

**Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee  
April 21, 2016**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
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
Mehan, Kunal	[15-16]	U Student
Eisenberg, Justin	[15-16]	U Student
Balachander, Sathya	[15-16]	G Student
Cottle, Mark #		Faculty Executive Board Liaison
Kohn, Paul ##		Standing Guest, Non-voting member, Vice Provost, Enrollment Services
Rodriguez, Omar##		Standing Guest, Registrar's Office

10 Voting members/5 required for a quorum.

# - Non-voting member

## - Non-voting standing guest member

† - Secretary

\* Chair

**Attending:** Anne Pollock, Ruth Poproski, Charles Mulford, Greg Nobles, Reta Pikowsky, Kunal Mehan (replacing Nagela Nukuna), Justin Eisenberg (replacing Decker Onken), Sathya Balachander (replacing Thomas Gable), and Paul Kohn

**Guests:** Omar Rodriguez (Registrar's Office)

1. Dr. Nobles announced that he will be retiring in June of this year. Faculty elections are underway to determine 16-17 representation on Standing Committees. Dr. Nobles replacement will be determined in that process.
2. The Committee asked Dr. Paul Kohn to provide some current information on financial aid in terms of how both students and the Office of Scholarships and Financial aid are impacted by the many pressure points.

Dr. Kohn presented some information via a PowerPoint presentation that was later provided for Committee members. His presentation focused on financial affairs, "Trends in Student Aid." He mentioned that the State of Georgia ranked among the lowest with zero percent in need-based total undergraduate grant aid by State, 2013-14. This information highlights the lack of need-based funds to support undergraduate students in Georgia. The information is available in the "Trends in Student Aid 2015" handbook, pg. 36, a publication of the College Board. Committee members were provided a copy of the publication.

The financial burdens of both in-state and out-of-state students were discussed. The lack of need-based aid affects how the neediest in-state students can be supported. Non-resident students face challenges, and have to rely on those types of aid for which they can qualify as citizens of states other than Georgia. International students have very few options since they don't qualify for any Federal aid.

The Tech Promise program has done a great job of assisting Georgia Tech's neediest population, but it has its limitations due to funding. The mission is to raise more resources for need-based aid. It was noted that institutions such as Princeton and UC Berkeley meet the full need of their students. Georgia Tech does not.

The numbers of Pell-eligible Georgia Tech students was also discussed. The number is actually very small, not surprising when the nature of our applicant pool is considered. There is concern that in the future there will be two essential types of students, those in the high need category and those in the low need category.

Georgia's Zell Miller Scholarship and HOPE Scholarship are for students that demonstrate academic achievement and want to pursue a college degree, but do not address the need-based concern for undergraduate students. Dr. Kohn raised mentioned that 1/3 of resident students that receive the Zell Miller Scholarship, a scholarship that pays full tuition, degrade to the HOPE scholarship, a scholarship that pays partial tuition. It is difficult for them to maintain the GPA that is required. They can regain eligibility later in some cases, but the GPA requirement is demanding. A small percentage of students bounce back to the Zell Miller scholarship. Some students are able to retain the HOPE scholarship, but others gain struggle to maintain the GPA requirement and have to resort to other forms of aid.

It was also mentioned that Pell Grant rules are subject to change. It went from a year-round option to a two-semester option, for example. This is a matter of Federal policy and has political implications. In thinking more about what SAFAC could do to support the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, voicing the need for better Pell Grant benefits though the appropriate venues could be one approach.

There was also discussion of students who work, whether at on campus jobs through Federal Work-Study programs or off campus through private industry. Committee members mentioned concern for students who work off campus for sometimes long hours. The need varies student-to-student and sometimes it is the amount that the student can earn that determines where or whether he or she will work and how many hours.

Other ideas sometimes arise such as a current discussion about investors offering loans to students based on their potential future income. The student would pay back the loan 10 years or so into the future after graduation and achievement of employment. Committee members wondered whether this would lead to other problems such as something amounting to “indentured servitude” and would focus attention on some majors or others.

Dr. Kohn discussed the early decision approach that the Institute may consider in order make a commitment to mitigate financial need. The group discussed the pros and cons of this approach. SAFAC can provide support in determining whether the early decision approach is an appropriate option for the institution.

The last topic discussed involves compliance requirements. There is wide-spread concern that higher education institutions are going to have to spend so much of their time on compliance issues and regulatory reporting that they will not have the resources to provide services to students such as financial planning.

Presentation Resources: (1) Handbook, “Trends in Student Aid 2015”, (2) PPT, “Financial Need Aid and Tech Promise for SAFAC”, and (3) Department of Education Compliance Letter

3. Committee members also discussed the communication strategy for how the new religious observances policy will be socialized and advertised on campus. After some discussion, the group determined to communicate this policy with both faculty and student interfaith groups. Outreach and communication of the policy will be introduced in FASET, would be addressed by a new suggested notation on the CETL recommended syllabus, and would involve new faculty orientation.

The religious observance policy will be added to the catalog in May 2016.

4. A motion was made to approve the revised language on Institute Approved Absences, religious observances, that is being added to the Registrar's Office website. The motion was seconded and approved.

See Appendix A for the new information.

5. The next meeting date is to be determined.

Adjourned,

Dr. Anne Pollock, LMC, Chair

## Appendix A

### Institute Approved Absences

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](http://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](mailto: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.

[DOWNLOAD FORM](#)