

# University Senate Committee Annual Report

**Due Date:** Submit in MSWord format to [senate@gcsu.edu](mailto:senate@gcsu.edu) no later than 11:59 pm on 4/22/2021

*Note: This report should represent consensus of the entire committee and serve as a historical record of committee deliberations over the academic year.*

**Committee Name:** Academic Policy Committee (APC)  
**Academic Year:** 2020 - 2021

## Committee Charge:

**V.Section2.C.1.a. Membership.** The Academic Policy Committee shall have no fewer than thirteen (13) and no more than fifteen (15) members distributed as follows: no fewer than eleven (11) and no more than thirteen (13) members selected from the Corps of Instruction faculty, at least seven (7) of whom are elected faculty senators, one (1) member who is the Chief Academic Officer or an individual appointed by the Chief Academic Officer to serve as a designee in compliance with V.Section2.C, and one (1) member appointed by the University President in compliance with II.Section1.A.5.

**V.Section2.C.1.b. Scope.** The Academic Policy Committee shall review and recommend for or against policy relating to undergraduate and graduate education matters that have broad impact or implication to the university as a whole, which includes, but is not limited to, policies relating to grading, scholastic probation and honors, academic appeals, academic standing, standards for admission, general university degree requirements, educational processes, academic calendar, academic assessment, and academic ceremonies. This committee also provides advice, as appropriate, on academic procedural matters at the institution which includes, but is not limited to, academic assessment and those matters relating to the educational process.

## Committee Calendar:

*Listing of dates on which the committee met.*

Date	Location
August 10, 2020	Zoom (University Senate Retreat)
September 4, 2020	Zoom
October 2, 2020	Zoom
November 6, 2020	Zoom
January 8, 2020	Zoom
February 12, 2021	Zoom
March 5, 2021	Zoom
April 9, 2021	Zoom

## Executive Summary:

APC spent time discussing the following:

1. Copyright issues – Syllabus Statement and Training
2. Resolution concerning USG and GCSU approach to Covid-19 policies
3. Policy restricting Chair and Supervisor access to the D2L pages of instructors of record
4. Academic Calendar (emergency alterations)
5. Policy allowing for Pass/Fail grading of elective courses
6. GCSU Mental Health Syllabus Statement

APC (the most awesomely dedicated bunch of educators I have had the pleasure of working with for a full academic year) kept busy throughout the Covid-tainted year. APC came out of the gate swinging with important copyright issues left over from the previous year and a critique of institutional approaches to Covid-19 policy. The need to lean heavily on our Georgia View infrastructure brought to light potentials for abuse from supervisors. This led to a policy proposal to ensure such abuse does not occur. The Registrar brought a request that we consider penning a policy that allows students to take up to three electives using a Pass/Fail grading scheme similar to an opportunity UGA students have. Finally, as the spring was winding down, APC forwarded a request to consider a Mental Health Syllabus statement.

## Committee Membership and Record of Attendance:

AGGREGATE MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR:

“P” denotes Present, “A” denotes Absent, “R” denotes Regrets.

Meeting Dates	Sept. 4	Oct. 2	Nov. 6	Jan. 8	Feb. 12	Mar. 5	Apr. 9
John R. Swinton (Chair)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Catrena Lisse (Vice Chair)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Jolene Cole (Secretary)	P	P	R	P	P	P	P
Julian Knox	P	P	P	P	P	R	P
Christine Mutiti	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Gennady Rudkevich	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
James Schiffman	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Liz Speelman	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Mariana Stoyanova	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Rob Sumowski	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Melanie DeVore	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Dana Gorzelany-Mostak	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Claire Sanders	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
Meridith Styer	P	P	P	P	R	R	P

