



# Georgia Institute of Technology®

Date: October 7, 2015

To: Deans, Vice Provosts, and A&F Leadership

From: Rafael L. Bras, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Steve Swant, Executive Vice President, Administration and Finance

Copy: G.P. "Bud" Peterson, Joe Hughes, Steven Girardot, Jennifer Herazy, JulieAnne Williamson

Subject: Task Force on Classroom and Academic Scheduling

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At its most basic level, classroom scheduling is central to our academic mission and impacts how and when we deliver instruction. More significantly, the scheduling and utilization of classrooms has broad implications for our teaching and learning environment, including our students' ability to complete their degrees in an efficient and timely manner and our faculty's ability to engage in their research and scholarship while still prioritizing the learning needs of their students. Further, class scheduling that is concentrated and uneven can lead to practical problems for campus resources, such as overcrowding and rushing on transportation, dining, and other services.

Recently, several ad-hoc task forces and committees have been examining related issues. In Spring 2015, the Academic Calendar Task Force, chaired by Dr. Steven Girardot, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dr. Paul Kohn, Vice Provost for Enrollment Services, made recommendations for changes to our academic calendar. Several of these were subsequently approved by the faculty and are currently being phased in over the next few semesters. As part of its recommendations for future action, the task force suggested that we give further consideration to changes to our daily class schedule. The Registrar's Office has been convening a Registration Task Force for the past year. This group, which includes academic advisors and others who work closely the registration process, has been discussing issues related to registration, such as the use of waitlists and our two-phase model of registration. Finally, our Complete College Georgia Tech Steering Committee has been discussing the issue of decreasing time to degree completion for undergraduates as one of its strategic priorities.

This past fall, we experienced several challenges related to classroom scheduling that brought many of these issues to the forefront. These challenges caused disruption and frustration for both students and

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faculty, highlighting the uneven process of our registration and classroom scheduling process. As we continue to experience a growing enrollment and geographically expanding campus– while simultaneously being constrained by limited classroom resources– it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive review of our classroom and academic processes, procedures, and protocols to determine a path forward that balances the needs of our students and faculty with our existing campus resources. **To that end, we are establishing a task force and seek your input for a faculty representative from your college.** Dr. Joseph Hughes (ECE) has agreed to chair the task force, which is charged with the following goals:

1. Develop recommendations for policies and procedures for the optimal scheduling and utilization of classrooms that best balance the needs of the entire Institution. These recommendations should be based on, at minimum, the following actions:
  - a. Evaluate the current system for scheduling classrooms, including the allocations of space for large courses, scheduling practices for current “prime time” class periods, and the daily/weekly class scheduling protocols to determine what issues need to be addressed.
  - b. Solicit comments from students, faculty, and associated staff/administrators (departmental schedulers, Registrar’s Office, Space Planning) regarding priorities and challenges for course scheduling and develop a set of “Guiding Institutional Principles” that can serve as the basis for evaluating trade-offs and resolving priorities in the development of policies and procedures.
  - c. Conduct a representative benchmarking study on classroom scheduling staffing, policies, and protocols at USG and peer universities to determine what effective practices exist and what may work well at Georgia Tech.
2. Conduct an organizational review– and make recommendations for possible organizational change– for classroom scheduling functions and staffing, particularly in regards to the relationships among Enrollment Services/Registrar’s Office, Space Planning, and the Offices of the Vice Provosts for Undergraduate Education and Graduate Education & Faculty Development. As appropriate, the task force may also recommend additional organizational bodies (permanent standing committees, working groups etc.) to continue to oversee or coordinate these issues after the task force’s work has been completed.
3. Develop an implementation plan and timeline for the Academic Calendar Task Force’s recommendation of implementing a daily class scheduling protocol that includes 15-minute pass time (breaks between classes). Ideally, this change will begin Fall 2016. Other remaining recommendations from the Task Force’s report (e.g., class length, term schedules, terms-within-terms) also may be considered with respect to their impact on course and classroom scheduling.
4. Review suggestions from the Registration Task Force that may impact classroom scheduling and incorporate these into recommendations as appropriate.

The Task Force will begin its work immediately with the goal of providing a preliminary report addressing these goals by January 31, 2016.

## **Task Force on Classroom and Academic Scheduling**

### Leadership

- Dr. Joe Hughes, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering (task force chair)\*
- Dr. Steven Girardot, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (task force vice-chair)\*

### Membership

- Dr. Paul Kohn, Vice Provost for Enrollment Services\*
- Dr. Leslie Sharp, Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Faculty Development\*
- Mr. Howard Wertheimer, Director, Capital Planning and Space Management
- COS representative
- COE representative
- COC representative
- IAC representative
- COB representative
- COA representative
- GTPE representative
- Ms. Laura Margaret Burbach, Undergraduate Student, SGA\*
- Ms. Abby Phelps, Undergraduate Student
- TBD, Graduate Student, SGA

### Consultants to the Committee

- Dr. Debbi Greene, Assistant Director Capital Planning and Space Management\*
- Ms. Sandi Bramblett (or IRP rep), Executive Director, Institutional Research & Decision Support
- Ms. Reta Pikowsky, Registrar\*
- Mr. Rich Steele, Senior Director of Campus Services
- Ms. Cynthia Hutcherson, Senior Manager, Capital Planning & Space Management

### Staff Support

- Ms. Sandy Simpson, Director for Initiative Advancement, Office of Strategic Consulting\* (project support)
- Ms. Cara-Joy Wong, Office of the Provost (committee support)

*\*Member of Academic Calendar Task Force*