

University System of Georgia Board of Regents Fine and Applied Arts Advisory Committee
Annual Meeting: 7 March 2014
Middle Georgia State College, Macon

Chair David Saltz (University of Georgia) called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. with introductions. Members present included Donna May Hatcher (Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College), Jason Sweet (Atlanta Metropolitan College), Kurt-Alexander Zeller (Clayton State University), Jeffery LeMieux (College of Coastal Georgia), John DiMino (Darton State), Michael Mallard (Darton State), Bobby Dickey (Fort Valley State University), Sam Baltzer (Georgia Highlands College), David Koffman (Georgia Perimeter College), Joe Thomas (Kennesaw State University), Robert McTyre (Middle Georgia State College), Donna Colebeck (Southern Polytechnic University), David Saltz (University of Georgia), Pam Sachant (University of North Georgia), and A. Blake Pearce (Valdosta State University). Also present was Susan Donoff, Research Associate to the USG Board of Regents, as liaison with the Board of Regents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Committee member Robert McTyre's name and institution (Middle George State College) were corrected in the minutes of the 22 February 2013 meeting. Minutes were approved as corrected and appreciation expressed to David Koffman for stepping in on short notice to take such thorough minutes.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Joe Thomas gave an update on the status of Kennesaw State University's proposal for a Master of Music degree, which this committee considered at the 2013 meeting. At that time, two principal areas of concern were raised. One such area was related to proximity to other USG institutions with MM degrees and possible redundant program duplication; Georgia State University wrote a letter to the Board of Regents to raise this point. The other area of discussion included a number of concerns about the structure or content of proposed curriculum itself. No further action has occurred at the BoR level, but Joe reports that KSU has been revising its proposal to address feedback received from the BoR, which we assume includes the curricular concerns raised by this committee. Last year, there was some question about whether the committee properly should consider the question of proximity or confine its advice to curricular design and content. Dr. Donoff clarified that the BoR Program Review Committee considers questions of program proximity and duplication, among other issues, in its deliberations, and the BoR does not consider it necessary for this committee to weigh in on issues of proximity and duplication; however, the BoR is eager to hear this committee's views on program structure, content, and integrity, so those earlier concerns in that area about KSU's proposal were properly raised.

Members asked if the committee's commentary is forwarded to the campuses as well as to the BoR. Nobody seemed to know. Dr. Donoff volunteered to investigate. Joe Thomas reported that KSU has indeed been revising its proposal, so his assumption is that its School of Music must have received some communication about curricular concerns. Since no vote was taken by this committee last year, he will ask KSU's VPAA to re-submit the proposal to the BoR so that it can come back to us for formal review and an advisory vote about the program's integrity before the Program Review Committee makes its final decision.

There was considerable discussion concerning whether or not arts history courses (e.g., Art History or Music History) could be proposed to fulfill core General Education in Area C. Some committee members reported that administrators at their institutions are under the impression that there is a blanket

prohibition at the USG level against such arts history courses being used in Area C. In the course of the discussion it became clear that there is no such prohibition; multiple committee members reported that their institutions are already using 2000-level art history or music history courses to fulfill Area C requirements and have been doing so for quite some time. Consequently, the determination of whether or not to propose a music history or art history (or dance history or theatre history) course as an Area C General Education core requirement is the individual institution's responsibility—or prerogative. (The specific course itself still must be submitted to this committee for review as an arts-related General Education course.)

As the discussion continued, several points that institutions interested in following this path would need to consider were raised. One was transferability; in arts majors at many USG institutions, the required major-area history sequence consists of upper-division course numbers, so transfer students matriculating at those institutions still would be required to take those courses to complete their degrees. Further, students can't count a course twice; if an arts history course is "counted" as an Area C requirement, the same course cannot also be used to fulfill a major-area requirement. So if a transfer student were to transfer in a USG associate degree which included an arts history course in Area C, that transferred course could not also fulfill a major-area requirement at the new institution. There is also the issue of exclusivity. Some institutions prefer that their history sequences be restricted to majors and minors (a rigorous music history course, for instance, is a stretch for students who cannot read music notation fluently), whereas any Area C General Education course must be available to all students at the university. In summary, the committee consensus is that there is considerable diversity of practice among the USG institutions about placement of arts history courses in their curricula, but there is no prohibition against using lower-division arts history courses as Area C General Education courses.