## Motions brought to the Senate floor:

<b>Motion Number:</b> 2021.APC.001.R	<b>Title of Motion:</b> Resolution Condemning Unsafe Return to Face-to-face Instruction
<b>Motion Type:</b> Resolution	<p><b>Motion Text:</b> Resolution Condemning Unsafe Return to Face-to-face Instruction</p> <p>Whereas without a safe environment for students, faculty, and staff, no institution can be expected to carry out its academic mission to the fullness of its potential, and Whereas faculty members, in collaboration with their department chairs, have a vested interest in delivering instruction in a modality they deem best, based on their experience, to achieve course outcomes, the University Senate of Georgia College and State University affirms the following:</p> <p><i>Resolved</i>, that the Georgia College University Senate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Condemns the unsafe return to face-to-face teaching forced on faculty and students by the administration of the University and the Board of Regents (BOR) of the University System of Georgia (USG);</li> <li>2. Asserts that students whose situations do not fit within the limited number of medical conditions outlined by the BOR and the Georgia College administration excusing them from attending classes in person should not be forced to take classes face-to-face when that format causes them excessive fear for their physical or mental health;</li> <li>3. Asserts that faculty whose situations do not fit within the limited number of medical conditions outlined by the BOR and the Georgia College administration excusing them from conducting classes in person should not be forced to teach classes face-to-face when</li> </ol>

	<p>that format causes them excessive fear for their physical or mental health, or endangers the health of those who reside with them and are at high risk.</p> <p><i>Resolved</i>, that the Georgia College University Senate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finds the actions of the BOR, the USG, and Georgia College administration regarding Fall 2020 have undermined the values of Reason, Respect, and Responsibility in the academic policies they have enforced;</li> <li>2. Calls on the BOR, the USG, and Georgia College administration to immediately revise policies and allow faculty to deliver instruction in a manner they regard as the most pedagogically sound consistent with the bedrock principle of providing a safe educational environment for students;</li> <li>3. Calls on the BOR, the USG and Georgia College administration to immediately revise policies and allow students to opt for online instruction if they regard face-to-face classes as unsafe, without any other preconditions.</li> </ol>
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**Purpose:** To provide the GCSU Faculty, Staff, and Students the opportunity to express their dismay at the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic at the USG and GC level. The motion was brought to APC by concerned members of the GCSU community. APC debated the Resolution starting in its September meeting through its November meeting. The Resolution was shared with SGA which did not agree with the Resolution and Staff Council which did not respond to requests for comments. The Resolution was passed on November 6 with a vote 7 for and 4 abstaining. The Resolution was brought to ECUS on the same day. The Resolution was debated and ultimately defeated in University Senate on November 20. President Dorman and Provost Spirou attended APC on January 8 for a discussion about the resolution.

**Outcome:**

The Resolution was passed on November 6 with a vote 7 for and 4 abstaining. The Resolution was brought to ECUS on the same day. The Resolution was debated and ultimately defeated in University Senate on November 20.

<b>Motion Number:</b> 2021.APC.002.P	<b>Title of Motion:</b> Student Use of Copyrighted Materials: Syllabus Statement
<b>Motion Type:</b> Policy Recommendation	<p><b>Motion Text:</b></p> <p>To add the following Syllabus Statement to the Syllabus Statement items:</p> <p>As a student your ability to post or link to copyrighted material is governed by United States copyright law. The law allows for students to post or link to copyrighted materials within the course environment when the materials are pertinent to course work. Students are expected to adhere to the stipulations of the Georgia College Honor Code, which addresses plagiarism. Violations are subject to disciplinary action. Policy recognizes that exclusive rights of copyright holders are balanced by limitations on those rights under federal copyright law, including the right to make a fair use of copyrighted materials. The absence of a copyright notice or symbol on a work does not denote a lack of copyright. Failure to comply with this policy, including federal copyright laws, may result in restriction or loss of university network access and/or disciplinary action through the Office of Student Life. For questions involving copyright issues, please consult the GC Office of Legal Affairs. Refer to the USG Policy on the Use of Copyrighted Works at <a href="https://www.usg.edu/copyright">https://www.usg.edu/copyright</a>.</p>
<b>Purpose:</b> To make students aware of the USG policy concerning the use of copyrighted material.	
<b>Outcome:</b> This motion was approved by APC on October 2 and brought to ECUS on the same day. The motion was presented to the University Senate electronically on October 20 where it passed.	

