

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Regents Academic Advisory Committee on
History for the Academic Year, 2021-2022

On Saturday, February 26, 2022, the Regents Academic Advisory Committee on History (RAACH) met in Athens, GA on the campus of the University of Georgia. The RAACH met in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Georgia Association of Historians (GAH). The meeting was in a face to face format, although some RAACH representatives participated virtually on Microsoft Teams.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Michelle Brattain (chair, Georgia State University), Bronson Long (chair elect, Georgia Highlands College), Michael Gunther (past chair, Georgia Gwinnett College), James Galt-Brown (Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College), Scott McDermott (Albany State University), Ruth McClelland-Nugent (Augusta University), Uzona Miller (Atlanta Metropolitan State College), Kenja McCray (Clayton State University), Adam Tate (Clayton State University), Patrizia Stahle (College of Coastal Georgia), Gary Sprayberry (Columbus State University), Tammy Bryon (Dalton State University), John Tone (Georgia Institute of Technology), Carol Herringer (Georgia Southern University), Glenn Robins (for Brian Parkinson, Georgia Southwestern State University), William Simson, (Georgia State University, Perimeter College), Bob Burnham (Middle Georgia State University), Matthew Adams (Savannah State University), Jeff Pardue (University of North Georgia), Stephanie Chalifoux (University of West Georgia), Barney Rickman (Valdosta State University)

MEETING MINUTES:

The USG system office tasked the RAACH to discuss foreign language requirements for History majors and pathway students. Some RAACH representatives expressed concern about losing History majors because of the foreign language requirement. Others noted that traditionally, taking at least one foreign language was considered a mark of an educated person. However, even those whose specialization necessitated considerable foreign language studies agreed that this view is increasingly outdated in the twenty-first century. While most schools currently require six hours of foreign language in Area F, a few require nine hours. Foreign language options for students also varies widely across the system.

The consensus of the RAACH is that foreign language requirements should be flexible and that rigid requirements should be eschewed. In general, Area F for History should have a “learning tools” category of some sort that allows students who wish to take foreign language to do so. However, depending on the options available at individual institutions, it should likewise allow students who wish to pursue things such as digital, statistics, sign language, or even education courses to do so as well. To explore this issue at more length, the RAACH agreed to form a sub-committee. James Galt-Brown, Glenn

Robins, Ruth McClelland-Nugent, and Stephanie Chalifoux volunteered for this sub-committee.

The USG system office also requested that the RAACH update the History Area F Learning Outcomes and Area F Course Guideline document. A subcommittee consisting of Michelle Brattain, Bronson Long, and William Simpson agreed to take up this issue.

The RAACH sub-committee on African-American History, with Adam Tate (chair) and Kenja McCray in attendance, gave a brief report to the RAACH. They stated that approaches to African-American History vary widely across the system, with courses organized in different chronological and thematic fashions, depending on the school in question. The sub-committee recommend that schools continue to pursue their own unique approaches. While the system office may be concerned that a lack of common prefixes will cause problems with transferability, no RAACH representatives had ever heard of transferability problems. This suggests that transferability is not an issue in this case.

Several on the RAACH raised concerns about faculty at schools such as Georgia State University and Georgia Tech University who have received threats or hostile questions about classes directly related to diversity. The consensus of the RAACH is that it should write a statement in favor of academic freedom for faculty and a respectful learning environment for our students. The purpose of this document is to show faculty and students that the RAACH supports a safe, free marketplace of ideas for all in the USG, especially in History classes.

In other RAACH business, the sub-committees on US History, World History, Graduate, and Major Programs will largely remain the same in membership. These sub-committees have not had much work in recent years. However, Matthew Adams and Ruth McClelland-Nugent were added to the Major Programs sub-committee.

In terms of elections, the RAACH did not elect a chair-elect for 2022-2023. The RAACH bylaws state that the Executive Committee should serve as the nominating committee, plus two at-large members. Scott McDermott and William Simson agreed to serve as at-large members in this regard.

The Executive Committee and the sub-committees created to deal with Area F issues will report to the RAACH around the end of April or early May. The RAACH will have discussion and votes on these matters via e-mail at that point.

The RAACH meeting in February 2023 will take place in Valdosta in conjunction with the annual GAH meeting. Bronson Long will chair this meeting.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Bronson Long.