

Meeting Minutes: Regents Advisory Committee on Records and Admissions (RACRA)

RACRA - RACSFA Joint Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2002
Unicoi Lodge
Helen, GA

At 8:40 a.m. Deborah Barbone (North Georgia), Chair of RACSFA, called the 2nd annual meeting to order and welcomed the joint groups (RACSFA and RACRA).

To begin, Deborah called on Tonya Lam from the System Office to review her remarks from the previous day on Transfer Articulation (patches for Banner), SEVIS, and Georgia Best Model of Best Practices. She emphasized the need to recognize the impact that transfer articulation module has on business practices in financial aid so that adjustments can be made. Tonya reiterated that the federal government had not finalized all regulations yet and was still testing SEVIS to remove bugs discovered in testing the software program for tracking international students. The program will be re-released in July 2002.

Mandatory tracking will be required by October 2003. There is an important need to coordinate among affected offices on campus.

Tonya reported on the GA BEST meeting held in Macon on 3/13. Ten campuses have been surveyed and additional campuses will be added to determine functional processes and best practices. A CAPP team implemented this process at Georgia College & State University, ABAC, Georgia Southern, Darton College, and North Georgia. Tonya said that students are very excited that they can access their degree completion information on-line through CAPP.

Deborah Barbone asked to see a show of hands from institutions that have tested transfer articulation and HOPE. She encouraged those who had not yet tested the process to look around and see who might help them as they moved forward to test these processes on their campuses. Tonya indicated that there are listservs for both transfer articulation and CAPP.

Joe Head (Kennesaw) reported that Pat Neri left Georgia Perimeter to join SCT as of March 1. Pat will be working with CAPP. Nancy Gratin, International Advisor at Georgia Perimeter, also joined SCT. Tonya indicated that Pat and Nancy would be working with Georgia campuses behind the scenes. Consultants will be working with institutions to help get CAPP working.

John McElveen called on Cathie Hudson to give a report on the Office of Educational Accountability (OEA) report card and the Board of Regents Strategic Plan. Two handouts, "Recommendations for Definitions of Indicators for Office of Educational Accountability Report Card and Technical Notes for USG Institutions (posted previously on the web) were distributed to attendees.

Cathie explained that the System is in the middle of a new planning process at the Board Level. Before Chancellor Porch left the system, the Board had a retreat developing the vision for the system and new priorities and planning goals. Some of the goals discussed were: (1) 4:4:2 programs; four year degree programs offered by four-year campuses on two-year campuses; (2) renewed emphasis on non-traditional access and for African American males with possible funding available for initiatives in this area; (3) expansion of waivers for the 120 hour limit on Baccalaureate degree programs; and (4) offering sabbaticals for faculty.

Cathie then discussed the document that was passed out and was recently sent to OEA as a draft. Four indicators were recommended by committee to be a measure for the USG report card. These were: (1) retention rate, (2) graduation rate, (3) pass rate on licensure exams, and (4) Regents Test pass rate. Those will be disaggregated by gender, race, and socio-economic status. Cathie indicated that although we desired to have reporting at the system level, OEA required that it be at the institution level. In December, OEA will issue a report card for each institution and for the University System as a whole. OEA will allow the system to give definition to the four indicators. Cathie said institutions may and should provide input to the USO as to definitions of the indicators. What we cannot do is say data are wrong once the report card comes out. It is important to decide now if the definitions accurately reflect what we are reporting.

Cathie proceeded to discuss the handout in terms of the definitions for each of the indicators pointing out which ones might cause some problems because of ways data were previously reported for SIRS. She explained that some data would be collected from other agencies. Teacher education pass rates would come from Professional Services Commission (PSC), and Nursing from Georgia Board of Nursing. Regents test pass rate will be reported for students who have 45 hours. There are some questions regarding the disaggregate variables particularly related to older reporting methods for race. Socio-economic status (SES) presents challenges too since there is no one variable that can really be used to reflect it. Pell grants status may be used as an indicator to separate SES groups. Mollie DeHart asked whether the Appendix would include the degrees from DTAE schools and Cathie responded that they would be added.

