

Meeting Minutes: Committee on English

Academic Committee on English Minutes of Meeting Held at Jekyll Island, Georgia February 10-11, 2000

The annual meeting of the Regents' Academic Committee on English was convened at 2:10 at the Clarion Buccaneer Resort on Jekyll Island. Dr. Curtis Ricker presided.

The following attended: Harold Brannam, Savannah State University; Jean Bridges, East Georgia College; Kathleen Burk, Georgia Board of Regents; Laura Dabundo, Kennesaw State University; Charles Davis, Waycross College; Valerie D'Ortona, Middle Georgia College; Jane Rose, Georgia College and State University; Sheri Gravett, Valdosta State University; Fred Green, Floyd College; Watson Holloway, Coastal Georgia Community College; Jason Horn, Gordon College; Joyce Jenkins, Fort Valley State University; Lillie Johnson, Augusta State University; Eric Link, North Georgia College and State University; William Webster, South Georgia College; Larry Mobley, Macon State College; Susan Morrow, Southern Polytechnic State University; David Newton, State University of West Georgia; Mark Nunes, Georgia Perimeter College; Carol Jamison, Armstrong Atlantic State University; William Pasch, Clayton College and State University; Joyce Peoples, Atlanta Metropolitan College; Elizabeth Ragsdale, Darton College; Curtis Ricker, Georgia Southern University; Alsyvia Smith, Albany State University; Thomas Tuggle, Gainesville College; Nelson Hilton, University of Georgia.

The following did not attend: Deborah Barshafsky, Medical College of Georgia; Reginald Comer, Georgia Southwestern State University; Sandra Corse, Georgia Institute of Technology; Robert Gingras, Bainbridge College; Oscar Patton, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College; Daniel Ross, Columbus State University; Robert Sattelmeyer, Georgia State University; Robert Weathersby, Dalton State College.

Following Dr Ricker's welcome to the committee, Dr. Burk reported news from the Board:

- E-Core, the University System of Georgia's program to provide core courses on-line, will commence summer semester, 2000.
- Issues of standardization of E-Core courses, load limits, which institution (home or instructor) receives credit for E-Core courses, class size, and insuring credibility of student work have yet to be determined.
- Students must complete all E-Core course work within the semester for which they register.
- A representative from the Regents' English Committee is needed to serve on the Council on General Education to take Jean Bridges' place.
- Recommendations from last year's Regents' English Committee were rejected by the Vice- Presidents for Academic Affairs Committee on the grounds that they were institutional matters.
- The Vice-Presidents for Academic Affairs Committee accepted last year's English Committee recommendations against Applied English Courses in the College Preparatory Curriculum.
- Once again the English Committee's recommendation that computerized Regents' Testing be implemented was unanimously approved by the Administrative Committee on Academic Affairs but the recommendation did not go forward to the Presidents.
- Because of the anticipated greater number of students taking the Regents' Test spring semester, additional

raters will be needed.

At 3:20 Dr. Ricker instructed the Subcommittees to meet separately and prepare reports for the next morning.

A tasty Luau dinner at 7:00 p.m., highlighted by shrimp fried in a delicate coconut batter, ended the day's work in a mood of festivity and conviviality.

The meeting resumed at 9:00 Friday morning, February 11.

Minutes of the April 9-10, 1999 meeting were approved on a motion by Joyce Jenkins, Joyce Peoples seconding.

The Committee agreed to approve the 2000 minutes electronically within one week of the meeting.

Old Business:

- The Committee discussed at length the recurring delays in implementing on-line testing of the Regents' Test
- The Committee approved a motion (by Bill Pasch, second by Susan Morrow) that the Executive Committee draft a grant proposal, in collaboration with the History Committee, to improve World Literature instruction. The proposal is to be circulated to the entire English Committee for approval.

Subcommittee Reports:

Freshman Subcommittee: (Chair Bill Pasch reporting)

1. Computer-administered and graded Regents' Test

Recommendation: The appropriate agents of the BOR should be urged to implement computerized administration and scoring of the Regents' Test as soon as possible (motion seconded by Joyce Peoples and approved unanimously)

Rationale:

- a. Computer-assisted Test administration and grading were agreed to nearly a decade ago (1992)
- b. Because for many, if not most, students writing with a computer is now the norm, large numbers of students may now be disadvantaged by the need to return to paper-and pen testing.
- c. Potential for public embarrassment grows with the perception of inconsistency between the System's emphases on students' acquisition of skills with instructional technology and the failure to computerize an important public System requirement such as the Regents' Test. This inconsistency is highlighted by the fact that writing skills are widely acknowledged to be essential to electronic communication of all kinds.
- d. Overall System cost savings are likely through decreased costs of test handling, scoring center maintenance, and travel expenses for scorers. Some portion of such savings could then be passed along to Test scorers in more equitable and attractive pay.

