

Minutes of the BOR Philosophy Academic Advisory Committee
November 17, 2007

Meeting at Georgia State University, Atlanta GA
(in conjunction with the Georgia Philosophical Society)
Start Time: 11:50 am
End Time: 1:15 pm

Attendees: Troy Catterson (North Georgia), Janet Donohoe (West Georgia), Ron Jackson (Clayton State), Alan Nichols (Georgia Highlands), Erik Nordenhaug (Armstrong Atlantic), Larry Peck (Georgia Perimeter), George Rainbolt (Georgia State), Ari Santas (Valdosta), Dorothy Zinsmeister (BOR liaison).

1. George Rainbolt was re-elected chair of the committee.
2. Dorothy Zinsmeister indicated that the BOR would prefer a more formal committee (with recorded minutes, more developed procedures, etc.). While the committee's informal and consensus-based model (based primarily on the committee's listserv) has been working well, the committee agreed that more formal procedures are appropriate because we can rely on them if ever there is an issue where consensus is not possible. It was agreed that we would begin taking minutes.
3. We agreed on the following policy for voting via email.

Voting by email is allowed. However, given the importance of discussion, if there is one vote against the motion distributed via email, the voting is postponed until the next physical meeting of the committee.

4. We agreed that improved spam filters should allow us to open up the philga listserv so that all members may post to the listserv. (This has been done.) The listservs' address is: philga@mailbox.gsu.edu All members of the committee may now use the list to send email messages to all members of the committee.

4. Dorothy Zinsmeister reported that Philosophy is the only discipline that has failed to agree on common course numbers. For the list of other disciplines, see http://www.usg.edu/academics/comm/aa_docs/usg_com_courses.pdf The committee agreed that we should develop common course numbers. We should also examine our course titles. If it is possible to change to common course descriptions without significant local confusion, we should do so. Erik Nordenhaug and Ron Jackson were appointed as a subcommittee to collect current philosophy course numbers, course titles, and course descriptions. They will also make recommendations about changes. Members of the committee are asked to help Erik and Ron out by sending in your information promptly.

5. It was agreed that we should review the philosophy Area F. Dorothy Zinsmeister reported that in some disciplines, Area F at particular institutions were not in compliance with the Area F approved by the BOR. We should review our Area F and see whether the local philosophy Area

Fs are in compliance with the BOR Philosophy Area F. Here is the currently approved Philosophy Area F

PHILOSOPHY REQUIRED

Philosophy courses to include Introduction to Philosophy, Logic, Ethics, Critical Thinking, Aesthetics, or other lower-division Philosophy courses 6-9 hours

NON-PHILOSOPHY INSTITUTIONAL ELECTIVES:

Options include foreign language, humanities, arts, social sciences, natural sciences, or other non-philosophy lower-division courses determined appropriate by the institution. 9-12 hours
Total hours 18 hours

George Rainbolt will organize the collection of Philosophy Area F requirements at all institutions that offer philosophy courses.

6. The new core curriculum process was discussed. Several concerns were raised. The two most serious were concerns that the “competency-based” approach seems likely to reduce graduation rates and impede the ability of students to transfer between institutions of higher education. The other serious concern was that the process does not have sufficient faculty input. In particular, the number of faculty participating is small and many disciplines are not represented. The following motion passed unanimously.

Motion:

The Philosophy Board of Regents Academic Advisory Committee recommends to the Board of Regents that:

1. the chairs of all the Board of Regents Academic Advisory Committees be resources to the Steering Committee, the Core Curriculum Competencies Committee, and the Curriculum Design & Assessment Committee;
2. the chairs of the departments that play a large role in the core but have no Academic Advisory Committee (e.g., communications), should elect a faculty member to be a resource. As resources, these faculty members should be sent the agendas of upcoming committee meetings, the minutes of past meetings, and their input should be sought before key decisions are made.

Rationale:

It is crucial that the new core curriculum reflect the diversity of programs offered in the University System of Georgia. As it stands, many disciplines (e.g., communications, criminal justice, fine and applied arts, geological sciences, sociology, anthropology, and social work) have no representation in the new core curriculum process. Some disciplines (e.g., communications) have no Academic Advisory Committee. In these cases, it seems best for department chairs to elect a representative.

By Board of Regents policy (http://www.usg.edu/academics/comm/aa_docs/procedures.phtml), the Academic Advisory Committees are charged not only with studying “the curricula and programs of instruction in the discipline or disciplines within the purview of the committee” but also “to make reports and recommendations concerning the improvement of instruction and the curriculum.”

Both sound education practice and Board policy speak in favor of the motion above.

The Philosophy Academic Advisory Committee urges other Academic Advisory Committees to support this motion.