

MINUTES
REGENTS' ACADEMIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HISTORY
SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 2005
Columbus State University

Present: Don Butts, Lee Ann Caldwell, Judy Cornett, Bob Durand, Glenn Eskew, Doug Flaming, Richard Hall, Gene Hatfield, Don Kagay, Peter B. Makaya, Bill Muggleston, Alice Pate, Sandra Peacock, Mike Price, Jeff Purdue, Paul Riggs, Pam Roseman, Fred R. van Hartesveldt, Mark D. Vickrey.

The meeting convened at 9:00 AM, and after welcoming remarks from the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters at Columbus State, RAACH Chair Doug Flaming (Georgia Tech) opened the discussion.

1. Announcements

Doug Flaming informed the committee that the usual November meeting of the chairs of the academic advisory committees had been cancelled "due to stringent budget cuts within the system," so that he had no news to report on BOR matters.

2. Timing of next year's meeting

This year, the GAH meeting began its sessions on Friday morning, which has long been the time at which the RAACH met. Some members found this less convenient and there was brief discussion about when to schedule next year's meeting. Gene Hatfield (Clayton State), who will be arranging next year's GAH meeting at Clayton State and Sandra Peacock (Georgia Southern), next year's RAACH chair, announced that the GAH executive committee had decided to try the two-day format again next year and decide after that whether to keep the new format or return to the old one. They will coordinate the RAACH meeting ahead of time so that conflicts can be avoided; meanwhile, RAACH members who wish to express an opinion on the timing of next year's meeting are urged to contact Sandra Peacock (speacock@georgiasouthern.edu).

3. Update on K-12 Curriculum Standards

Doug Flaming expressed gratitude to Mike Price (Armstrong Atlantic), who had coordinated the GAH response to Kathy Cox about members' concerns over the curriculum standards proposed last year. Cliff Kuhn (Georgia State) and Alice Pate (Columbus State) worked closely with the Department of Education on revisions during the last year, and most of the suggested revisions had been incorporated into the final version. Overall, the following improvements were made: the number of standards was reduced; early U.S. history was restored to the curriculum; World History was made less focused on Europe. Mike Price said that the BOR had recently sponsored meetings with the Department of Education during which USG faculty were introduced to the final version, and that the point had been made that History departments now have to make sure that future teachers are prepared to teach the new curriculum.

Doug Flaming and the RAACH wanted specifically to thank Chris Jespersen (North Georgia College & State Univ.), Cliff Kuhn, Alice Pate, and Mike Price for their efforts over the last year to improve the curriculum standards.

4. Advanced Placement credit

Doug Flamming introduced the issue of college credit for Advance Placement courses, which had surfaced as an issue in a communication from the BOR. The BOR apparently wants to narrow the range of policies that exist across campuses on what scores enable students to get credit, which courses and how many credits they can get credit for, and how the credits transfer across campuses. Members present were not aware that this had become a problem, and the discussion that followed addressed this issue.

Don Kagay (Albany State) wondered why in fact there are so many different policies, and whether we should work toward a common policy. Doug Flamming replied that staffing needs may influence policies (if for example the administration wants to exempt more students from core courses to cut down on seats required), and institutions may have different expectations or other reasons for setting a specific policy. Mark Vickrey (Southern Polytechnic) said that on his campus, the dean had suggested conforming to system guidelines, though in the absence of any uniform guidelines this would be difficult. Paul Riggs (Valdosta State) raised the issue of transfer credit, which can cause problems, for example, if a student is awarded 6 hours for a particular score on one exam. Mike Price suggested that this issue may be connected with the BOR's desire to create a "seamless" transfer policy throughout the system.

