

**STATE OF ALABAMA**  
**Articulation and General Studies Committee**  
**University of North Alabama**  
**Guillot University Center**  
**Banquet Hall B**  
**May 9, 1997 - 10:00 A.M.**

**Minutes of Meeting**

Committee members present:

Dr. Joe Morris, Chair	Jefferson State Community College
Dr. James Yarbrough	University of Alabama
Dr. Charles Nash, Alternate	University of Alabama System
Dr. Tom Osborne	University of North Alabama
Dr. Margaret Kelly, Alternate	Alabama A&M University
Dr. John Morrow	University of South Alabama
Dr. Larry Allen, Alternate	University of South Alabama
Dr. Harold McGee	Jacksonville State University
Dr. Elizabeth French	Commission on Higher Education
Dr. James Kimbrough	STARS
Mr. Keith Sessions, Alternate	STARS

Others present: Joey Holley-STARS; Maryanne Ivey-UAB; Michael Neilson-UAB; Ada Long-UAB; Victoria Rivizzigno-ACCUFP; and Nicholas Sylvester-USA.

<b>CALL TO ORDER</b>	Meeting was called to order by Joe Morris, Chair.
<b>WELCOME</b>	Dr. Robert L. Potts, President University of North Alabama
<b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b>	Osborne moved for the approval of the March 6, 1997 Minutes. Morrow seconded. Minutes were approved as circulated.

**STARS REPORT.** Sessions indicated that a home page is set up now. It's not where you can print guides on it yet, but we're working on it. There's a page on the INTERNET that basically overviews what the general studies committee is, the history of it, and where this committee is, and what they're planning to do. We're going to continue to update that information if you want us to. The address is STARS.TROYST.EDU.

## **RECORD OF DISCUSSION RE: AREA V AND THE ARTICULATION PROCESS**

**MORROW:** I think there's a big misconception among our colleagues about some of the directions of the Committee and some of the things that we're trying to accomplish. And that has to do with native students. I attended the first meeting in 1994 of this Committee at TSUM and I think I've attended most of the meetings since then and I've gone back through all the minutes. We never intended to impose this agreement for native students within the university. There are people across this state and faculty at the institutions who think there has to be a standard curriculum that is mandated from this Committee. This was never the intention of this Committee. Each institution offers its own programs. This Committee's function is to work on transferability.

We never intended for this to be a curriculum committee to move on the appropriateness of a particular course. That belongs to the university faculty. This is only for transferability so that students don't take courses that are not appropriate for a career path and that would not be accepted by other institutions.

**MCGEE:** Since the beginning there's been some turnover in the process. We have had people who did not wish to be in the process. We started with each of the subsets that said in the beginning that we're not going to do this and there are some who still don't want to do this. Then at our last meeting in Tuscaloosa we were presented with a Michigan proposal.

The university presidents met last week in Montgomery. They have agreed to bring forward the resolution you have seen from the Chief Academic Officers (CAO). The resolution basically defines the terms of which this Committee will work and how you will define what articulation is and what general studies is. They will bring that forward at the July Council of Presidents meeting after the legislature has adjourned. We have some people who want to go back to the starting point.

I'm convinced that the model that we have stayed with since the beginning, which is the Georgia model, was intended for maximum flexibility. It was my full understanding that what we were really trying to achieve was not a core curriculum process, but one which did account for transfer and articulation.

**MORROW:** The University of South Alabama fully supports the arrangement that this Committee has worked on for the past three years. We think it would be wrong for us to tell UA how to organize their program or any other institution. This Committee's purpose was to work out some kind of arrangement whereby students would know what courses to take for a particular discipline or particular career path and organize so that we accept each other's courses. We don't do that now from 4 to 4 and we don't do it 2 to 4. We simply do not accept each other's program components.

**MCGEE:** The CAO resolution also has a second element which is very positive and will be very helpful to us. They are supporting our earlier discussion that we enhance STARS to INTERNET quality level and whatever computer support that is needed.