<b>Motion Number:</b>	<b>Title of Motion:</b>
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2021.APC.003.P	Guidelines for supervisor access to faculty members' courses on the university's online learning management system
<b>Motion Type:</b> Policy Recommendation	<b>Motion Text:</b> To recommend Guidelines for supervisor access to faculty members' courses on the university's online learning management system, as described in the supporting document, as university policy.
<b>Purpose:</b> To provide guidelines for supervisors who wish to observe instructors' Georgia View material.	
<b>Outcome:</b> This motion was approved by APC on November 6 and brought to ECUS on the same day. The motion was presented to the University Senate electronically and passed on January 25.	

<b>Motion Number:</b> 2021.APC.004.P	<b>Title of Motion:</b> GCSU Syllabus Statement on Mental Health
<b>Motion Type:</b> Policy Recommendation	<b>Motion Text:</b> To add the following statement to the Required Syllabus Statements:  GCSU Syllabus Statement on Mental Health:  In order to best meet the needs of students and their mental health, the University System of Georgia (USG) and Georgia College & State University provides 24/7 counseling through Christy Campus Health (833-855-0085 or <a href="https://www.gcsu.edu/gcmentalhealth">https://www.gcsu.edu/gcmentalhealth</a> ) alongside on-campus Counseling Services (478-445-5331).
<b>Purpose:</b> To provide resource information to the GCSU community concerning mental health.	
<b>Outcome:</b>	

<b>Motion Number:</b> 2021.APC.005.P	<b>Title of Motion:</b> Pass/Fail Grading Option: Policy Recommendation
<b>Motion Type:</b> Policy Recommendation	<b>Motion Text:</b> To recommend the following policy regarding Pass/Fail grading at GCSU:  The pass/fail option is intended to reward students who wish to take courses outside their majors and who are making satisfactory progress in their studies. Students who were classified as full-time during the preceding academic year, who have a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better, and who have the approval of their advisors may enroll in elective courses outside their majors on a pass/fail basis. During the semester they enroll in a pass/fail course, students must also take a minimum of 12 additional hours (6 hours during summer) of graded (A-F) coursework at the University. Pass/fail courses will appear on the official transcript with a grade of "S" or "U." To earn a grade of "S" the student must earn the equivalent of a C or better as described in the course syllabus. These grades do not count in the computation of the grade point average. No more than three pass/fail courses may be counted towards an undergraduate degree. Courses taken on a pass/fail basis beyond this limit will earn institutional credit but will not count toward graduation. Students who wish to take a course using the pass/fail option must declare their intention by the end of the add/drop period for the term. Instructors will not be notified as to which students have chosen to take a course using the pass/fail option. A student who has registered for a course on the pass/fail option may not, for any reason, change to A-F grading or vice versa. Students enrolled in a course or courses using the pass/fail option shall receive a "W" if they drop the course or courses after the add/drop period but before the midterm drop deadline. Students enrolled in a course or courses using the pass/fail option will receive a "U" if withdrawn from the course or courses after the midpoint of the academic term, except in those cases in which the student is doing satisfactory

	work and the withdrawal is recommended by the Office of Student Affairs because of emergency or health reasons. If a student opts to take a course using the pass/fail option that student cannot retake the course. A student who earns a “U” in a pass/fail course is not eligible for President’s List or Dean’s List in the term in which the grade is assigned.
<b>Purpose:</b> To allow GCSU students a limited opportunity to investigate courses outside of their major without the fear of a negative impact on their grade point average.	
<b>Outcome:</b>	

#### **Reference Material/Existing Policies and Handbooks:**

University System of Georgia’s Copyright Policy:  
[https://www.usg.edu/copyright/copyright\\_generally](https://www.usg.edu/copyright/copyright_generally)

#### **University System of Georgia’s Fair Use Checklist:**

[https://www.usg.edu/copyright/fair\\_use\\_checklist](https://www.usg.edu/copyright/fair_use_checklist)

#### **Other Significant Deliberation (Non-Motions):**

*Short summary of each issue that consumed a significant amount of committee time.*

#### **Compliance Training for Copyright Issues:**

There is not pressure from USG for compliance training. In the committee’s view the link to the USG copyright policy should be sufficient.