Glenn Eskew (Georgia State) commented that the transfer policy might also be desirable in order to ease a student's transition from a 2-year to a 4-year institution. He asked about the statement that appeared on some of the summaries: "uses UGA rules." Doug Flamming responded that some schools simply follow the UGA policy in all disciplines; the UGA policy is listed on the spreadsheet. For example, under this policy, students get 6 credit hours if they earn a score of 5 on the U.S. AP exam, possibly to reduce the load in survey classes. At Georgia Tech, on the other hand, the policy is more restrictive in order to make sure that students do take the surveys. Gene Hatfield commented that overall the policies in History seemed to be pretty uniform, so perhaps the problem was not as great as it might appear.

Discussion then shifted to the issue of the World History and European History AP exams, and Mike Price commented that on his campus they resist giving world history survey credit for the AP European history exam. Don Kagay and Fred van Hartesveldt (Fort Valley State) had heard contradictory information on trends in the AP exam in European history, with Don having heard that the number of students taking the course and exam is declining and Fred having heard that the number is increasing. Mike Price added that the overall number of students in AP courses is increasing, which suggests that the number seeking college credit will increase as well.

Don Kagay asked whether ETS had ever indicated how the scores should be accepted, and Fred whether the actual grading of the tests has been made easier. (According to my notes, neither question ever got answered.)

Paul Riggs and Mark Vickrey both said that on their campuses, where the world history survey is divided into three parts, students complain because they only get 6 credit hours for the AP course in world history, thinking they should receive 9 credit hours. Mike Price said that at Armstrong, he decided each case individually, though they give 6 credit hours as well. Paul Riggs added that at Valdosta, the transfer credit issue is handled case by case.

Pam Roseman said that on her campus, the VPAA had begun to issue directives on AP credit, largely about the AP in European History and whether kids should get credit for world history – the decision is that they do not receive any credit at all for the European History exam. Mike Price mentioned that with a score of 5 on the European History AP exam, kids get 3 credit hours for the World Civilization II course and 3 hours elective credit. Bill Mugleston (Floyd College) said that on his campus they give credit for both survey courses for a score of 5, and asked whether the AP courses are year-long courses. Mike Price said that it can depend on the school – that the course is a year-long course, but that if schools use block scheduling the content may be taken in one semester. One problem that results, though, is that students may take the course in the fall and the exam in May, then not do as well.

Doug Flamming raised the possibility that the BOR may be thinking that the more students are given credit for AP exams, the less they have to pay for credits on campus. Mike Price mentioned that we also need to consider the issue of retention – that the retention rate on USG campuses is low, and giving AP credit and resolving transfer credit issues may help with that. Doug agreed – that we should concentrate on academic rather than financial considerations. Thus, we had two questions to answer. 1) Is local control working for now? And 2) Is there concern over transfer credit?

Mark Vickrey said that the BOR is getting more adamant about “total portability” in transfer credit, and that on his campus, for example, they are being urged to ease transfer restrictions on grades of “D.” Gene Hatfield said he thought AP credit should be transferable, and that department heads could work out the individual courses. Mike Price added that once AP credit is accepted, it becomes credit for a course, and that that should solve the problem. AP scores could be sent even to the transfer institutions, and part of the problem may be transfer credits and how they are described on a transcript.

Alice Pate proposed a motion that autonomy be granted to departments to make decisions on the granting of AP credit, and the motion was approved unanimously.

At this point, Doug Flamming asked how many campuses had a policy on the “International Baccalaureate” program, which is becoming more common in high schools. Magnet and honors programs can adopt a more rigorous program and students receive an “International Baccalaureate,” and the curriculum may be more demanding than AP courses. Pam Roseman (Georgia Perimeter) said that it is becoming more common among applicants on her campus, but others had not heard of it. It is still largely unknown on college campuses, but we may have to learn more and develop policies as it becomes more widespread at the secondary level.

5. Next year's chair, and chair-elect

Sandra Peacock will take over the position of RAACH chair for 2005-06, and Judy Cornett (Dalton State) was voted chair-elect by acclamation. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra J. Peacock, Chair, Department of History
Georgia Southern University