The committee continued the discussion that was begun last year concerning curricula in the area of Film/Film Studies. Since last year's meeting, the Board of Regents has decided that our colleagues on the Communications Advisory Committee should be tasked with the responsibility of reviewing proposals concerning the art form of film. While this committee has no desire to challenge that determination and recognizes the many vital connections between Film and the traditional discipline of Communications, some concern was expressed that all the art forms represented by this committee (visual art and design, theatre, music, dance) are integral to the extremely interdisciplinary nature of activity in film and digital media (which also relates to still more fields, such as English) and members wondered if the USG would not benefit from also having input from the viewpoint of the advisory committee that represents all these fields in considering film-related proposals. As an indication of the various constituencies which film touches, film programs throughout the USG are housed in a very wide variety of disciplinary "homes," including (but probably not limited to!) theatre departments, communications departments, art departments, performing arts departments, and English departments. Further, *several* different disciplinary accreditors (including those for theatre and visual arts) have requirements for film programs that must be considered if that accreditor accredits programs on that campus—*whether or not* the institution's film program happens to be housed in that program. Therefore, collegial interdisciplinary communication would be highly beneficial; much time was spent in discussion of how this committee might helpfully facilitate such discussion among stakeholders and the BoR in understanding film as a cooperative, collaborative program. How best to build a collaborative bridge between the BoR's advisory committees?

The brain-storming and discussion were wide-ranging. Ideas floated included a common listserv for both the Fine and Applied Arts and the Communications Advisory Committees, a liaison representative from each committee to meet with its counterpart, and even a technical change to all the BoR

committee listservs so that interested parties could sign on as observing (but non-voting) participants, in something roughly analogous to community oversight in other government agencies. Concerns expressed included the possibility of added confusion on the listservs, too many reports and lack of a clear message back to the BoR; there also was a reminder that all members of these advisory committees represent their institutions and not merely their individual disciplines, so the BoR and the Communications Advisory Committee surely already expect that that committee's members are consulting any applicable faculty and departments outside their own back at their home institutions, just as we do (or should be doing!) when that is appropriate.

Although the increasing creativity of the discussion was stimulating, ultimately the consensus was that probably the *simplest* first step would be the best: to direct the chair of this committee to reach out to the chair of the Communications Advisory Committee to express our desire to be helpful and attempt to find a mechanism or procedure that could be mutually recommended by both committees to the BoR and which would facilitate proposals in the areas of Film or Digital Media being sent to the Fine and Applied Arts Advisory Committee for examination and feedback, which then could be provided directly to the Communications Advisory Committee for its consideration in preparing its report to the BoR. The consensus was that it was the will of the committee that the chair should take such action.

NEW BUSINESS

Next the committee worked to create a draft of Area F outcomes for Theatre, similar to Area F outcomes it earlier had approved for Art and Music. Using Theatre program outcomes from the National Association of Schools of Theatre as a starting point, the committee collectively drafted a set of outcomes that seemed reasonable for Area F, the initial lower-division coursework in a Theatre major. As very few representatives from Theatre were present and there was even some doubt that a quorum was in attendance, a vote was not taken. The draft will be circulated electronically to all the committee members so that they can share it with their Theatre faculty for further discussion, and we hope to have a final version by the end of the Spring 2014 semester, which then can be adopted at the 2015 meeting or perhaps by an electronic vote.

The committee adjourned for a lunch break at 12:15 p.m.

After reconvening at 1:20 p.m., the committee took up the subject of a "white paper" on the value of fine and applied arts degrees. The Board of Regents wants this no later than next year, so it was suggested that a draft should be completed in advance of the 2015 meeting, to be revised (if needed) and adopted at that meeting and then immediately submitted to the Board of Regents.

Examples of such "white papers" crafted by the BOR Academic Advisory Committees for Philosophy ("The Value of a Philosophy Graduate," 5 pages, adopted December 2011) and for Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work ("The Value of a Social Work Graduate," 6 pages, adopted November 2013) were distributed for reference. The two examples shared a standard format, and although it was not stipulated that the Board of Regents would specifically require that same format, it became the template for the subsequent discussion and brainstorming.

The first question in the template ("What are the Fine and Applied Arts?") drew various responses, but the consensus seemed to be that they included the fields of the visual arts, design, music, theatre, and dance (film having been, by Board of Regents fiat, assigned to Communications), and that areas of study

available in these fields should be understood to include not only their practice, but also their theory and history.