#### **Providing Midterm Grades as Part of Midterm Feedback:**

The committee did not pursue this proposal as there was significant opposition to its merits within the committee.

#### **Graduate Course Grade Replacement:**

The committee was asked to look into policies pertaining to graduate students retaking classes. The committee found that policies are already in place. No further discussion ensued.

#### **Required Assessments Prior to Graduation:**

The committee was asked to look into whether all students are required to complete an assessment prior to graduations. The committee discovered that all majors require some form of assessment. No further discussion ensued.

#### **Required Courses only offered during Summer Sessions:**

The committee polled the colleges and found a few examples of courses that appeared to be offered only in the summer sessions. We suggest that this topic is worth looking at in more depth by the 2021-22 Committee.

#### **Ad hoc committees and other groups:**

*Resolution Addressing USG and GCSU Covid Response:* M. Styer and J. Schiffman

*Chairs in D2L Policy:* M. DeVore, C. Sanders and G. Rudkevich

*Pass/Fail Policy:* J. Knox, J. Swinton

#### **Committee Reflections:**

*What worked well, what did not work so well. Given your charge, how did you spend your time?*

The Committee made sure that it did not use the Pandemic as an excuse to sit on its hands. Instead, we viewed the prevailing circumstances as an opportunity to look for areas of weakness in our Academic Policies. Consequently, we had a full agenda each month. Zoom was an acceptable way to meet. It would not be unreasonable to keep the option on the table particularly if it allows members to meet who might find themselves off campus on Fridays either on a periodic or regular basis.

#### Feedback on Committee Meetings:

- The times and “locations” worked well.
- We had a good turnout for each meeting.
- Meetings were run efficiently.

#### Feedback for the Executive Committee of the University Senate (ECUS):

Move President’s and Provost’s reports until after any motions that require debate and votes.

#### **Committee Recommendations:**

*Advice to the membership of the committee for the next academic year such as:*

*Are there any issues that should be considered by this committee the following year?*

*Are there any issues that this year's committee was unable to complete its work on?*

*Do any of this year's committee actions require follow-up? (i.e. a policy was drafted, but there was a recommendation for a review of the policy during the following year.)*

*Recommendations on calendar (meeting times, outline items that you expect would be considered annually)*

#### **Midterm Feedback for All Courses:**

The committee did not take back up its discussion of midterm feedback for all undergraduate courses. This has proven a tricky issue over the years. The perception of noncompliance appears to be largely in the eye of the beholder. Further discussion may be warranted.

#### **Required Courses only offered during Summer Sessions:**

The committee polled the colleges and found a few examples of courses that appeared to be offered only in the summer sessions. We suggest that this topic is worth looking at in more depth by the 2021-22 Committee.

#### **Recommend items for consideration at the governance retreat:**

Questions:

#### **Appendix: Academic Policy Committee Operating Procedures 2020-21**

##### Academic Policy Committee Operating Procedures 2020-2021

*Adopted by APC at the 10 Aug 2020 Governance Retreat*

The committee elected to retain the operating procedures from the previous year:

“In terms of SOP, the committee agreed to keep meetings rather informal, except for votes on policies. APC is composed of 15 members, so there will need to be 8 members present to establish a quorum. To conduct committee business. Other SOP items of committee agreement were to bring up agenda items early; to be respectful of when meetings begin and end; to require approval of extended time at regularly scheduled end of an APC meeting; require consensus before new items for discussion are brought to the attention of ECUS; and when possible, to invite guests to clarify information related to committee discussions.”

We also acknowledged that US operating procedures permit for electronic discussion of items if achieving and maintaining a quorum becomes difficult. During the 2020-2021-year, APC will continue to conduct virtual meetings as needed due to COVID 19.