

Executive Committee report for the March 2017 University Council meeting
Report presented by Janet Frick, Chair
March 15, 2017 (updated March 23, 2017)

President Morehead, Council Colleagues and Guests:

The Executive Committee of University Council met on March 1, 2017 in the Peabody Boardroom of the Administration Building. A quorum being present, Chair Janet Frick called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m, and the minutes of our last meeting were approved.

The full minutes of our March 1 meeting are available and provide more detail on the topics we discussed. The major events that occurred in the meeting, and then between our March 1 Executive meeting and the March 22 Council meeting, are discussed below.

1. We carefully evaluated 10 proposals from the Curriculum Committee, which are all available as agenda items for today's meeting.
2. We carefully evaluated a proposal from the Faculty Affairs committee, which has been working diligently on updates and revisions to the Guidelines for Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure. We had a productive discussion where we looked carefully at wording we found confusing or potentially problematic. These edits were all accepted as friendly amendments and are described in the Exec committee minutes. This proposal from Faculty Affairs is an agenda item for today's meeting. (Update: a quorum had been lost by the time this report began, so this item will be presented at the April 2017 meeting).
3. The academic calendar for 2018-2019 took up most of our meeting time. Our March 1 discussion and debate is described in detail in the executive committee meeting minutes, but in summary:
 - a. The Educational Affairs Committee brought a proposal for the 2018-2019 calendar, which their committee had discussed extensively and which they supported. Members of executive committee raised a number of concerns, primarily about interpretation of policy, and about why the UGA calendar would continue to start a week earlier, and thus be a week longer, than equivalent calendars at other research institutions in the USG. Discussion and debate ensued. At the end of nearly an hour of discussion, the vote on the EAC calendar proposal was 9 in favor, 13 opposed. This fell short of the $\frac{2}{3}$ required to send the proposal back to committee, so the EAC calendar will appear on today's agenda.
 - b. During new business, a member of executive committee proposed that we develop an additional calendar so that two options could be presented at Council, one of which would address the early start date issues that had received a great deal of attention in the earlier discussion (and which were specifically cited as causing problems and conflicts for students and faculty, impacting internships, research time, grant submission, conference attendance, etc). This action (of executive committee adding an agenda item

to the University Council agenda) is explicitly provided for in the University Council bylaws, as verified by the parliamentarian. After some discussion, we decided that the chair would work with the registrar to develop a new calendar model, based largely on the Georgia State calendar, which is already posted for 2018-2019. This calendar would have the federally required number of instructional weeks, and a similar number of instructional days, to other research universities in the USG, so as to be better aligned with other schools both in start date and length. The vote in executive committee in favor of taking this action was 14 in favor, 3 opposed.

A few other brief items were discussed during the meeting, and those are noted in the minutes. The meeting adjourned at 5:42 p.m. on March 1.

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Additional developments on the academic calendar after the March 1 meeting:

Following the March 1 meeting, the executive chair and the registrar worked together to create a calendar that would have 15 instructional weeks, with similar start and end dates to the 2018-2019 calendars posted by Georgia State and Georgia Tech. The fall calendars were not identical because the three schools handle fall holidays slightly differently; the spring calendars were nearly identical because spring holidays are identical. This calendar was posted when the University Council agenda was released on March 8, and the outline of it can be seen in a link at the end of this document.

On March 10, UGA Vice President for Instruction Dr. Rahul Shrivistav wrote to Dr. Rob Anderson, the Interim Executive Vice Chancellor & Chief Academic Officer of the University System of Georgia. In this email exchange, Dr. Shrivistav sent the two calendar proposals to Dr. Anderson and asked for guidance on whether both calendars adhered to Board expectations and policy.

Dr. Anderson's reply stated:

"Rahul,

Thank you for your letter and accompanying documents. I would suggest that UGA does not alter its calendar at the current time and that we, as a system, thoroughly study this issue in the coming year. My main concern is the loss of instructional days. Our faculty serve as the backbone of our colleges and universities, and the classroom is the primary forum for this learning and exchange of ideas. Any contraction of instructional days should be considered very carefully.

I am new to this position and would like time to study the issue more thoroughly and then inform both our Board and Chancellor regarding outcomes of this study. In addition, I would welcome UGA's involvement in this work in any way that you see fit. It appears that much thought, time and attention has been invested in this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out should you have any questions or concerns."

Dr. Shrivistav sent this correspondence, along with some additional information, to the executive committee, outlining some of his concerns with our proposed calendar.