**OSBORNE:** I do not believe it is responsible for this Committee to say nothing at all to students beyond the first four areas that are a part of the general studies about the rest of their first two years. I thought when we created the discipline committees and gave them that part of their charge to work on Area V that what they would do would be to find those things which all programs in that Area have in common and stipulate those and leave the rest of it as electives. or leave the rest open. I think where we started to go down the wrong path was when we began to speculate about stipulating the whole of Area V for all those liberal arts and sciences. When the word got out about that, then people felt that was really the

hidden agenda all along and that this Committee was going to take over and become a statewide curriculum committee. I think that we really dropped the ball on orienting and training the discipline committees as to what their task was. That compounded the problem. And that continues to compound the problem. The discipline committees have been doing things that are inappropriate, but they think that's what we're asking them to do. We never got the chairs of these committees together and gave them an orientation about what we really wanted them to do. I understand that the math committee has developed an elaborate system of courses and stipulated exactly what topics are going to be treated in every course. They think that everything has to be uniform in all these math courses in every institution. But that's not what we intended.

**NASH:** I don't think that's happening at all. In the case of the mathematics committee, I believe they understood what we asked them to do. They did choose to go beyond what we asked them, but that's not based on some assumption that they did not understand what we wanted. They acted on the basis of what they thought would be best for the mathematics committee.

**MORROW:** Their doing it doesn't mean it's official.

**YARBROUGH:** That's what's giving this Committee so much trouble. People are hearing these things and they are a part of the Committee's function. They are hearing that disciplinary committees are making choices about textbooks and grading procedures and this is getting all blown out of perspective.

**MCGEE:** Some of the people that are formatting the resolution are those who have been opposed to this process since the beginning. They are using every possible entry point.

**MORROW:** At Jim's request, I went up to TSU to meet with the Provost there. All the TSU campuses were there. We sat down and I took the TSU undergraduate bulletin from the different campuses and I applied the format that this committee has adopted, the five categories, to their programs. What we found was that it's not necessary that they change one single course. Everything they have will remain the same if they choose to keep it that way. If there are changes to be made, they will be made on the campus at TSU, Dothan, Montgomery or Phenix City. This Committee has no business tinkering around with the academic programs on campuses. The only thing this Committee is trying to do is to say to Jim and his colleagues - all these courses fit the model and any student who takes TSU courses can transfer them to any other state institution in Alabama.

**MORRIS:** I think a lot of that fear came from the fact that the pre-professional committees did get very specific. They want the specific 23 hours. And when the arts & sciences saw 23 specific, they drew the same parallel conclusion themselves.

**KELLY:** Is it possible for us to clarify our goal, our purpose, and to be sure that the chairpersons of the different sub-committees are aware of that? Are we working on trying to make sure that courses are transferable or trying to make a common curriculum in the first two years? What are we trying to do?

**MORROW:** We're not trying to make a common curriculum or a common core. We're trying to arrange so that students who take a course in English or let's say American history at A&M, understands that all the other sister institutions in the state will accept that. We don't tell you what history to teach.

**KELLY:** So it's transferability?

**MORROW:** Transferability only.

**MORRIS:** General studies is one part. Transferability is the other.

**MCGEE:** I need to surface one more problem with you in response to that meeting last week. There are those who believe that all we really are talking about is 2 year to 4 year transfer. The assumption is that 4 year to 4 year and 4 year to 2 year will not be affected by this process. We've got to clarify that.

**MORROW:** I've done a lot of research on articulation, and I haven't found one yet that was not motivated by legislative act. In a couple of states it took a second act.

**NASH:** Georgia was not.

**MORRIS:** Georgia has probably been the best as far as working anyhow. Arkansas had an act in 1989 and they passed 31 hrs. and came back two years ago and moved that up to 46. I did check out the Michigan plan by the way. I think when I looked in the catalog from one of the two year schools that was enough said for me. They have a disclaimer in the catalog. It's from Grand Rapids Community College. It says, "it is the responsibility of all students to contact the college or university which they wish to transfer in order to verify transferable credit. Each institution reserves the right to make changes in transfer requirements without prior notification".

Georgia is about as flexible as anything we've found anywhere. Like I said, if we had started with the arts & sciences first that flexibility probably would have been apparent. But when we started with the pre professionals they didn't want a whole lot. They wanted certain things there.

**FRENCH:** I have a question. I have not seen a copy of the resolution from the CAO. What position does that hold in terms of this Committee. I mean, so they have a resolution. So what does that mean?

**MCGEE:** Well its fairly simplistic. The way this Committee is structured, there are 3 members chosen by the SBE, the other 7 are either directly appointed by the president of their institution or they are elected by the regional universities. The presidents could enforce our votes either by directing your vote or by changing the membership.

