SENATE COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS AND STANDARDS
March 24, 2008

PRESENT: Brenda Blackwell, Nick Demos, Mary Finn, Mary Gebhardt, Susan McCombie, George Rainbolt, Tim Renick, Rebecca Stout, Elizabeth Throop, Sara Weigle

Minutes of the Meeting of December 11, 2007
The minutes of the December 11, 2007 meeting were approved as distributed.

Motion On Posthumous Grades
The Committee approved the motion on posthumous grades. The Office of the Registrar will administer the process.

Motion:
When a student passes away before completing all assignments in a course, that student will be awarded a grade of W in the course. However, if the student has completed more than half the work required for the course and earned a grade of A or B in that work, the instructor may award the student an A or a B.

Rationale:
There is currently no policy on posthumous grades. This invites confusion and unequal treatment. It also causes delay in the awarding of grades at a time when a student’s family does not need to be worried about such things. In a few cases, instructors, not knowing that a student has passed away, have submitted grades of F because the student did not complete the course. This has caused families unnecessary stress.

Motion to Revise the Credits Awarded for IB Exams
The motion to revise the credits awarded for IB exams was approved so that Georgia State complies with Board of Regents policy.

Motion:
The amount of credit that may be granted for IB courses is limited to 24.

Rationale:
The Board of Regents has passed a policy requiring all institutions to cap the number of credit hours awarded for IB credit at 24.

Motion on Regents’ Test Exemption Scores for Students Who Are Non-native Speakers of English
The motion on Regent’s Test exemptions scores for non-native speakers of English students was approved as amended with minor corrections of language in the motion.

Motion:
The policy on exemption from Regents Testing for non-native speakers of English will be: Nonnative speakers of English (NNS) will be certified as meeting Regents’s requirements by passing RGTR 0198 and RGTE 0199. However, NNS students may demonstrate their competence in reading and writing and automatically pass these courses by passing the Reading and Writing Tests of the Georgia State Tests of English Proficiency (GSTEP), taking the regular Regents’
Tests, taking the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or taking the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

NNS have automatically passed RGTR 0198 if they have at least the following scores on the reading sections of the TOEFL or IELTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper-based TOEFL</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer-based TOEFL (CBT)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internet-based TOEFL (iBT)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS Reading subscore</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NNS students have automatically passed RGTE 019 if they have the following writing sections of the TOEFL or IELTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test of Written English (TWE)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBT Essay score</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iBT Writing score on</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS Writing subscore</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rationale:
The policy needs to be updated because the IELTS is a new test that has become a common way to demonstrate proficiency in English. In addition, the TOEFL is available in a new format (internet-based). The motion establishes cut scores for these new tests.

Motion to Revise the Pass/Fail Grading Option
The Committee approved the motion to repeal the Pass/Fail Grading motion that was passed at the Spring 2007 Senate meeting pending further discussions and review of the issues of the use of S-U grades across the University. It is anticipated that a new motion regarding S-U grades will be brought to the Senate meeting in the fall.

Motion to Revise the Policy on Class Attendance
The Policy on Class Attendance was amended. The motion to forward the revised policy to Faculty Affairs to provide input and send back to Admissions and Standards for considerations of the input from Faculty Affairs was approved.

IV. Administrative Policies
E. Policy on Class Attendance
1. General

The resources of the University are provided for the intellectual growth and development of its students. The University expects each student to take full responsibility for his or her academic work and academic progress. Students are expected to attend classes regularly in order to gain command of the concepts and materials of their courses of study. For cause, absences are recognized in the following guidelines.

2. University-Sponsored Events
Absences due to athletic participation or other extracurricular activities in which a student is an official representative of the University shall be recognized as excused absences when the student informs the instructor in writing during the first two weeks of the semester of the dates of these planned absences for the semester. Absences due to similar events, which could not have been anticipated earlier in the semester, will be recognized as excused absences upon advance notification of the instructor by an appropriate faculty advisor or athletic coach administrator. Students are not to be penalized if absent from an examination, lecture, laboratory, clinical experience, internships, or other activity because of an excused absence. However, students are
fully responsible for all material presented during their absence, and faculty should provide opportunities, as feasible, for students to make up examinations and other work missed because of an excused absence.

3. Religious Observances
Students wishing to observe a religious holiday of special importance must provide advance written notification to each instructor by the end of the second week of classes.

4. Other Legal Obligations
Absences due to legal obligations shall be recognized as excused. Students who have a legal obligation to be absent, for example jury duty, military orders, must provide written documentation at the earliest possible date. Faculty should take into consideration summons, jury duty or other similar compelling reasons for absence.

