

**Administrative Committee on Distance Education (RACDE)
Meeting Minutes
September 27-28, 2007**

THURSDAY, September 27, 2007

The meeting was called to order by Kim McCroskey at 1:00 pm. Dr. Linda Bleicken, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Georgia Southern University, welcomed the group to the campus with comments on the increasing focus on distance education in the University System.

Business Meeting

Recognize New RACDE Reps

The RACDE group attendees were welcomed by Kim McCroskey. Each attendee was provided with a list of the RACDE representatives and an agenda, which was briefly reviewed.

Announcements

Ms. McCroskey informed the group of the departure of Chair Wesley Smith from RACDE at which time Kim McCroskey, the Chair-Elect, became Chair. Dr. Sandra Stratford was selected as the new Chair-Elect.

Minutes

A motion to approve the previously distributed minutes was made by Debi Moon and seconded by George Wright. There was no discussion. The minutes were approved.

Chancellor's Distance Education Initiative (Georgia ONmyLINE)

The Georgia ONmyLINE (GOML) initiative was described by Dr. Kris Biesinger, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Advanced Learning Technologies. Dr. Biesinger began by reviewing information and discussions from the last RACDE meeting on March 2007, at Southern Polytechnic State University.

- The SREB Electronic Campus database will be used for this project at no charge to the USG.
- Several project names were discussed and forwarded.
- Concerns identified included a need for a marketing plan and to address the registration process.

On October 10, 2007, the Georgia ONmyLINE searchable online site for USG distance education courses and programs will be announced by the Chancellor. Dr. Biesinger will demonstrate the website and database at the BOR meeting on that date. The database will be designed to be beneficial to students (or prospective students) as it provides a listing of the distance learning offerings of USG institutions. The database will still be a work in progress as it begins to be used.

Last year, about 4% of USG enrollment was in distance learning courses. The percentage may be slightly higher this year due to the increase in overall enrollment. Increasing the percentage of USG's distance education enrollment to 8% is one of the sub-goals of the recently approved Strategic Plan.

To address the need for streamlining of the Registration process, an RFP was released last July with a contract awarded to Campus Management early in September (www.campusmanagement.com). A company brochure and Dr. Biesinger's handout from her presentation at Georgia Summit entitled "Georgia ONmyLINE: Collaborative Program Registration" were distributed and discussed. Campus Management also provides services for a number of for-profit institutions. They are spending this week working with USG representatives, including Lisa Baldwin from Valdosta State. Later meetings will be with campus Registrars, WebCT VISTA administrators, and perhaps program directors. The registration package is to be ready for use the first of December. The franchise institutions (North Georgia, Valdosta, Columbus, Georgia Southern, and Georgia State) will be deploying the registration system first (8 programs).

Terms that need system-wide usage agreement include "home institution", "offering institution", and "collaborating institution" (Dr. Biesinger). A "home or collaborating institution" may also be an "offering institution". Collaborating institutions offer a program that includes courses offered by other institutions as well as perhaps its own courses. For collaborative programs such as the WebMBA, the institution offering the course will provide the description for the database. For e-CORE courses, the information will be in Banner for each institution offering the eCore courses.

Each institution decides what courses and programs also appear in the 16-state SREB Electronic Campus catalog. A basic EC requirement is that you have seats available.

A demo of the GOML website was provided by Dr. Biesinger and Dr. Jessica Somers, starting with the area where students can search for courses or programs (www.georgiaonmyline.org). Program information will be pulled from the SREB Electronic Campus (EC). RACDE representatives can add to or edit the information at the EC website. Updating the EC program information (PDE) also updates the GOML program information, generally within 24 hours. Jessica Somers of Advanced Learning Technologies will provide the password information for any RACDE members who need it.

Dr. Biesinger reminded the RACDE members that programs must be approved by the BOR in order to be listed at the EC website. New programs must be included in the institution's IDP (institutional delivery plan) prior to BOR approval.

Courses coded as Full or Partial Distance Education (>50% DL) will be extracted from Banner for the GOML database (via ZORELCA). Distance education coding at institution is critical. Franchise information should be entered by the lead institution and can be copied and edited by the other franchise members.

A challenge is that URLs are not linkable at this point; they must be copied and pasted due to the construction of the EC and GOML databases. As users encounter things that need improvement (search features, etc.), send info in. There is already work underway on a new USG tool. RACDE members emphasized that the data for a searchable database must come from Banner to be efficient.

