Report and Recommendations from the Georgia Tech
International Plan Task Force

September 23, 2011

1. Background
The International Plan (IP) at Georgia Tech was initiated in 2005, in response to recommendations from the Georgia Tech Quality Enhancement Plan, which was submitted and approved by the Georgia Tech Executive Board in 2005. The International Plan is designed specifically to prepare Georgia Tech students to compete in a globalized economy. Students in the IP gain competence in both foreign languages, by taking classes and by immersive environments, and in foreign culture, again by spending time and working or studying abroad.
In Spring of 2011, the Vice-Provost for International Initiatives formed the International Plan Task Force, and charged it with a complete and detailed evaluation of the IP as implemented at GT. The task force was given free rein to examine any and all aspects of the existing plan, recommend changes, deletions, and additions as they see fit, and to recommend other improvements to enhance the IP student’s overall experience. The task force consists of the following members:

- George Riley (ECE, Task Force Chair)
- Amy Henry (OIE)
- Jennifer Evanuik (OIE)
- Irfan Essa (CoC/IC)
- Mike McCracken (CoC/CS)
- Perry Yang (COA)
- Bettina Cothran (ML)
- Kirk Bowman (INTA)
- Al Ferri (ME)
- Doug Williams (ECE)
- Chuck Parsons (MGT)
- Debbie Donohue (DOPP)
- Jon Gordon (Assessment)
- Wes Wynens (VPSS)
- Rebecca Bacon (OIE)

The group met several times in the spring of 2011, and after a hiatus in the summer, resumed meeting in August 2011.
2. Overview of the Existing Georgia Tech International Plan

The current International Plan requires that students meet a number of requirements detailed below. Students who successfully complete the minimum requirements are given the International Plan designator on their diploma and on their Georgia Tech transcript. A summary of the existing requirements is given below.

a) Students who participate in the International Plan must first apply for admission to the program within their first four semesters of undergraduate study. Further, the student’s major department must be participating in the International Plan program.

b) All applicants excepting first semester freshmen must have a minimum GPA of 2.7.

c) Students must complete a minimum of two semesters, not less than 26 weeks, of active engagement abroad, either studying or working abroad on a Georgia Tech sponsored international program. If the student participates in two separate programs to fulfill this requirement, the locations of the programs must be “coherent”. The major school works with students and determines if a plan of study or work is “coherent”.

d) Students must complete at least three globally oriented courses, (one in International Relations, one in Global Economics, and one country or region related course applicable to the chosen region for the international immersion). The Office of International Education maintains a list of approved courses for each of the three categories of globally oriented courses. These classes must be taken for a letter grade, and the student must have an overall grade point average of at least 2.7 in these courses.

e) Students can choose either the “English Language Track” whereby the international experience is in an English-speaking country, or choose the “Foreign Language Track”, where the international experience is in a non-English language country.

f) Students choosing the Foreign Language Track must demonstrate proficiency in their chosen language by taking and passing the examination ministered by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The required level for the ACTFL varies depending on the chosen language.

g) Students choosing the English Language Track must take any foreign language up to the 2002 level (or equivalent).

h) Students must complete a senior-level capstone course. Each major participating in the International Plan has a list of pre-approved courses to satisfy this requirement.
Statistics for the Georgia Tech International Plan

Participation goals for the International Plan as originally stated in the Quality Enhancement Plan envisioned an inaugural cohort of 100 students in AY 2005-06 growing to a steady state of 300 students enrolling annually by AY 2008-09. Actual enrollment in the IP has been healthy, but has fallen short of these targets, and the number of new participants in the Plan has declined over the past three years. As of September 2011, there were 929 students enrolled in the IP.

Of more concern is the relatively low numbers of IP enrolled students who graduate with the IP designator. Of the 117 students who enrolled in the IP in 2005, 93 graduated without the IP designator, while only 17 graduated with it. For the 143

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<tr>
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<th>2005 Cohort</th>
<th>2006 Cohort</th>
<th>2007 Cohort</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accepted IP Students</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>156</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students Graduating with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IP Designator</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students Graduating</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>without IP Designator</td>
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<tr>
<td>IP Designators/All IP</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
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<td>Accepted Graduates</td>
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students who were accepted into the 2006 IP cohort, 97 have graduated without the
designator, and 26 graduated with it. Graduation rates for the 2005-2007 IP cohorts are presented in the table below.

Based on cohort progression statistics cited above, it would appear that retention is a considerable challenge for the IP. Related to overall IP retention is the pass rate for the ACTFL test for foreign language competence. The test is a graduation requirement for IP students on the foreign language track (i.e. students who sojourn in non-English speaking countries.) Of the 108 students who have attempted the ACTFL, 68.5 percent have achieved the required level of language competence to graduate with the IP designator, while 31.5 percent have not.