2. E-Core courses in Freshman English

Recommendation:

2.1 The following suggestions be forwarded to the appropriate System committees and agencies now developing the E-Core curriculum: (second by Joyce Peoples and unanimously approved)

- a. Advisement and retention of students in online classes is critical, not only to the success of the E-Core courses but even more importantly to the long-term academic success of the students who enroll in E-Core instruction. Students should be systematically advised about the unique demands of online learning, and particularly of the demands of the types of instruction and interaction required for effective learning in English Composition. Advisement strategies designed to optimize retention should be developed, possibly including a requirement that all students who register for online classes attend an orientation session of an appropriate type.
- b. Given the time demands not only of effective paper-grading but of managing online instructional logistics in general, strong consideration should be given to limiting each section to a maximum of 20 students per E-Core section of ENGL 1101 or ENGL 1102. In no case, however, should enrollments in sections of E-Core ENGL 1101 or 1102 exceed those permitted in conventional sections of those courses. Put in terms of teaching load, for example, if an E-Core instructor of ENGL 1101 is assigned 40 students, that load should count as the equivalent of teaching two 3-hour classes.
- c. In light of suggestions (a) and (b) above, if E-Core courses such as ENGL 1101 and ENGL 1102 prove popular in terms of student demand (in view of the numbers of faculty available to teach these sections), screening and admission standards for enrollment into E-Core ENGL 1101 and ENGL 1102 should not only maintain consistency with existing System and host-institution admissions criteria but should also consider the feasibility of additional admissions screening policies to help ensure that the students who enroll in E-Core ENGL 1101 and 1102 stand the greatest chances of persisting and succeeding in those courses.
- d. E-Core ENGL 1101 and 1102 should require a sufficient number of monitored writing assignments or other identity-verification measures to provide a reasonable assurance of the authenticity of the credit-awarding process (i.e., to verify that the student submitting the work is the student earning the grade in the course).
- e. E-Core instructors should be provided with adequate technical support during both the design and the teaching phases of their work.

3. 2.2 Recommendation: That USG sponsor a System-wide interdisciplinary forum to discuss not only E-Core implementation but also issues pertinent to online instruction in general. (second by Charles Davis and unanimously approved)

In closing, the Subcommittee expresses its deep gratitude to Dr. Charles Davis for his able leadership of the group for the past five years.

Sophomore English Subcommittee: (Chair Larry Mobley reporting)

- 1. The subcommittee recommends that comprehensive E-Core policies, procedures, and course descriptions be developed and disseminated to all System institutions before registration for the inaugural E-Core course offerings.** (Second by Valerie D'Ortona and approved unanimously)

2. **To ensure that student cheating and plagiarism in E-Core English classes be minimized, the Subcommittee recommends that at least one major assignment in each course be proctored.** (In lieu of separate approval the Committee recognized that this recommendation was consistent with Rationale (d) for the previously approved Recommendation 2.1 from the Freshman English Sub-committee and was thus already approved in spirit)

Major Program Subcommittee: (Chair David Newton reporting)

The Subcommittee discussed the following topics:

- Program Assessment: The Subcommittee discussed what different English departments in the system are doing in terms of program assessment (especially within the major programs) for purposes of accreditation and program evaluation and review. Departments need to share information and resources related to program assessment instruments and outcomes. For example, are departments using gateway courses into the major and/or capstone seminars to evaluate and assess student learning? What other assessment measures or instruments are used?
- Online courses and the use of technology within the major: building upon the Committee's extensive discussion of the new E-Core, the Subcommittee discussed how new demands for online or technology-enhanced courses might affect major programs or the offering of major-level courses.
- Communication between two- and four-year institutions: the Subcommittee discussed the need for stronger communication between two- and four-year institutions regarding core-level and major programs requirements since many students transferring from two-year schools enter four-year programs with Area F or other courses related to the major already completed. Improved communication could strengthen student advisement, student retention, and curriculum development at both two- and four-year institutions.

[The following recommendations were not voted on inasmuch as they were aimed only at the English Committee]

1. The Subcommittee recommends that the Regents' Academic Committee on English explore ways to share ideas (a resource web site, for example) on assessing the effectiveness of English programs.
2. The Subcommittee recommends that the Regents' Academic Committee on English establish a web site for sharing ideas on various subjects.

David Newton agreed to chair an ad hoc Committee on Assessment in response to (1) above.

Subcommittee on Testing: (Chair Jean Bridges reporting)

Dr. Bridges has written the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs concerning last year's recommendation about taking the Regents' Test on computer. When she hears from him she will report to the Testing Committee in March and they can then take appropriate action.

The Committee voted to schedule next year's meeting in Macon during one of the last three Thursday/Fridays of February. Larry Mobley will serve as chair. Valerie D'Ortona was elected to serve as secretary/chair elect.

Announcements:

- The Committee recognized Jean Bridges for her 28 years of outstanding service upon her retirement in April.
- The Committee thanked Curtis Ricker for his able leadership of the Committee this year.
- The committee recognized Carnell Moore of the Georgia Southern University Continuing Education Department for hosting the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Larry Mobley, Secretary/Chair Elect

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

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