Information about the franchise models was provided by Dr. Biesinger. The franchise programs are to be fully online, scalable as enrollment grows, have a reasonable completion time, and use an e-tuition structure (\$350). The tuition should go to the department offering the course. This does not mean that there will not be expenses that the department must pay others for course or student support. There is not a marketing budget at this time.

The first franchise, awarded in June 2007, involves Colleges of Education and the MED for practicing teachers or in informational technology and the MAT for those changing careers which addresses the teaching shortage. Franchise programs are showcased at the GOML website. Suggestions were made that other programs should also be periodically highlighted.

Dr. Biesinger shared statistics about distance education in the USG (FY06): 87 approved degree programs in 19 institutions (15 Associate, 28 Bachelors, 41 Masters, 1 Specialist, and 1 EdD). Over 50% of students taking online courses in Georgia are enrolled in out-of-state institutions (Eduventures).

GOML WEB CONFERENCE

This week's web conference focused on questions and answers about GOML, along with suggestions for improvements. A new ZORELCA release is anticipated prior to the Summer/Fall 2008 course input. West Georgia has developed a method for faculty to put in information about their courses, which they will hopefully share.

RACDE representatives are the primary institution contact points for distance education information including the GOML project which involves input of information on USG programs greater than 90% Distance Learning (DL) and/or courses greater than 50% DL. Further questions should be addressed to the OIIT Help Desk. The GOML web conference will be archived.

GOML PROJECT

Dr. Jessica Somers indicated that a number of teams are working on the GOML project, one of which is a marketing team. A draft GOML brochure was distributed. The brochures will be available for distribution at the BOR meeting and to

individuals and groups. Debi Moon's assistance in the development ideas for the brochure was requested based on her successful efforts on behalf of her institution. Anyone needing passwords or extraction workshops should contact Dr. Somers. She will also be distributing the Banner leads list to RACDE members.

RACDE List-Serve

Dr. Somers indicated that OIIT has been receiving requests by non-RACDE representatives to become participants in the RACDE list-serve which is open only to the official RACDE representatives. Discussion focused on whether RACDE reps should approve who is added to the list; whether having non-RACDE members on the list will inhibit discussion among RACDE members; and long-term needs versus current interest and need for information (ex: GOML).

A motion to open the RACDE list-serve to others was made by Darryn Ostrander and seconded by Debi Moon. Following discussion, the motion was defeated. An amended motion submitted by Jessica Somers passed. This motion, as approved, opens membership to others for a 3-month time period upon submission of those new list members names by the institutional RACDE representative within a week following the RACDE meeting.

Another request received by OIIT is from a Collaborative Director who seeks membership in RACDE in order to have access to the information distributed and shared within the group which is relevant to their organization's work (ex: WebBSIT, WebMBA, or eCore Executive Directors). Bylaws would need to be changed as they allow only institutional members. Discussion included whether Collaborative Directors would be voting members if the decision is made to allow them membership or to attend meetings. This item will be under further discussion.

Online Certification programs being listed in GOML was discussed. Also discussed was eligibility for Hope Scholarships for students in certificate programs.

A question was received at OIIT about the current roles of RACDE members. Debi Moon and Kim McCroskey volunteered to work with Jessica Somers to help create a document.

The meeting adjourned for the day at 4:45pm.

FRIDAY, September 28, 2007.

The meeting was called to order by Kim McCroskey at 8:32 am.

OMEGA Military Update

An update on the work with the OMEGA project was provided by Debi Moon. OMEGA (Organization for Military Education in Georgia) is the Georgia collaborative initiative to become more involved with educational opportunities for the military. A conference is being planned for anyone interested in seeing how their school could be involved in distance education opportunities for the military and for the educational officers in the state. The next goal of OMEGA is to communicate to institutions information on how to become a SOC approved institution (Service Organization Colleges). The biggest challenge to date is the campus SOC representative being someone involved with knowledge of working with the military.

Barriers to address in order to attract military students include:

- Limits on items paid by military; ex: dollar per credit hour or total, fees not paid
- High school transcript required for those out of high school more than 5 years
- Multiple applications: one for military and one for school
- Inability to withdraw without being reassigned (BOR policy)

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY PLAN (IDP)

Jessica Somers referred attendees to the USG Academic Affairs Handbook, 2.12, for off-campus instructional policies. Since February 2005, all external and distance learning programs require inclusion in the institutions' 3-year Instructional Delivery Plan (IDP). It should include what is offered and what offerings are planned (even if not yet approved). The IDP can be updated or expanded each year. A team, including Jon Sizemore from Valdosta State, reviews the submitted plans. There is not a specific due date. However, new programs must appear in the IDP prior to their offering. Attendees were encouraged to call if they had questions about what should be in their IDP.