3. Findings of the International Plan Task Force
The task force reviewed carefully the existing International Plan requirements and the statistics regarding students’ performance and success rate in the plan. The findings are:

   a) The existence of the International Plan is a differentiator for Georgia Tech, and in many cases attracts students to GT who would otherwise choose peer universities.

   b) Employers value the international experiences gained by the International Plan students, both in the language experiences and cultural familiarity.

   c) The percentage of International Plan students who complete all requirements and receive the International Plan designator is unacceptably low.

   d) Academic advisors and Faculty Advisors have varying degrees of familiarity and expertise in the International Plan requirements.

   e) Students participating in the International Plan do not have sufficient camaraderie with other International Plan students.

   f) The requirement to take and pass the ACTFL examination is a barrier to both entry and exit from the program.

   g) Many International Plan students prefer to split the two-semester international immersion experience between two different countries or cultures.

   h) The current implementation of the existing Capstone Course requirement for IP students is of uneven quality or relevance.

   i) There are a number of ways that the International Plan could achieve greater exposure to high school students and incoming freshmen, including interaction with International Baccalaureate programs, working with the “Model UN” annual conference at GT, and more on-campus advertising and exposure.
4. Recommendations from the International Plan Task Force

Based on the finding described above, the task force recommends the following.

a) The existing two-semester/26-week international residency requirement, with no more than one summer term, is a strong differentiator for the GT International Plan and should be continued.

b) Departments presently have the option to levy additional requirements for IP students with approval by the IP committee. This practice should be continued.

c) Remove the existing “English Language Track” option.

d) Add the requirement that all IP students must successfully complete a foreign language to the 2002 level (or equivalent). Students may complete or demonstrate the equivalence of completing a 2002 (or higher) course with a minimum GPA of 2.7 at Tech or another accredited institution or, for students who have studied French, German, Russian, or Spanish, by placing above 2002 on an online placement test offered by the School of Modern Languages. Students may also fulfill this requirement by scoring a 4 or higher on an Advanced Placement language examination. If Georgia Tech does not offer classes or a placement test in the student’s chosen language and the student is proficient above the 2002 level, then the student must provide documentation of the language skill level. This documentation may be:

   i. An official transcript from another accredited US university showing successful completion of the courses through the 2002 level with at least a 2.7 GPA

   ii. A formal oral and written language evaluation by a professional instructor of the language.

   iii. Official results of a formal language level test (such as the test administered by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, ACTFL).

The school of Modern Languages is responsible for evaluating the foreign language credentials.

e) Change the requirement of passing the ACTFL examination from mandatory to optional.

f) Students choosing to skip the ACTFL examination, but who have completed all other IP requirements will be given the degree designator “International Plan” on both the diploma and the transcript.

g) Students who choose to take and pass the ACTFL examination in addition to completing all other IP requirements will be given the designator “International Plan, Language Proficiency” on both the diploma and the transcript. Students who choose to take the ACTFL but do not pass it will still earn the “International Plan” designator, provided they have completed all other IP requirements.
h) Allow students to select two different countries to satisfy the international residency requirement, provided that the two countries have intellectual coherence as determined and approved by the student’s major department.

i) Designate a special section of the existing GT1000 course for International Plan students only, and encourage all newly accepted IP students to register and attend.

j) Add a new text box on all undergraduate student’s transcripts entitled “International Experience”, which would include summers abroad, internships and work experience abroad, research abroad, and successful completion of the ACTFL if applicable.

k) The International Plan Committee should prepare a detailed document describing all International Plan requirements, policies, and petition processes to be delivered to and presented to the Georgia Tech Academic Advisors Network (GTAAN).

l) The International Plan Committee should designate a single point of contact in the Office of International Education responsible for clarifying requirements and answering questions from the academic advisors in the various academic units.

m) Undergraduate coordinators at the various academic units participating in the International Plan should prepare a list of pre-approved transfer courses from pre-approved international campuses, to ease the burden on students choosing where to study abroad.

n) Academic advisors and Faculty advisors should encourage International Plan students to consider increasing their foreign language proficiency by either pursuing a minor in the chosen foreign language (18 credit hours) or a double major in the chosen language as the second major.

o) The recommended changes above to the IP requirements, once approved by the GT International Plan committee, will take place immediately. Students currently participating in the International Plan can choose to follow the new revised requirements or continue with the requirements in force when they enrolled.