

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

Date: December 13, 2005

Location: Macon State College

Meeting was called to order by Debbie Powell, Chair.

Banner 7 Update

Amanda Marshall and Karen Nunn, OIIT, gave an overview of Banner version 7.x, which they reported is on schedule for testing in March and Production in June. Karen noted that this will be the most technically challenging Banner upgrade to date. From the standpoint of the end user, the most significant change will be an internet-native user interface with a full-sized (1024x768 pixels) screen. The larger screen will allow the elimination of many of the abbreviations seen in current screens and will permit the display of a greater number of fields. Also, forms have been redesigned to be more efficient and users will have flexibility in setting up preferences. This Banner version is said to be more consistent with Luminis. A significant addition to Banner web will allow students to view account detail by term as well as the account summary by term currently available. The upgrade will include no functional changes to Georgia enhancements and no new enhancements.

Computer-based training is available from the University System for version 7.x, including Advancement Overview, Common Matching, Financial Aid Overview, Fundamentals and Student Overview. The CBT's are in ISO file format and must be downloaded from <http://swdust.banner.usg.edu>. Once downloaded, they can be written to a CD or viewed with ISO mounting software.

Miscellaneous Topics - Morning Session

Analysis of Receivables

Debbie Powell, Georgia Southern University, demonstrated a report created at her request by the Georgia Southern IT staff. The report program combines the logic of TGRAGES and TGRRCON to produce the data need to complete the Analysis of Receivables report. This report is required twice yearly by Section 10.7.5 of the Business Practices Manual and is next due on February 10. Many in attendance indicated that they have been manually combining information from a variety of sources to complete this report and expressed interest in getting copies of this script. Debbie indicated that she would inquire about her IT department's policies on sharing scripts and would notify the group of the response.

Rich Loftus, University System Office, expressed reservations about the practice of institutions using home-grown software solutions or getting scripts from other institutions to solve specific problems. He observed that this results in a lack of procedural uniformity within the University System and complicates the task of providing support. He said that in matters such as the Analysis of Receivables report, he would prefer that RACAR members first discuss the issue with appropriate parties on their campuses, then as a group agree on

requirements and have the Chair submit a change request to OIIT. Ideally, the end result would be solutions and procedures that would be uniform throughout the System.

Hope Books Authorization

Rich Loftus led a general discussion of the origin and impact of recent changes in the Georgia Student Finance Authority's HOPE book award regulations. He indicated that Columbus State is experiencing some success with the HOPE books authorization feature provided in release 6.9. This enhancement produces a prompt at log-in on Banner web requesting that the student check a box authorizing the institution to deduct non-covered fees from the HOPE books award. The prompt continues to appear at each log-in until the student grants the request, and may also allow Title IV authorizations at the discretion of each institution. The language of the HOPE authorization was developed in negotiations involving a system-wide committee and GSFC personnel. There were a number of questions about the exact requirements of the regulation. Reference was made to a November 18 "Dear Colleague" letter in which GSFC president Timothy Connell stated that, while the law and regulations give no strict timetable, book funds "ideally" should be available in the first week of classes. The letter also states that schools providing bookstore credit with HOPE book funds should provide an "alternative mechanism" for students who wish to buy elsewhere. Rich also indicated that schools distributing HOPE book awards before the beginning of classes are not required to return book awards should students withdraw.

Hurricane Katrina Update on Receivables

Rich Loftus reminded the group that the Board of Regents did not enact any new requirements in November thus ending fee deferments and nonresident fee waivers for Hurricane Katrina refugees with the end of fall semester, and also that receivables incurred in this way during the fall must be collected. Institution President's have been asked to attempt to assist students who may still have an outstanding receivable balance.

Reconciliation-Banner to PeopleSoft (The Never-Ending Topic)

Rich Loftus once again addressed issues associated with the reconciliation of TGRRCO and the PeopleSoft trial balance. He noted that many of the problems institutions are having with TGRRCO are the result of improper setup of the accounts associated with Banner detail codes. Third-party accounts, for instance, should go to an unapplied account rather than a receivable. He indicated that he would post the GaBEST model detail code setup document to the RACAR list in the near future so that schools can verify that their detail codes are set up correctly. He urged the group not to wait until the deadline to review data for the TGRRCO reconciliation template sent each month Regents' internal auditors, but to begin a few days ahead of time allow sufficient time to correct problems. He said that schools submitting reconciliation reports in which Banner and PeopleSoft numbers do not match will be reported as out of balance, even if an explanation is provided, and he cautioned that the internal audit staff can easily spot cases in which template formulas have been replaced with values. He urged committee members to view the reconciliation process as a valuable tool for detecting problems in their accounts rather than as just a monthly reporting requirement. He noted that members of the internal audit staff were unable to attend this RACAR meeting because of prior commitments and asked if members, of the committee would like to have them attend future meetings. It was the consensus of the group that internal audit

staff members should be invited to future RACAR meetings to provide input on the reconciliation process.

Escheating Funds

Carol Payne, Georgia Tech, gave a brief presentation on the process by which the state acquires custody of unclaimed property and funds, including refund checks that are not claimed or cashed. Unclaimed Title IV refunds must be returned to the Department of Education. Other unclaimed AR refunds are to be held for five years before being turned over to the state. It was pointed out that schools which use a third party to process refunds are still responsible for keeping track of unclaimed refunds and for the return or escheat of those funds as appropriate. Schools negotiating with Higher One or other third parties should be sure that mechanisms are in place to allow them to meet that responsibility.

Miscellaneous Topics - Afternoon Session

GAcollege411 Touchnet Admissions Payment

Rich Loftus reported that seven University System schools now have live applications on the GAcollege411 website and two more are being contacted. Payment of application fees on the website is through each school's TouchNet instance and payments will appear on the TouchNet control center. He noted that it is possible to go live on GAcollege 411 without using TouchNet in Banner, and he advised schools to be sure that the website has the correct information on their tuition and fees. There followed a general discussion of the correct way to return overpayments, which are now allowed as a result of the increased payment flexibility offered by TouchNet. Rich pointed out that the correct way to refund credit card overpayments is to refund to the card. A check should be issued only if it can be documented that the refund to the card was not successful.

Due Diligence and Write Offs

Debbie Powell pointed out that Senate Bill 73, which allows University System institutions to write off amounts up to \$3,000, will expire on June 30, 2006. Rich Loftus has requested an update from Ron Stark. It is anticipated that the legislation will be renewed, but that the amount could change.

Statewide A/R User Group

The Committee discussed the desirability of forming a statewide A/R users group similar to the Georgia Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (GASFAA), which includes members from the University System, the Department of Technical and Adult Education and private institutions. There was general agreement that this idea is worth exploring. As a first step in that direction, the group voted to accept an offer from GASFAA to include an A/R track in their spring meeting in May on St. Simon's Island. The spring RACAR meeting will be held concurrently.

Business Meeting

The chair appointed Susan Crozier, Georgia State University, Barbara Stewart, Augusta State University, and

Cam Reagin, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, to serve on an election committee which will nominate candidates for the offices of Vice Chairman and Secretary. The names of the candidates will be published to the RACAR listserv 30 days before the Spring meeting; election of the candidates will occur at the Spring meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

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