

*Regents' Administrative Committee on Academic Affairs*  
*Meeting Notes/Conclusions*  
Wednesday, March 26, 2008  
Macon State College

**Approval of November 2007 Minutes**

The November 2007 minutes were approved as distributed.

**Executive Vice Chancellor Remarks/Report**

Dr. Susan Herbst provided an update on five top items: targeted enhancement funds, the system strategic plan, increasing the university's participation in research (goal #3), presidential searches and communications, and faculty governance. With regard to targeted enhancement funds, Dr. Herbst announced that several proposals had been submitted for review. This year the system office focused on projects that could "jump start" an area such as first-year experience programs. The six goals of the strategic plan were briefly reviewed. Dr. Herbst explained that Shelley Nickel is spearheading the project and is open to academic affairs feedback. Dr. Herbst specifically addressed goal #3, "Increasing the University System of Georgia's participation in research and economic development to the benefit of a global Georgia." She indicated that not all research was directly tied to economic development; basic research that advances the discipline was important to the system and the academy; and returns on investment were contextual in nature. It was explained that several presidential searches were underway with retirements at such institutions as Columbus State University, Georgia Tech, and Georgia State University, to name a few. Within the system office, efforts were underway to close the P-16 executive search. With regard to faculty governance, Dr. Herbst explained that the system office would take a closer look at faculty governance in the university system with projects developing in the area of faculty development. In terms of communications, presidents have expressed a desire to be apprised further of what is going on at the system level. To that end, updates will be posted to various groups. Chief Academic Officers were advised to submit ideas to Dr. Melinda Spencer.

**Core Curriculum Report**

Dr. Melinda Spencer provided opening remarks concerning progress to date on the core curriculum project. A recapitulation of activities included the following: a February 2008 retreat was held at the University of Georgia by members of each of the subcommittees; the subcommittees reviewed various models of the core; and information was shared with the chairs of the academic advisory committees. Dr. Spencer further explained that efforts were underway to further understand how the entire core curriculum fits within the broader context of academic advisory committee recommendations and comprehensive program review.

President Dorothy Leland provided a report on the future direction of the core curriculum project. Although a website was available with activities to date and frequently asked questions, Dr. Leland expressed to the Chief Academic Officers that she wanted to find out what they had heard thus far about the project. Dr. Leland further suggested that the group contact members of the steering committee with respect to the process. President Leland explained that current models under review were preliminary and that efforts were underway to ensure that faculty members were meaningfully involved in the process. In response to questions concerning core curriculum changes, President Leland explained that the committee was looking at a competency or outcomes-based framework with flexibility and creativity that would not necessarily be prescribed at the system level.

Next steps in the process include a meeting of the chairs of the academic advisory committees in April in order to bring this group into the discussion. Follow-up action will depend on discussions held in April. President Leland explained that at this juncture the challenge was to reach the broadest number of faculty.

### **Break-out Sessions**

The following individual break-out sessions were used as focal points for specific topics of discussion: faculty recruitment and retention, costing out academic programs, program review, risk management and tenure, intellectual diversity, and faculty recruitment and retention. Individuals were free to self-select and participate in small groups.

### **Presentations on First-Year Experience Programs**

During the lunch hour, presentations were provided concerning first-year experience programs at the following institutions: Georgia Tech (Dr. Anderson Smith), Valdosta State University (Dr. Pat Burns and Dr. Louis Levy), Kennesaw State University (Dr. Ruth Goldfine and Ms. Natasha Lovelace), and Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (Dr. Niles Reddick and Dr. Don Parks). Valdosta State University representatives explained that they make academic advising “the heart of the matter” with regard to its significance on retention. Valdosta State University has also initiated a plan to determine why students leave the institution in an effort to address issues of attrition. Kennesaw State University’s first-year experience program focuses on life skills and strategies for academic success. Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College provided insight into its ABAC 1000 course. The course, although not required, was very popular among freshmen due to the strategies, student to faculty ratios, and information sharing that were all part of the course. The structured environment at ABAC enables students to begin with a cohort of peers who eventually form a community of support.

### **Listening Post with Susan Herbst**

During the fireside chat with Executive Vice Chancellor Susan Herbst, discussions concerning the university system budget, unfunded mandates, targeted enhancements, and intellectual diversity ensued. Dr. Herbst explained that a survey was under development through the University of Georgia Survey Lab to inquire about student experiences concerning intellectual diversity. A template will be transmitted to administrators in order for everyone to be aware of the questions posed to students.

Questions concerning a faculty development program and employee self service operations were presented. It was determined that some institutions were still printing contract letters while others were using password protected websites. As a result, the system office would check with legal affairs to determine what is acceptable in terms of a faculty member’s final contract. Dr. Linda Noble announced that a faculty development program was underway for the 2008 – 2009 academic year. Upcoming projects would involve the work of institutional Centers for Teaching and Learning, teaching workshops, and department chair workshops.

On other business matters, Dr. Herbst announced that work was underway to present to the Board a shared services model to improve efficiencies for back-office operations in the university system. Chief Academic Officers were encouraged to speak with their financial officers concerning the details of umbrella services with one or a select group of vendors. Lastly, Dr. Herbst announced that several institutions had developed recommendations concerning quality of life issues such as partner benefits, spousal hires, and other human resources actions.

## **New Business**

Dr. Mary Ellen Wilson distributed two academic advisory committee recommendations, one from the history committee and the other from the philosophy committee. Both committee recommendations concerned reevaluation of the core curriculum. Below are the recommendations of each committee:

### ***Academic Advisory Committee on History***

Recommendations:

- 1) The Academic Advisory Committee on History expresses concern about the process of reevaluating the core curriculum of the University System of Georgia and the lack of information about the future direction of curricular reform as well as the two thematic frameworks which have emerged from the combined meeting of the two committees on February 4 – 5, 2008.
- 2) The Academic Advisory Committee on History endorses the recommendation by the Regents' Academic Advisory Committee on Philosophy (26 November 2007) regarding the reevaluation of the core curriculum.

### ***Academic Advisory Committee on Philosophy***

Recommendations:

- 1) That the Chairs of all Board of Regents Academic Advisory Committees be resources to the Steering Committee, the Core Curriculum Competencies Committee, and the Curriculum Design & Assessment Committee;
- 2) That 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 agenda of upcoming committee meetings, the minutes of past meetings, *and* their input should be sought before key decisions are made.

A motion was made and seconded to send the recommendations to the Core Curriculum Committee. By unanimous verbal agreement, each of the recommendations was removed from the floor with an announcement by Chair Wilson that they would be referred to the Core Curriculum Committee.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting began at 9:35 a.m. was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

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Respectfully Submitted,  
Marci M. Middleton, Ph.D.  
Director, Academic Programs