The next question (“How does undergraduate training in the Fine and Applied Arts benefit students?”) was answered most cogently by Jeff LeMieux, who offered the response that cultural and creative expression was one of “the two halves of a human being’s relationship with reality”—to engage only in objective study and experience is not to be fully human. Although this response was warmly greeted by the other members of the committee, it was also suggested by an attendee with close ties to the Board of Regents that a line of argument which emphasized subjective measures would not carry enormous weight with the current cadre of Regents. The body, however, had no difficulty enumerating several very tangible benefits of training in the Fine and Applied Arts, including 1) vocational training, 2) cultivation of critical thinking skills, 3) the benefits that accrue to a broad-based liberal-arts education such as that enshrined in the USG’s General Education Core requirements, 4) cultivation of job skills and exposure to many vocational possibilities that are related to the arts but are not the relatively narrow set of professions both students and the general public most immediately associate with “the arts,” 5) cultivation of beneficial habits of thought and behavior (such as the drive to continually improve through practice, repetition, experimentation, and close observation), 6) development of creativity, self-analysis and introspection, 7) development of global and multi-cultural competence, 8) provision of alternate modes of inquiry and ways that every student can learn, including those who find learning primarily through reading and lectures difficult, 9) increasing abilities to make connections and apply ideas between fields, 10) development of skills in collaboration (many art forms are profoundly collaborative), 11) igniting the spark of imagination, 12) resilience—that is, excellent organizational and time-management skills and the ability to initiate, plan, and execute complex projects, and 13) adaptability and openness to improvisation as conditions and stimuli change. It was further noted that professors in all disciplines currently are being strongly encouraged to adopt “active learning” strategies in their courses—while those of us who train musicians, actors, dancers, and visual artists have been presenting our students with active learning experiences since the dawn of time. The fine and applied arts are all about active learning!

The third question from the sample white papers, adapted to our use, would be “How do fine and applied arts graduates benefit the State of Georgia?” It was suggested that focusing on how arts graduates possess and display skills sought by employers would be a good way to organize the response. Robert McTyre has a list of skills polled employers say they seek in employees that might prove useful.

There also was discussion of co-curricular support to other fields of study at universities. Numerous examples were cited—opera productions used as case studies of family dysfunction by psychology majors, acting students portraying mock patients for nursing classes, etc. It was further noted that arts programs frequently play an important role as the public faces of their universities—it is they who are a resource and a gateway for local communities (perhaps especially in more rural areas), a way of going out into the community as well as of drawing the community into the campus, in a way that many other disciplines are not.

Committee members suggested several resources for further information, including a Georgetown study of liberal arts majors, a November 2013 Wall Street Journal article and an October USA Today article, and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies’ website, www.nasaa-arts.org.

Other ideas raised included the economic impact of the entertainment industry in the metropolitan areas and the value of artistic outreach work in underserved and rural communities, as well as the

concept that a vibrant arts community attracts businesses and employers to the state (and the popularity of the current buzzword, “the creative class”). Arts training provides needed community services (e.g., art/music/drama therapy). Arts training programs also provide the State with P-12 educators, as well as with other professionals who partner with P-12 schools to the benefit of all Georgians. Further, the arts in general and design in particular are integral to all aspects of daily life: the clothes people wear, the phones they carry, the music they listen to (or are made to listen to in order to influence their behavior), the computer games they play.... In short, the arts are “vitaly engaged in the economic and cultural aspects of the state.”

Our liaison suggested that it might be judicious for our response to demonstrate some continuity with the Board of Regents’ Strategic Plan, which emphasizes Research, Support Services, and Economic Development. The terminology of “workforce improvement” and “establishing accountability” will create recognition on the part of Regents members, whose default orientation will be toward valuing the creation of something that is tangible and practical.

Southern Polytechnic’s information sheet on its BA in New Media Arts was distributed as an example of ways to address some of the questions we had been discussing, and Pam Sachant shared an experience in which the University of North Georgia gave each of the members of the Board of Regents a work of art when they visited the campus; this provided them with a tangible reminder of the value and enjoyment of art in the academy!

A subcommittee to take all these ideas and to draft the white paper was appointed, consisting of Kurt-Alexander Zeller (Clayton State University), Pam Sachant (North Georgia University), David Saltz (University of Georgia), Donna Colebeck (Southern Polytechnic University), and Robert McTyre (Middle Georgia State College). Susan Donoff will assist. There was discussion, of which the Recording Secretary understood not one single word, of methods of communication and collaboration on the document online using a program or system called Sharepoint. It was asserted that Felita Williams at the Board of Regents could set this up for us.

In the final item of business for the day, Joe Thomas of Kennesaw State University was elected by acclamation as Chair-Elect of the Fine and Applied Arts Advisory Committee for the 2014-2015 academic year, succeeding Kurt-Alexander Zeller of Clayton State University, who will assume the role of the Chair.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurt-Alexander Zeller, Chair-Elect/Recording Secretary
Clayton State University