UACT Meeting Notes  
Dec. 14, 2005

Present:
Michael Lubin, Vicki Hertzberg, Jim Morey, Wendy Newby, Patrick Allitt, Steve Walton, Gretchen Schulz, Mel Gutterman, Mary Elizabeth Moore, Bill Eley, Michael Elliott

Excused:
Claire Sterk, Donna Troka

Absent:
Michael Neville, Harriet King, Arri Eisen

Agenda Items:

1. Minutes approved for last two meetings (November and September 2005)

2. No update on programming for this meeting

3. (a roundtable discussion ensued for about 45 minutes regarding the structure and mission of a teaching/learning center at Emory; the following is a summary of that discussion):

   Claire Sterk suggested (in an email) that the committee begin to contemplate what a teaching/learning center (TLC) at Emory is going to look like. Steve Walton voiced his concern that such a center could be ignored if it separates ‘teaching’ from other professional duties of academia. Wendy Newby agreed with Steve, but still thought such a center was needed. The Center for Teaching and Curriculum (CTC) has spent 9 years doing something similar, she said, and could serve as a model for a new TLC. Patrick Allitt noted that a university-wide center might swallow similar entities like CTC; CTC’s roll, he said, needs to be expanded within it. Vicki Hertzberg also worried that a new TLC would be a ‘college-only’ institution where public health, for example, would be taxed for something that is inconvenient for them to use. Gretchen Schulz suggested that a centralized body could be created that works with various schools and satellite bodies. Michael Lubin concurred that cross-fertilization through a centralized body is necessary, but wondered how big it would be and how it would work with satellites. At this point, Michael recommended that he meet with the provost and get his ideas on the subject. Wendy added that there were 2 crucial questions at issue: 1) What are the benefits to each school of a new TLC?; and 2) What are the mechanisms to achieve such benefits? Bill Eley emphasized the need for evaluation mechanisms of teaching methods to assess whether or not benefits/goals are being achieved. Patrick added that the process of evaluation should not be seen as policing but, at the same time, could still be used for promotion (with consent of the instructor). Both Steve and Bill concurred that evaluation is necessary to measure output and for didactic purposes, but it needs to be non-threatening so that people don’t get scared away from the center. Mary Elizabeth Moore noted that it’s difficult to identify evaluation techniques until you know the mission and design of a TLC. She suggested that the conversation be shifted to strategic planning and

the formulation of designs that can be tested, perhaps in concert with the provost. Michael Lubin suggested that it might be helpful to have the provost come to the January meeting and discuss these various issues. Before this happens, Wendy added that it might be helpful if each person tries to identify what they would most like to see a TLC accomplish. Mary agreed and suggested that a design team be selected to begin to formulate specific directions (and compare them to last year’s report) so that, when the provost comes, the committee is doing more than just ‘discussing’ things. Steve noted that the provost already told the committee what he wants, in general, and may not want to come. Patrick worried that consensus could never be reached on how to measure ‘output’ or evaluation techniques across disciplines. Wendy and Gretchen agreed that this might be difficult, but that it was still possible to identify ‘basic’ outcomes that need to be achieved. Mel Gutterman reiterated that the committee needs a design on the table of what a TLC is going to look like before we proceed. Several members suggested that it might be helpful for everyone to look at strategic designs of TLCs at Stanford, Michigan, UNC Chapel Hill (in business), and Columbia (in health sciences). Steve recommended that these be evaluated in terms of the following criteria: 1) strategy; 2) organizational structure; 3) core processes; and 4) metrics (i.e., how to measure success and deliver on stated goals). Vicki added that we should keep in mind ‘how to make such centers better’ and ‘how to make our center uniquely Emory.’ Gretchen concluded that the university faculty should vote on any TLC initiative.

Next UACT Meeting:
Wednesday, February 8, 2006
107 Candler Library, CTC Conference Room