to use.
  - Accuplacer is an adaptive test similar to COMPASS.

Dr. Leslie Caldwell updated the Directors on Regents' issue not addressed above.

- Dr. Frank Butler will retire at the end of December 2006. At that time, Dr. Caldwell will be the official liaison for Learning Support and the BOR. He is also the liaison for the Learning Disabilities Committee and the English Advisory Committee.
- A survey of institutional practice with regard to ESL:
  - Some institutions use COMPASS as the placement and exit test for all ESL students.
  - Some institutions use TOEFL only.
  - Some institutions use ESL COMPASS for placement but do not exit on COMPASS at all.
  - One institution uses the Michigan Test.
  - Leslie commented that it makes sense to use ESL tests for placement and exit. He also commented that the ESL version of Accuplacer has been praised more often than the ESL version of COMPASS.
- The Regents' Test is very much on the minds of the people at the System Office. The issue was removed from the BOR agenda in October, but this issue is not dead. The floor is open for additional options.
  - There are no constraints on extended time: some institutions give 90 minutes and some give as much as 2 hours.
- Larry Fennelly asked that Cathie Hudson be invited to come to a meeting of the LS Directors to interpret the LS Data report that she sends out.
- Scores on COMPASS form outside the System may be used if they are a direct communication from the sending institution. These should be reputable institutions but they don't have to be accredited. There is nothing in the BOR Academic Handbook about this.

The next meeting of the Learning Support Directors will be March 31 at St. Simons Island, GA.

This meeting adjourned at 2:59pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jackie Thornberry  
Secretary