7. Class Policies
All matters related to student absences, including the making up of work missed, are to be arranged between the student and the professor instructor. All professors instructors will, at the beginning of each semester, make a clear statement in the course syllabus to each of their classes, describing their policies for handling absences. Professors Instructors also will be responsible for counseling students regarding the academic consequences of absences from their classes, laboratories, clinical experience, internships or exams. Students are obligated to adhere to the requirements of each course and of each professor instructor.

In cases of continuous extended absences, a withdrawal may be appropriate. The student must consult with their instructor and the Office of the Dean of Students in such cases.

8. Regent’s Test Preparation
See appropriate sections of this handbook University Catalog regarding class attendance for the Regent’s Test Preparation course.

9. Class Attendance by Veterans
The Department of Veterans Affairs requires that institutions of higher learning immediately report to them when a student discontinues attendance. Georgia State University institutional policy requires that professors instructor report the absence of a veteran student as soon as it is known that the veteran student will not be returning to class. Generally, this should be reported after one week of absences and no later than two weeks of nonattendance by a veteran student.

Rationale:
In addition to a set of editorial changes, the following text was removed from the policy.

Students must be present for announced quizzes, laboratory periods, or final examinations unless the reasons for the absence are acceptable to the professors concerned, with the exception of University approved activities. Students who are absent because of participation in approved University activities (such as academic and selected/governance events and athletic events) will be permitted to make up the work missed during their absences, provided that no more than 15% of class hours per course per semester are missed. Any absence exceeding the 15% allotted must be approved in advance by the faculty. If requested, the appropriate University official will provide a memo stating the official nature of the business in advance of the activity.

The athletics department is confronting difficulties with student athletes’ ability to conform to NCAA standards under the current attendance policy. The source of the potential problem is found in the statement that, “A student who is absent because of participation in activities approved by the Provost’s Office will be permitted to make up work missed during his or her
absence, provided that the student misses no more than 15 percent of class hours per course per semester."

Prior to the move from the Atlantic Sun conference to the Colonial Athletic Association (CAA), this attendance stipulation was not an issue for student athletes. However, an unanticipated consequence of the move to the CAA has been an increase in the number of travel days and travel during the week, and hence, classes missed by student athletes. More specifically, the move to the CAA generated a need to fly rather than to bus to competitions, as the travel distances increased. For example, during the first year of CAA participation, the Women’s Basketball schedule was Friday/Sunday, yielding few missed classes. However, the following year, a vote by the CAA shifted Women’s Basketball competition dates to Thursday/Saturday; these students now are missing Thursday classes as well as a few Friday classes. While the Athletics Department has worked to schedule heavier course loads for Women’s Basketball in MW classes to alleviate the problem, it continues to exist. Other sports that are heavily impacted by the shift to the CAA and the class attendance requirements are Baseball and Men’s Golf. In addition, with football on the horizon for Georgia State, the problem will be further exacerbated, with a greater number of student athletes being impacted. The NCAA noted the problem of athletes being unable to meet the attendance policies in a recent visit.

Based on these facts, the Athletics Department requested a review of the attendance policy and a committee, comprised of Elizabeth Throop (chair), Brenda Blackwell, Elisabeth Burgess, Evan Eskridge, Chris Heinrich, and Peggy Sherman, was formed; Carol Cohen attended the meetings to represent athletics. The committee commenced the policy review by examining attendance policies of other universities, focusing in particular on UGA and Georgia Tech as well as other institutions in the CAA. In addition, the committee reviewed policies randomly as they were identified, from regional universities. The key findings of this review were 1) that GSU has a more specific policy, with the 15% specification, that other universities, and 2) that most policies were either substantially more limited, or substantially more complex than that of GSU. Policies of the latter group tended to be more explicit about what constituted absences that the faculty should treat as excused and/or how faculty should accommodate students who have such absences. These policies tended to highlight not only issues related to veterans (as noted in the GSU policy) but also university sponsored events, religious observances, legal proceedings, and student and family illnesses.

Given this review of other policies, the committee undertook a more thorough review of GSUs Class Attendance policy, with issues beyond the impact on athletics considered. The committee noted that GSUs policy seemed somewhat outdated and disorganized. As well, the committee noted that GSU has the only attendance policy which specifies, in percentages, how many classes students in university-sponsored events may miss. Finally, the committee noted that several instances where student absences should be excused were not included in the policy.

The resulting recommended amendments are geared to accomplish the following:
(a) create a more structured and easily accessible (readable) document for students,
(b) highlight the expectation that students regularly attend and take responsibility for their academic progress,
(c) outline the specific situations where this expectation of attendance should or may be relaxed,
(d) highlight the role of instructors in adherence and responses to attendance and absences.

Recorded by:
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Associate Provost Office