ISSUES OF MUTUAL INTEREST:

HOPE Residency Issues: Auditors are cracking down and making institutions pay back money when the rules are not applied properly. Several problematic groups exist: military dependents, transfers, transients, and readmits. Institutions need to review the questions asked on admission applications to ensure proper coding of residency status. Admissions offices will need to play a front-line role in initiating concern for proper coding and raising red flags for financial aid offices. Another problem group is transfer students. There is inconsistent treatment among institutions in applying the rules to transfer students. Discussion indicated that it is difficult to determine the history of transfer students. Students who transfer from private institutions also present problems. Dee Minter suggested that the University System approach the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC) to ask for a certain acceptable margin of error since institutions are having to deal with two separate residence policies (HOPE and BOR). Rich Loftus (USO) indicated that he would begin development of a process that the USO could then take to GSFC for approval. John McElveen suggested that RACRA members join the RACSFA subcommittee that is studying the issue and appointed Kathryn Sweeney (Augusta State), Dee Minter (Macon College), Carol Nobles (MCG), Wayne Smith (Ga. Southern), Bob LaVerriere (North Ga.), and Tonya Lam (USO).

Consortia Admissions and Financial Aid Agreements between USG Institutions: Deborah Barbone reported that a pilot program is underway to determine the best way to form consortia agreements. The pilot study will document the pros and cons of such agreements and will report suggestions and best practices to the USO. Those institutions participating are Middle Georgia College, ABAC, Valdosta State, and Macon College. Tonya mentioned that Dr. Butler wants these agreements to include all financial aid programs, not just HOPE because these agreements benefits students. The institutions will be providing a report and feedback to the System Office and the RACRA and RACSFA memberships. Transient Students: John McElveen introduced discussion on whether institutions charge transcript fees to transient students. Indications were that some do and some do not. Deborah Barbone asked that those institutions that do charge a fee emphasize to transients that they must pay the fee before the transcript is released since their financial aid (HOPE) at the home institution cannot be released until the transcript is received and coursework is articulated. Sending postcards through mail regarding financial aid status: John noted that financial aid offices want to send postcards to notify financial aid applicants about documents needed in order to be more cost effective. The question is whether this is contrary to FERPA regulations. Debbie Williamson (GA Tech) stated that if the postcard is worded carefully to be generic and not specific, it is ok. Do not directly identify them as a financial aid applicant or recipient. Newly admitted students who have not yet matriculated are not covered by FERPA.

Study Abroad Issue: Deborah Barbone asked if students who are going a study abroad trip could register at the home institution rather than as a transient so that HOPE and financial aid issues would be eliminated. Tonya Lam indicated that this issue is under study and the contact person is Sue Sugarman in the Office of International Education. John McElveen reminded the membership that international students, who change status and become resident aliens, must be recoded to be eligible for financial aid.

Future Meetings: Deborah Barbone led a discussion about future joint meetings. She said she hoped that the two groups would continue to hold an annual joint meeting but that several issues needed to be addressed:

Need to establish a treasurer and identify money to make reservations if meetings are going to be held off campus

Need to decide where and when to hold the meetings so reservations can be made ahead of time

Members voted to return to Unicoi next year. Dates will be determined via the listserv for each group. No shows who reserved rooms this year must still pay for their rooms. Tonya said she would check to see if an agency account could be established at the USO so the two groups could roll money over to that account.

John McElveen opened the floor for any other issues for discussion. Deborah Barbone introduced discussion of how transfer articulation impacts financial aid. If you set up the ZAHOPE screen transfer work manually, that student cannot be transfer articulated for HOPE purposes. The student must continue to have transfer and transient work put into the transfer section of the ZAHOPE manually. Financial Aid must run grades twice: once for students who have manual work and once for those who have had work transfer articulated or else the transfer hours are doubled. Marsha Welch (Floyd) asked how to identify whether a student is transfer articulated

or manually entered on the screen. Deborah responded that answers to questions and step-by-step instructions will be posted on the web. Tonya announced that there would be a workshop in mid-April for financial aid and admissions staff on how to do grades under transfer articulation. North Georgia will do the workshop.

There being no further discussion or business, John thanked Deborah for setting up the meeting and thanked all University System Office representatives for attending. The meeting was adjourned at 10:45a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Burns, Secretary

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