Two approved IDP examples have been posted at the USG website (Kennesaw and North Georgia). One of the keys to a successful distance program approved by SACS is providing comparable student services off-campus. Dr. Somers will also send RACDE members the URL for the Principles of Good Practice for Distance Learning.

PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Dr. Somers reported that plagiarism detection software applications such as Turnitin, has been in use in the USG for several years (handout). Legal attention has now been turned to such products. Earlier this year, Liz Johnson, at OIIT, put together two webcast programs which are available. Blackboard has announced plans to incorporate plagiarism detection technology into Vista 4 at no extra charge.

GeorgiaVIEW VISTA UPDATE

Dr. Somers described the reorganization of OIIT into Services and Productions areas. Planning updates and other work across the calendars of all of the institutions is especially challenging. Tom Maier is heading a group to work on this issue.

The “Updates for GeorgiaVIEW Vista” handout compiled by Doug Hyche included information that:

- The Cluster split has been completed. The split was designed to allow for expansion not to alter the functionality of the product.
- The most recent version of Live Classroom will be tested in October
- MyMathLab pilot will be evaluated in late October.
- The Reports and Tracking functions availability date is not known at this time.
- Availability of a GeorgiaView faculty listserv (VISN-L) to promote pedagogical and best practices discussions.

In response to a question, Dr. Somers indicated that all products used by the USG continue to be evaluated. Other products are also being considered. Efforts to improve the current version are on-going, even though there are plans to implement a new version in 2008. Policies are needed about inactive courses.

The need for additional support help at the Online Support Center was discussed, especially at the beginning of terms. Examples of issues encountered with VISTA and with the Online Support Center were shared by RACDE members. Further “Town Meetings” are not scheduled at this time, but can be requested.

SECTOR MEETINGS

RACDE members divided into sector groups for discussion. Each group was asked to identify ways in which the members can help each other and to come up with ideas and scheduling for training and events. The groups also addressed topics brought up earlier in the current meeting.

The Two-Year Institutions discussed:

- Quality control for online courses;
- Institutional Roadblocks in growing and administering courses;
- Grants as topic for further discussion;
- Resources: those have, those want, and how to get them (ex: freeware, tracking, etc.).

The Four-Year Institutions discussed:

- RACDE role needs to be well defined with description including facilitating and collaborating efforts with other institutions.
- Recommend that the Collaborative Directors be non-voting members of RACDE.
- Sector leadership length of term. (Group discussion favored limiting term length.)

- Communication issues within institutions (ex: who receives which messages; who needs to take action). Suggestion: e-mails to various groups should include phrase at beginning such as “Action required by” a particular date.
- Campus due dates for information input were later than requested ZORELCA due date. Suggestion: use due dates such as “at the start of registration” rather than a calendar date.
- Banner Lead information may need to be copied to RACDE members.
- To facilitate communication among RACDE members, Irene Kokkala will set up a blog for the group.

The Research Universities discussed:

- RACDE membership. Suggestion: Consortium Directors be “invited guests” for the purpose of improving communications.
- Informal exchanges are very valuable (ex: common problems, lessons learned, etc.). Suggestion: “birds of a feather” sessions offered at the next meeting, perhaps as pre-conference activities. Another idea was that RACDE might meet in conjunction with other conferences such as Rock Eagle.

NEXT MEETING PLANNING

Kim McCroskey will survey RACDE members by e-mail to determine the exact next meeting date and desired length of meeting. She will also ask about interest in “birds of a feather” or pre-conference sessions and topics. Elections need to be conducted in the Spring. Ms. McCroskey will send out an e-mail requesting nominations.

The membership consensus was that three meetings should be held in 2008. The next meeting will be in January or February at Augusta State. The Fall meeting will be at North Georgia College. A Summer meeting location will be determined later. Thursday-Friday are the generally preferred meeting days. A question was raised about whether having an additional meeting will require a Bylaws change. The decision was to try having an additional meeting and then to determine whether to continue with additional meetings.

FINAL DISCUSSION AND ACTIONS:

The RACDE website is being worked on by Dr. Somers. It was suggested that it include Bylaws, Role of RACDE members, and sector identification as well as the list of RACDE members.

A question was raised about when sending an alternate to RACDE meetings, can that person vote. The Bylaws indicate that guests may be invited to meetings, but that they will be non-voting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40am.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra K. Stratford, Chair Elect