**Offering Students Flexibility When They Are Ill**

Dear Students,

This semester has been amazing with so many students back on campus and in classrooms. From participating in regular asymptomatic testing to wearing masks indoors, the Yellow Jacket community has done their part to ensure the health and well-being of our fellow peers and faculty. We have heard from portions of the student body regarding a concern that professors will not be flexible if they fall ill during finals week. With support from Provost McLaughlin and Vice President Hong, the following message was sent out to faculty last week:

*Dear Faculty,*

*As we approach the end of fall semester, we wanted to take a moment to say how grateful we are for all you are doing inside and outside of the classroom. You continue to offer outstanding educational opportunities for our students during ongoing challenges. We also appreciate the staff in the Dean of Students Office and Stamps Health Services, as it has been a collective effort to address student health throughout this pandemic. As we partner to help our students finish strong, while maintaining a safe campus environment, we are asking for your flexibility when they are ill.*

*We have heard a number of comments from students expressing concern about the ability to successfully complete the necessary requirements for their classes due to being ill or the need to isolate. They are especially concerned about missing a test. Please be mindful of the fact that our students are balancing their academic goals with the need for wellness in the community and attending to their own health and welfare.*

*Instructors should accommodate students who are ill, have tested positive, or need to quarantine due to Covid-19 as they normally would have accommodated ill students before the pandemic. Students are encouraged to prioritize their own health and the health of their peers, especially with Covid-19. Please make every effort to offer students flexibility when they are ill.*

*Contacting the Dean of Students Office for verification of illness is not required, though staff are available if needed. For reference, see Rules and Regulations, Section IV, Attendance in the* [*2021-2022 Catalog*](https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/)*. Please be aware that if you choose to require verification, there may be a delay in the response to faculty, depending on the timing of the illness and the volume of services to be handled through both Stamps Health Services and the Dean of Students Office. The concern about whether they will be accommodated can put additional stress on students who are already feeling unwell.*

*The method or approach to providing content and makeup work for the students is at the instructor’s discretion. Should a student need to miss an exam, there are several options that Georgia Tech faculty have used with success, including giving a makeup exam with the same or a new test, replacing the missing portion of the student’s grade with a higher weight on the final or another assignment, or synchronously proctoring an exam using virtual connections such as BlueJeans or Teams. There are, of course, many other options.*

*One of the six focus areas of the Institute’s strategic plan is Cultivate Well-Being, supplemented by the strategic value that students are our top priority. Our goal is to maintain academic rigor while also clearly conveying care and compassion. Working together, we can do that.*

*Thank you for your flexibility.*

*Sincerely,*

*Steve McLaughlin*

*Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs*

*Luoluo Hong*

*Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-Being*

As we head into the final months of classes, SGA encourages you to take care of your mental and physical health. This time especially can be quite stressful, and Georgia Tech offers many [resources](https://www.sga.gatech.edu/resources/) for students seeking help. We wish you best of luck in a strong finish to the Fall 2021 Semester.

In Progress and Service,

Rohan Sohani

Vice President of Academic Affairs