**MORROW:** I think the issue will probably go back to the legislature with the information that this Committee is not able to carry out.

**MCGEE:** Well that's one of the strategies.

**MORRIS:** We did get clarification from the authors of the legislative bill.

**MCGEE:** The answer to that one is that Roy wrote that. So that's irrelevant. I tried to share with them some of the realities. Back during the Hunt administration there were two major task forces. One on education and one on tax reform. Dr. Martin, Dr. Austin, and myself from the Council of Presidents were assigned to the task force. We met with a team of people from the two year system including at that time Roy, Seth Hammet and others. They layed out a bill that they were going to bring in the early 90s. Basically which was - we're going to transfer you 2 years of work and that's it.

It would not have worked and we spent a lot of time negotiating the current version to establish this Committee, set up a neutral body, a balance of all institutions so that nobody could control the votes.

That's why you have this 4/5ths rule in there, so that we could come up with a fair, objective plot in the process. If we go back to the legislature and say we're giving this back to you, they are going to give you back where they were in 1992. You're not going to like what they give you, and there's not the muscle out there to stop it.

**YARBROUGH:** What disturbs me about the conversation we're in now is that because people have disagreed with the Committee, we're going to go back to the law and back to the legislature and fix it. I think the disagreements have some legitimacy to them. I don't think the disagreements say we're going to block articulation. I think what they're saying is that we need to reserve as much flexibility as we can as we go down this road toward articulation.

**MCGEE:** I think the process is not helped by the wording of the resolution. The resolution says that the CAOs recommend that the Articulation and General Studies Committee not review courses beyond those approved as part of the general studies curriculum. That just re-defines our role. They're defining your role and function. I don't believe that's particularly appropriate.

**NASH:** But hasn't there always been some question in the back of our heads about the difference between having a general studies curriculum taken during the first two years and the other piece being - a general studies curriculum that includes all the first two years. Haven't we talked about that on occasion?

**MCGEE:** We fought this out at the meeting at Alabama State University early on. We agreed not to get into a core course set of confinements. Then we were going to look at the entire first two years. The balance after the first part is that you just have to somehow account for the hours of the professional degrees or liberal arts programs or licensure and certification. Somehow you've got to tell that student what it is they have to do so they can move. It should not be confusing or secretive; it should be straight forward articulation.

**OSBORNE:** We need to say something about Area V. We do not need to have this whole structure of review of syllabi of all courses for Area V. That model that we've applied through the discipline of the pre professional committees for Areas I-IV, it's simply not appropriate to this residual category of courses in the first 2 yrs.

**MORROW:** I don't believe we ever agreed to do that.

**OSBORNE:** I know we didn't, but that's what people are afraid of.

**MORROW:** I think much of the discontent among the Presidents and the CAOs is from misunderstanding of what this Committee has done and is intending to do. I went back and went through all the minutes so I could understand what decisions we had made. I think we need to have a standing committee of this group to review the minutes of every meeting and pull out the decision points that were made and make those available on a continuing basis to this Committee. Our membership changes almost every time we meet.

**MCGEE:** I think that our assumption was that there was going to be almost no restrictions on liberal arts.

**MORROW:** That's right. None.

**YARBROUGH:** So Area V has been decided by this Committee? Is that what I'm hearing?

**MORROW:** 64 of 128 hours. That's right.

**YARBROUGH:** Now at the last meeting I thought I heard people saying we never voted on the category Area V.

**MORROW:** We never have approved the curriculum except for education which was approved at the Auburn meeting.

**YARBROUGH:** Area V as a concept has been approved?

**MORROW:** Absolutely. Going on two years.

**NASH:** Do Georgia and Arkansas approve all of the courses in that major and elective area?

**MORRIS:** Georgia does. Florida has a common core book. Arkansas only has official approval for the 46 hrs and the other is by agreement. The only one that I know that gets them all the way through is Georgia, and the discipline committees do that.

**YARBROUGH:** Approved raises a lot of issues. When you are going to approve a course in category 5 that means something very specific - Somebody's going to have to sit down and look at it and approve it.

**MORROW:** We've had the academic vice presidents meet with us 5 times in the last 3 years and the general focus and direction of our purpose has not changed in that period of time. Something else has changed. We have involved every constituent group in this state who wanted to be involved. We invited some who didn't want to be involved. I don't know how our communication could have been better. The arts & sciences deans were neglected by not communicating with them because we thought they had no problems.