On March 20, executive committee chair Dr. Janet Frick reached out to Dr. Anderson for guidance on whether proceeding with the academic calendar vote would be appropriate, given that his communication with Rahul indicated he wanted UGA to stay with a 16-week calendar instead of adopting a 15-week calendar. Dr. Frick also asked for clarification about some wording changes that the BOR made to their calendar policy this past year, which removed some of the language that had previously been cited in support of UGA's longer calendar. Dr. Anderson's reply stated:

"Dear Dr. Frick,

I really do appreciate your message and reaching out.... Last year's adjustment to policy was targeted at questions pertaining to whether the former policy addressed compressed courses and mini-terms. The key addition, from our perspective, is "a course offered in fewer than fifteen (15) instructional weeks shall contain the same total hours (contact hours, preparation time, content, and requirements) as the same course offered in the standard 15-week semester."

There was no intent to alter what was previously required within these 15 weeks or to lessen minutes of instruction. I apologize if we caused confusion. The strikethrough of weeks and minutes was counterbalanced by linking both the credit hours and weeks of instruction with federal regulations, which require both 15 weeks of instruction (34 CFR 668.3 (b)) and commensurate meeting time regulations found in 34 CFR 600.2.

I strongly believe that my office needs to examine closely the impact of calendar policies on classroom instructional time. As a component of this examination, I want to understand better the current practices at both Georgia Tech and Georgia State. With these next steps in mind, I have requested of President Morehead that he not entertain a 15-week calendar at the present time. I also respectfully ask the same of you and the University Council. This request is made with a promise that this issue will be resolved in the coming year and Board policy will reflect the outcomes of this analysis. I thank you for all that you do in service of your students, your university and our system."

Given the short time between the receipt of this email and the upcoming University Council meeting, there was some debate among members of Executive Committee about what would be the best course of action. In the end, the committee took an email vote on the morning of March 22 concerning whether to remove the executive calendar from the Council agenda. The result of this vote was 18 yes, 3 no, and 2 abstain.

A link comparing relevant academic calendars of the three USG research institutions, including the Exec and EAC calendar proposals, and the 3 institutions' final exam policies (often cited as the explanatory reason for why State and Tech have fewer minutes of instruction than UGA), is found at the end of these minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Janet Frick, Chair
UGA University Council Executive Committee
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**Link to the Academic Calendars of the three USG research institutions for
2018-2019, along with the two calendar proposals:**

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/16XsqiyM4tU7AxfK5_q5YuOzotDpe_Tu0-Kly4hEutQ/edit?usp=sharing

USG final exam policies for research institutions

UGA: <http://www.bulletin.uga.edu/bulletin/ind/finalexam.html>

Relevant excerpt: "Although there are special courses where a final examination of the regular type may not be appropriate, each student must be provided the opportunity to stand for a final examination as part of the completion of a full instructional term. Each instructor has the authority to design and administer the final examination in whatever manner is appropriate. Additionally, the instructor has the authority to structure the course syllabus and content so that the final examination may be a summative evaluation of the entire term's work or a portion of the term's work. Take-home exams are permissible as long as the exams are not due earlier than the final examination time slot as assigned by the University."

Georgia State: <http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfhb/fhb.html> , section 402.01

Relevant excerpt: A final examination is defined as an examination to be given during the scheduled time and day after the end of classes for the term. The standard in-class final

examination length is two hours. It is expected that a final examination will be given in each course as part of the requirements for the course as stated in the syllabus, unless one of the following conditions apply:

- A. departmental/college policy governs final examinations for the course;
 - B. the academic nature of the course does not warrant a final examination in the opinion of the instructor;
 - C. an alternative form of examination to be completed after the end of classes for the term is being given (for example, a "take home" final examination to be completed by students off campus after the end of classes for the term).
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Georgia Tech: <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/12/> , section D1

Relevant excerpt: "In regularly scheduled lecture courses of the Institute, a final examination shall be administered at the time specified in the official Final Examination Schedule as distributed by the Office of the Registrar. In courses such as seminars, senior design, capstone, writing courses, and laboratories, final examinations may be waived and may be replaced with appropriate assessment. The decision to give a final examination in these courses shall be made by the instructor of record. An announcement of the course's final examination policy shall be made to the class at its first meeting and included in the syllabus.

No assessment other than a final examination or its replacement may be due during the Final Examination Period.

Requests to change a class's final examination time within the Final Examination Period must be submitted to the Chief Academic Officer of the department of instruction for approval no later than one week before the beginning of the Final Examination Period. Any such request must have the unanimous approval of the class as shown by secret ballot, as well as approval by the instructor of the class.