

Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee
Revised Minutes
March 15, 2016

Name	Term	Affiliation
Conte, Tom	[14-17]	CoC-CS
Mulford, Charles	[13-16]	Business
Nobles, Greg	[11-17]	Honors Program
Perez, Ruperto M. #		Counseling
Pikowsky, Reta †		Registrar
Pollock, Anne	[14-17]	LMC
Poproski, Ruth	[15-18]	CETL
Nukuna, Nagela	[15-16]	U Student
Onken, Decker	[15-16]	U Student
Balachander, Sathya	[15-16]	G Student
Cottle, Mark #		Faculty Executive Board Liaison

10 Voting members/5 required for a quorum.

Attending: Anne Pollock, Ruth Poproski, Charles Mulford, Anju Suresh (replacing Nagela Nukuna), Benjamin Nickel (replacing Decker Onken), Sathya Balachanda (replacing Thomas Gable), and Paul Kohn

Guests: Omar Rodriguez (Registrar's Office)

1. The Committee discussed the proposed revision for Institute Approved Absences and the group made a suggestion for purposes of clarification. The Registrar's Office added the recommended suggestion which is attached to this set of minutes as Addendum A and will be approved by SAFAC.
2. Committee members also discussed the communication strategy for informing instructional faculty and the campus community about the religious observance policy. After some discussion, the group determined to communicate this policy with both faculty and student interfaith groups. Outreach and communication of the policy can be introduced in the New Faculty Orientation, to Dean's and/or Department Chair's, Georgia Tech's Center for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL), Academic Advisors, and Student Housing Department.

The group determined that the religious observance policy and communication of the policy will be for fall 2016.

3. The Registrar's Office does not have a date set for a visit from the Financial Aid Office. Committee members raised interest in the previous meeting in becoming a supporting unit for academic advising system and financial aid programs. More information will be shared when available.

4. During the discussion of the role and direction of SAFAC, the Committee Chair raised the question of whether curricular policy changes might help students complete degrees in four years, pointing out for example that other engineering universities have longer "add" periods, which allows students who realize that they are not in a class that is right for them to change to another one (rather than just dropping and losing the chance to make progress toward a degree). The Vice Provost for Enrollment Services responded that he is interested in learning whether there are institutional barriers or is it a personal choice when it comes to students finishing their undergraduate degree, and raised awareness in the admissions acceptance process and the challenge student's face to graduate with their undergraduate degree within four years.

The group discussed their concern with admission by major and how students may be taking advantage of the admissions process by selecting a particular major to gain acceptance into Georgia Tech. All newly admitted undergraduate students, not including transfer students, can change their major immediately or at FASET with the one free change of major option. Although it is recognized that it may be necessary for students to change their major, as they learn about themselves and their interests and talents as well as the fields of study, the resources of the Institute for certain departments may not easily facilitate students and faculty program of instruction. The fact that some ME classes are scheduled on Saturday's raises awareness in faculty orderly arranging to meet student needs.

SAFAC may be able to provide advice and support on institutional policy for change of major options for current and newly admitted undergraduate students that balance administrative imperatives with goals such as fostering student intellectual exploration by writing a recommendation to Academic Faculty Senate. It was also suggested that the Committee may want to decide as a group to keep the Vice Provost for Enrollment Services as an active member. Committee members will discuss the admissions process and this suggestion at the next meeting.

5. The next meeting will be Thursday, April 21, at 3:00 PM in the Registrar's Office Conference Room, 1st Floor Savant.

Adjourned,

Dr. Anne Pollock, LMC

Addendum A – March 15, 2016 Minutes

Institute Approved Absences – Proposed Revision 2-18-16

Individual students may make requests for Institute Approved Absences. The following guidelines and deadlines apply. Recognized student groups who need to request excused absences do so through their faculty advisor who enters the information on the Registrar's Office website under the Faculty/Staff tab or at iaa.gatech.edu.

The Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee has jurisdiction over these requests. The request is made through the Registrar's Office which then submits it to the Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee. Students should submit the required [request form](#) to comments@registrar.gatech.edu. It will be routed to the appropriate staff members to prepare it for the Committee. If approved, the letters are issued by the Registrar's Office. The student is notified by email of the decision.

The types of requests may include students missing class to deliver a paper at a conference, students attending a seminar or conference related to their studies, students attending a conference related to a leadership group of which they are members and officers, or students attending a meeting or conference as Georgia Tech representatives. These requests are evaluated on their individual merits.

Requests for absences due to religious observances may be made directly to the instructors of classes that will be missed and worked out in an informal manner. Students also have the option to fill out the request form and submit it to the Registrar's Office as indicated above. Please note that after the first two weeks of the term, a formal request for an excused absence due to a religious observance may be made via the request form, but it will be considered as an appeal and will be reviewed by the Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee.

It is important for students to be aware that exercising one's rights under this policy is subject to the Georgia Tech Honor Code.

Information Required

Students are expected to provide the following types of information, along with their GT ID, name, and email address (using the form mentioned above):

- Name of the event and a description of it

- Their role in the event (attendee, presenting a paper, etc.)
- Location of the event
- Dates and times of the event
- Dates of requested absences
- An agenda or program that shows what events occur on what dates
- Their class schedule for those dates
- A list of any exams, tests, or presentations they will miss on those dates

Deadline for Submission of Request

The requests are expected to be filed in the Registrar's Office as soon as the student receives the information and wishes to attend the event. At least two weeks (10 class days) in advance of the scheduled event is the time needed for the Committee to review the request and to take the follow-up action. The Committee typically cannot address the request if it does not arrive within this two-week (10 class days) timeframe.

If this deadline is not met, it may not be possible for the request to be processed. In this event, the student should work with his/her professors individually to determine if missed work can be made up. It is up to the instructor of each class to make this decision if an excused absence is not approved.

Further, when the activity involves some kind of competition that may result in the student being selected for the next round, he/she needs to notify the Committee within 24-hours to ask for the excused absence for that event.