**MORRIS:** Well we did meet with them.

**OSBORNE:** We need to make it clear. The courses in what we call Area V are not to be submitted to the discipline committees and pre professional committees by each campus with some sort of approval of quality of textbook or syllabus. That was never the intention.

**NASH:** There is obviously a lot of overstatement going on. People are exaggerating what this Committee proposes. And part of that may be because some of those people may be opposed to this process. We could help clarify by writing what this Committee expects and getting that to the heads of those groups is a way of doing that. I think we can do some damage control, but I still think we'll have some groups that will choose on their own to go beyond.

**MORROW:** But nothing they do is official until it's approved by this Committee.

**NASH:** But it doesn't have to be approved by this Committee if all of the mathematics programs in the state decide that they want to have those common courses with numbers and titles and names. If they choose to do that.

**NEILSON-UAB:** About Area V. I seem to be hearing two separate things. One is that programs listed in Area V would be programs common to all institutions that offer that major. The other is that it was independent of the major and the institution would define what Area V is for them.

**MORROW:** If it is a native student at UNA then the UNA has complete control of that academic program. The Area V may differ somewhat from that which is proposed from the discipline committee. And that's fine, unless that student later decides to transfer. If that happens, the student would have to have each individual course evaluated by the receiving institution to see if it is an appropriate match or mix for that particular program. The concept is to leave it as flexible as it could be for institutions in building their own programs.

**MCGEE:** We looked at everybody's catalogs early in the game. There was a tremendous amount of overlap.

**MORROW:** The scheme we used is what we really got from the undergraduate bulletins of all the institutions in Alabama. And that's why it fit so well. This is what we do now.

**MEGEE:** The only place it didn't fit was the professional programs where we had several engineering operations.

**NEILSON-UAB:** My understanding of what we are asked to do as a discipline committee is define those courses so that it wouldn't really matter whether the student transferred to UNA, USA, or UA. Those 3 courses in chemistry, 3 courses in physics, and math courses would go with that student because they are an integral part of each major. So it was the commonality that counted. If the student started at UNA and ended at UNA, then this to some extent is irrelevant.

**MORROW:** That's right. That was the intent.

**NASH:** It seems to me that the more flexible the curriculum the less flexibility the students have. What we have built in Areas I-IV is a distribution requirement not a core that locks in on every course.

**MORROW:** It seems to me that an institution has almost unlimited flexibility for the native students. There are no restrictions whatsoever.

**MORRIS:** Here's the Georgia statement out of their agreement. Keep in mind they call it core. Core has two parts, general studies and the pre professional. They say: "Transfer students who complete the sending institution's approval core curriculum (whole 64 hrs) shall be given complete transfer credit in the same major field by the receiving institution. Receiving institution's may require that transfer students complete the requirements as specified for native students, however the total number of hrs required for transfer students for the baccalaureate degree shall not exceed the number of hrs required of native students for the same major field." So they do work in the same field. This is the principle we've been working all along.

**MORROW:** Probably Joe we ought to make a special attempt to take the word approved out of our conversations. I think that's a flash point word, and start directing our discipline committees to catalog the courses for appropriate categories. That's really what they're doing...recommending cataloging of courses. They really are not approving courses from a curriculum point of view. That's not their business. It never was intended to be, but we obviously have not communicated that well.

**SYLVESTER:** It's not necessary to specify Area V. But if you don't specify it, then you must accept whatever comes. That's why all the professional schools specified. They wanted to define the curriculum. Arts & sciences doesn't have to. What I think you just said is the geology people decided Area V would be 1 yr of physics, 1 yr chemistry, 1 yr math. Fine. In English they might not want to say anything, accept whatever comes. Fine. It doesn't matter but you have to decide one way or the other.

**MORROW:** I think back when we selected the 64 sem. hrs. for general studies it was with the understanding that all institutions would be involved with those 64 hrs. That some may go above that. Areas I-IV was to be 41 hrs. and category 5 was to be 23 hrs. I think that's an expectation of all institutions in the state. And then we did go in and specify in areas of composition, math, science, history, literature. Before we came up with that structure we got the general studies programs which exists at all the institutions in Alabama and put that on a grid to see what kind of format would most nearly fit what we already are doing. And that's what Harold is saying. What we came up with is what we already are doing in Alabama. But we haven't communicated that way.

