UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
1200 E. Anderson Lane, Austin, TX

Board Room
Friday, April 16, 2010
10:00 a.m.

MEETING NOTES

UEAC Members attending: Russell Lowery-Hart, , Roberto Aguero, Janna Arney, J. Michael Coleman, Shannon Carroll, Dani Day, Juan Carlos Reina, Rex Peebles, Jeanie Hardin, Bill Waggoner, Agnes DeFranco, Richard Eglsaer, Donna Ekal, Marianne Hopper, Lynn Hoggard, Larry King, Cynthia O'Neal, Joyce Ritchie, Jeffrey Schonberg, Celia Williamson
Coordinating Board Staff: MacGregor Stephenson, Anya Sebastien, Catherine Parsoneault, Lucy Bloor, Janet Beinke
Guests: Danita McAnally (Amarillo College), Loraine Phillips (TAMU), Judith Bean (TWU), Neal Armstrong (UT, Vice Provost), Larry Abraham (UT), Brenda Nichols (LU), Russ Schultz (LU), Cheryl Peters (HCC), Nancy Martin (UTSA), Martyn Gunn (TAMU)
UEAC members absent: Jessica Woodward, Larry Garrett, Mark Smith, Ronald Swain

I. Approval of Meeting Summary for February 26, 2010.

Introduction: Russell Lowery-Hart called the meeting to order at 10:02 am. He noted that the meeting was being webcast and was following the requirements of the Open Meeting Act.

Meeting Notes from the previous meeting were approved unanimously.

II. Discussion Regarding Revisions to the Core Curriculum (continues the discussion from the previous meeting)

Dr. Lowery-Hart moved that the agenda be revised to allow the committee to consider Agenda Items II and III together to allow for approval within the discussion. The motion was approved. After giving a brief over-view of the core revisions, he outlined that the primary goal for this meeting was to approve the core objective descriptions, the knowledge-based component areas, and mapping of the core objectives to each component area. Rex Peebles noted that the committee should continue its progression to completing its goals in a timely manner in order to be able to have its recommendations available for the legislative session.

a. Core Curriculum Objectives and Definitions

Dr. Lowery-Hart reminded members of the status of the core objectives discussed at the February 26, 2010 UEAC meeting. He noted that all objectives except Social Responsibility and Personal Responsibility had been approved by the committee at that

time. Dr. Smith and other members raised concerns regarding the definition of Communications. The co-chairs agreed that there was some confusion, and discussion was broadened to include all objectives. The committee's discussion included the removal of of "digital communication," the importance of oral (Dr. Waggoner) and visual communication (Dr. DeFranco), and the ability to assess "receptive and expressive" aspects of communication. From this discussion, the definition of the core objective Communication was refined, and the committee voted to accept the Communication core objective as stated: "Communication Skills - to include effective written, oral, and visual communication."

The advisory committee broke into work groups to develop recommendations for the objective "Empirical Skills." When the committee came back together for discussion of the work-group's recommendations for Empirical Skills, Dr. Aguero expressed his concern that this definition dissuaded the inclusion of College Algebra. Dr. Lowery-Hart reminded the committee not to confuse the Core Objectives with component areas but over-reaching objectives that could be applied to any knowledge-based course. Dr. Parsoneault reminded the committee that the existing rules cover a variety of math courses suggesting that, after a rough draft has been developed, the committee might consider content-based tracks or a series of more course-specific recommended core curricula for specific majors. Dr. Stephenson noted that recommended "tracks" might give students a straightforward plan for success at any institution. He also noted that a component of the Lumina grant is to determine opportunities to improve graduation and retention rates. He believes that recommended tracks within the core curriculum might be one of these opportunities.

Dr. Schonberg questioned whether Dr. Parsoneault and Dr. Stephenson were recommending "mini-cores;" both denied that. Dr. Stephenson noted that all courses would be accepted, but a recommended track might clarify the courses foundational to specific majors. At this point he noted that the option for recommended tracks is for future discussion.

Discussion continued regarding the Empirical skills component. Dr. Eglsaer requested a re-wording of "mathematical/statistical." Much discussion continued about the inclusion of the term "statistics" and it being a subcomponent of math. After a motion by Dr. Williamson to accept the core objective as presented, discussion continued. Topics covered the inclusion of phraseology such as "real world applications," "quantitative literacy," and "statistics." With friendly amendments based on revisions, the motion was approved, and the objective will be: "Empirical and Quantitative Skills - to include applications of scientific and mathematical concepts."

The work-group proposed Social Responsibility as the fifth core objective. Dr. Smith moved to approve, seconded by Dr. Williamson. Discussion included defining "intercultural competency" and the assessment options for "effective engagement," and "ability to engage." Dr. Peebles noted that this component concerns how ordinary citizens effectively engage in community and the dynamics of the political landscape. Dr. Stephenson noted that the Texas House Committee on Higher Education is especially concerned about the incorporation of Western Civilization and ethics in the core curriculum. He believes the proposed core objective will be sufficient to address these

items. Dr. Larry Abraham, Associate Dean of the School of Undergraduate Studies, UT-Austin, noted that the first three core objectives are skills based while Social and Personal responsibility are based on beliefs. He expressed concern over this "potentially explosive" item. After continued discussion, the committee approved the core objective for Social Responsibility: "Social responsibility - to include intercultural competency, civic knowledge, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national and global communities."

