Student Learning Enhancement Team Minutes

March 6, 2009

3:30 p.m., Peabody Boardroom, Administration Building


Pre-proposal presenters: Kathleen deMarrais, Noel Fallows, Jane Gatewood, John Gittleman, James Porter (plus one other person—from Public Health)

Invited guests: Takoi Hamrita, Nina Hellerstein, Lioba Moshi, Hugh Ruppersburg

Rodney Mauricio called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. and asked that the team approve the minutes of the February 20th and 27th meetings. The minutes were approved.

Rodney then introduced the presenters and invited guests.

Jim Porter made an opening statement about their topic, “Re-envisioning the Undergraduate Curriculum in a Global Context,” explaining that his group is “extremely enthusiastic” about transforming learning at UGA.

Jim distributed a handout (attached to minutes) and asked the other members of his group to make statements about their proposal.

Noel Fallows said that he likes the group’s idea because it is collaborative and offers a broader experience than that of a typical study abroad program. Their initiative would encourage students to study foreign languages without requiring them to do so.

Kathleen deMarrais pointed out that their group represents five colleges. She would like to see all UGA colleges participate.

Xxx (public health) said that the topic is timely for the area of public health. The initiative could provide opportunities for students in developing countries.

John Gittleman currently serves on the advisory board of the Centers for Disease Control. The CDC is in the process of re-examining its goals. “One world—One Health” is their focus. Also, a large portion of students attending UGA’s aspirational institutions enroll in international programs.
Fran Teague asked if the sum of $500,000 a year would make a difference to UGA’s ability to globalize its teaching and learning. Jim Porter and Jane Gatewood answered that new faculty would be needed only in the area of languages. Their project calls for re-envisioning what we are currently doing—taking what already exists and building on that.

Fran asked how many students they would target. Jim said 1,000 initially.

Kathleen cautioned the team not to over-focus on international experiences. We should internationalize classes being held on campus. Also, we should ask the development office staff to help find scholarship money for study abroad programs.

Jim reminded the group about UGA’s efforts several years ago in environmental literacy. This project would be similar.

Cheryl Dozier said there would be issues with teaching loads and tenure/promotion. The initiative has an inter-disciplinary component that might be problematic. How would the proposal support faculty?

Lioba Moshi emphasized that students need to understand the cultures of our immigrant populations. Students will need special skills in order to serve Georgia in the future. UGA has to look into language and cultural education requirements. She is concerned about the budget for this project.

Judy Shaw stressed that the proposal is about changing the curriculum. She cited a project at the University of Minnesota that had been funded by a grant. The goal of the project was to internationalize the curriculum. A team of people went into departments to work with faculty. They also changed advising sheets, giving first year students international options. The faculty began to re-think their programs. Judy suggested that we could have an international minor, or plan.

Rodney stated that UGA is already doing much of this. What is new about this initiative?

Jim said that it involved re-directing the campus.

Takoi Hamrita asked how UGA would make itself international in terms of teaching, research, and service. Jim responded that we would have to get people’s time and attention directed toward that goal.

Katy Bowers said that there is value in teaching required classes abroad. That idea would get many more students abroad. This would require changing the curriculum.

Noel said that courses could be cross-listed. This would require a dialogue across the campus.

Hugh Ruppersburg said that he liked the five-college collaboration that is taking place. He has concerns in the areas of criteria for classes that might want to be classified as international and also concerns about minors and/or certificate programs.

Takoi suggested that all of the other colleges need to be a part of this discussion. In addition, we should familiarize ourselves with all the available international program models and build our program from these.

Rodney said that he has concerns about scalability. He doesn’t want people to become enthusiastic and then have the initiative not get through the Leadership Team.
Bob Boehmer explained how the rest of the selection process will work. The Leadership Team will select one topic from the several that the SLE Team will give them. Then that plan will be developed until it is due in December, 2010. In Spring 2011, SACS will review the plan, and UGA will make any necessary modifications. The plan would operate from 2011 until 2016.

Robin Tricoli asked if grants might be available to support the initiative that is selected. Bob said that that was a possibility. In our budget for the plan, we will include all possible sources of funds.

Paige Carmichael said she had noticed that throughout our discussions about different plans that a theme of inter-disciplinary programs keeps coming up. She would like to see us focus on that point. She added that we will have a difficult time in making decisions about which ideas to send forward to the Leadership Team.

Rodney thanked everyone for coming. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Wheeler