**MCGEE:** All of what we do is either driven by SACS standards or by professional standards. So there's a built in floor there in that general studies area that's already there for everybody.

I just want to share with you a story I think that is important. I began with this experience as I mentioned this morning briefly with the governor's task force, three of the university presidents were assigned from the Council of Presidents. When this law was passed it was during the end of my term as the Chairman of the Council of Presidents. Volunteers were asked to serve on this Committee. I was the only volunteer. Tom is the other elected person by the presidents representing regional universities. No other president would serve on this body. If you'll notice there's not many other presidents from 4 yr institutions here except me and those who substitute for me on occasion. I had to work hard to get those two volunteers to come in here and substitute for me.

I first began administration as an Assistant Dean in 1962. I was in an office that was responsible for admissions, records, and registration, and financial aid. I was involved in buying the first computers that we brought in the operation. As an Assistant Dean our state had a State Council of Higher Education. And like ours, it had committees which were appointed. I was assigned to a committee on articulation. I kept my files and my committee file folder. I left from that institution to go back to become a doctoral student, got my degree, and went on to work for the Office of Education during Johnson's administration. I stayed with that for 5 yrs until the first year of the Nixon administration. I went from that experience to be the Provost of a regional community college system. Later I became the founding president of a new 2 yr college in Virginia, and that was a unique experience. The city of Charlottesville then had about 25,000 people. It is a company town and has been since Thomas Jefferson put it there in the 1800s. In Virginia, like in Alabama, the chancellor got to appoint committee people who worked for the State Council of Higher Education. I again got shipped back to the articulation committee. I took my folder with me that I had packed away. It was now about 9 years old. This was in the fall of 1971 versus fall of 1962, and I get there and the agenda is exactly the same. It has not changed in 9 years. It is verbatim, the same agenda. And the state was fighting at that time the same battle we're fighting now. How do you move students from the 2 yr schools to the 4 yr schools in a non-punitive articulation fashion that works so they can finish in 4 yrs., that doesn't waste their and their parent's time and money. And again the legislature imposed the standards and that's the way it got done and we had articulation and it worked. It was not voluntary. I found it very instructive. I think I'm the only person in the current peer group in Alabama who has been both a 2 yr college president and a university



president. I've worked both sides of the street. That's why I'm a little more passionate about articulation and transfer than my peers are. I've tried to achieve a position here that bridges the two areas. I've kidded them that I'm the best friend they have on the committee on the 4 yr side. It's very important that we not go back to the Michigan model. We cannot go back to step one and start again. There's not enough time. We cannot ignore legislative mandate. I don't think that's a very feasible or plausible alternative. We certainly need to listen to what the people of letters and sciences are saying and do whatever to take away those fears. We need to bring in those committee chairs and get them studying off the same song sheet with us so we can get rid of that fire. We need to continue on in our work. So I would encourage us to stay with our goal. I may not be with you after next week. I want to thank the Committee for its hard work. I appreciate the support by the ACHE staff, and by the STARS staff. It's been a good system and I commend you for what you've done. Keep up the good work. Thank you.

## **DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Dr. Morris distributed a listing of courses recommended for approval submitted by the Discipline Committees to date. Morris stated that the listing was prepared by institution. The courses listed were recommended without restrictions. Some institutions do not have courses listed due to incomplete information, conditional approval of the Discipline Committee, no course at the institution, or the course proposal has not been received by the Discipline Committee. Eleven out of 19 committees have reported. The eleven reports submitted were:

- Art & Art History
- Biological Sciences
- Chemistry
- Economics
- Geology, Physical Geography, and Earth Science
- History
- Math
- Music and Music History
- Physics
- Psychology
- Speech

## **SCHEDULE OF FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:**

May (To be announced)	
June 12	TSU/Troy
July 11	FSCC/Gulf Shores
September 12	UAB

## **INFORMATION ITEMS DISTRIBUTED:**

1. Memo from Morris to CAOs, Discipline Committees (copy attached)
2. Listing of Courses Recommended for Approval compiled from Discipline Committee Reports (copy attached)
3. Excerpts from Minutes of Meetings compiled by John Morrow-USA (copy attached)

4. STARS On-line and Usage Report (copy attached)

Meeting was adjourned at 3:00 P.M.

Joe Morris, Chair

Deborah Nettles, Recording Secretary