The work-group then recommended the final core objective of Personal Responsibility. Dr. Waggoner noted that this objective overlaps the critical thinking objective substantially and is not needed. He also added that "ethical" is too vague. Dr. Eglsaer noted that one can teach ethical thinking but cannot determine how a person behaves. Dr. Smith moved to accept the proposed core objective. After no further discussion, all approved: "Personal Responsibility - to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making."

[All six core objectives have been approved during either the February 26, 2010 or the April 16, 2010 meeting.]

Dr. Reina proposed that "skills" be added to each title. He then made the motion to change the wording in the preamble of the core objectives. During the discussion, Dr. Lowery-Hart and Dr. Loraine Phillips noted that the preamble was never approved, and that "skills" is not necessary in all core objectives. Upon voting, the motion failed.

b. Knowledge-based Component Areas

Dr. Lowery-Hart presented the eight component areas. These are based on the current component areas with slight alterations. Dr. Peebles reminded the committee that these are recommendations without request for statutory changes. Dr. Williamson moved that the components be accepted while leaving room for potential changes after legislative session. Dr. Waggoner expressed his continued concern that nothing is being added or changed. Both co-chairs agreed but noted that the climate is not good to propose potentially costly changes. The options for UEAC's recommendations are maintaining the status quo or proposing phased changes. Statutory changes could be considered in the next phase. After a lunch break, Dr. Williamson reiterated her motion to move forward with the presented component areas: Communication, Mathematics, Life and Physical Sciences, Humanities, Visual and Performing Arts, U.S. History, Government/Political Science, and Social and Behavioral Science. All approved.

c. Mapping Objectives onto Component Areas

For ease of transferability and tracking of completed core objectives, UEAC must make recommendations mapping the core objectives to component areas. The work-group presented a sample of mapping the core objectives to the component areas. Dr. Peebles emphasized the handout was for example only and not a proposal for UEAC from the work group. Dr. Aguero asked why institutions could not choose which objectives were used in the component areas. Dr. Peebles noted that transfer students may take a component course at one institution that covers certain core objectives; that student

may transfer to an institution that has chosen different core objectives for that component, and therefore, the student may not get one or more of the Core Objectives. However, institutions could have the option of adding more objectives to the component area. UEAC would recommend minimum standards for each component area. Dr. Aguero stated that institutions should be able to choose which courses go in which component area. Dr. Peebles noted that UEAC is only mapping core objectives, not courses. However, if the mapping of objectives is to be effective statewide, then all courses in the component area should include the core objective/s mapped to that component area.

The members broke into groups to develop suggestions about how to map core objectives to specific component areas, with each work group being assigned two component areas. No additional parameters were given, only that too many objectives per component area might restrict institutional flexibility, and too few would not refine the component area sufficiently.

Upon reconvening, each group presented its recommendations. Discussion continued concerning the parameters, minimum and maximum use of each core objective, dual credit courses, and assessment (including value-added assessment). Dr. Waggoner expressed concern that the committee does not have discipline experts to make these determinations. Dr. Parsoneault agreed that the committee could not possibly cover all areas; however, the UEAC recommendations will go out for comment upon completion. Dr. Eglsaer recommended the chart be taken back to members' institutions and shared for informal comment. Dr. Schonberg moved to accept the entire chart as proposed by the groups. After a second and clarification that amendments can be made after discussion and comments, the committee approved the mapping chart. [This document can be found on the UEAC website: http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/ueac as *Core Objectives Mapped to Component Areas*.]

d. Knowledge-based Component Area Descriptions/Objectives

The co-chairs then tasked the discipline-based work groups to write basic descriptions for the component areas to be presented at the next UEAC meeting. Recommended sources for information include the current Assumptions and Defining characteristics, national standards, and appropriate national academy definitions.

e. Related Information for Consideration

i. Course-level Learning Outcomes for ACGM Courses

Dr. Parsoneault updated the committee about items presented at the March 29, 2010 meeting of the ACGM. Of special interest to UEAC is the Mechanical Engineering Transfer compact that includes descriptions and learning outcomes and the Lumina grant to develop descriptions and learning outcomes to courses in the ACGM.

ii. Unique Need Courses at Community Colleges

Dr. Parsoneault also reminded UEAC members of unique needs courses and their effect on the core curriculum. Board staff are in the process of revisiting unique need course parameters.

III. Consideration of Recommendations Regarding Revisions to the Core Curriculum

After the approval of the Communication core objective, Dr. Lowery-Hart recommended that each core objective be considered after discussion, within Agenda Item II, so that the two agenda items would be taken up simultaneously. The vote results can be found within section II of the minutes.

IV. Interim Assignments and Next Meeting Date (June 2010)

The next meeting of the UEAC will convene on June 11, 2010, in the Board Room. Committee members were asked to work in teams to research and write basic descriptions for the component areas. Discussion will continue at the next meeting about how much direction to include for each component area.

V. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:17 p.m.