A&S Petition to Modify A College Degree Requirement

The College acknowledges receipt of student’s Petition to substitute the foreign language requirement in his degree program and provides him with the steps in the process.
-----Original Message-----
From: Shundra Rene Mondy
Sent: Thursday, March 03, 2011 12:15 PM
To:  
Subject: Follow Up: Appeal to Modify Degree Requirements

Dear

The Dean's office is the process of reviewing your appeal attached and wanted to bring a few items about the appeals process to your attention. Policy requires the college to have verification from the Office of Disability Services when granting a course substitution based on a disability.

From your letter, it appears that your appeal is based on a medical condition as you state, "Unfortunately, I have struggled with math as well as foreign language since grade-school due to a medically diagnosed disorder; In response to this circumstance, it is appropriate for you to register with the GSU Office of Disability Services since that is where the required verification resides that will support the basis of your appeal.

I have attached a reference sheet on the Foreign Course Substitution Procedure for Students with Eligible Disabilities to this email. I encourage you to review it and let me know what you decide in regards to the submission of this appeal at this time.

Since the Undergraduate Petitions Committee is scheduled to review your file on March 10th 2011, I would appreciate your decision by then. Meanwhile, I am happy to answer any questions you have and can be reached by email at srprest1@gsu.edu .

Thank you.

Sincerely,

-----Original Message-----
From: Shundra Rene Mondy
Sent: Thursday, March 03, 2011 2:27 PM
To:  
Subject: Availability: Petitions Committee Meeting

Please verify receipt.

Hello

Just as another follow up. The Petitions Committee will review your cases on Thursday, March 10th at 1:30 pm. Will you be available at that time to answer any questions they might have. You may participate in the meeting in person or by phone. Typically, the review takes about 15 minutes. Please take a moment to let me know.

Sincerely, Rene
Undergraduate Petition for Modification of Degree Requirements of the College of Arts and Sciences

This form is to be used only by undergraduate students who wish to petition an Arts and Sciences College (versus departmental/school or university) requirement. A committee composed of four faculty members and two students will review this petition for approval or disapproval. Prior to the petition being reviewed by the committee, the Office of Academic Assistance will submit the petition to the departments/schools involved which will communicate their recommendations to the committee. Responses are obtained from the student’s major department/school and from the department/school that offers the course. Contact the Office of Academic Assistance in Room 418 General Classroom Building for information about the semester deadline for submission of petitions.

Instructions:

Please attach supporting documentation to this form that addresses the issues listed below. Include a narrative justification to substantiate the requested deviation. Type or neatly print your responses and be as thorough and as concise as possible. If you are petitioning to have a course from another college or university fulfilled as a GSU degree requirement, attach a course description from the catalog of that institution.

- State which requirement your petition addresses (e.g. the math requirement in area II of the core curriculum). If you are unsure about this information, consult the General Catalog or check with your academic advisor in the Office of Academic Assistance (404-413-5000).

State specifically which course you wish to petition to fulfill the requirement, and include any pertinent documentation about the course so that the committee can make the most informed decision possible about your petition. Be certain your petition is written clearly and thoroughly presents your case. Student Information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Student Number:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date: 2/1/11</td>
<td>Address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Phone:</td>
<td>Catalog Edition: Spring 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Major:</td>
<td>Applied for Graduation: Y or N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Date of Graduation:</td>
<td>Office Use Only: Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Substitution Course:</td>
<td>Disapproved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

any recommendation or course I have completed as I have a surplus of classes
Greetings, My name is , and I am a senior major within the college of Arts/Sciences. I am currently a candidate for graduation, but the issue that I am currently facing is my inability to complete the Spanish 1002 (foreign language area F) requirement. There are a variety of factors which contribute to my difficulty, which I will outline below.

Unfortunately, I have struggled with math, as well as foreign language since grade-school due to a medically diagnosed disorder; its something that I've since partially overcome with special programs, and simultaneously education. However, there are various areas which I excel in tremendously, but these are my documented weaknesses. My previous institution, declined my documentation as my last results where from 2007. However, I was and into the threshold of adulthood. I am now , and the problems I still face everyday. As a result, retesting, and requesting a course substitution as a disabled student was simply out of the question due to finances, etc.

However, from a much more apparent standpoint, I am a diligent student, and the only foreign language course I've ever completed was at the junior college level, Spanish 1001. I received an A, as the result was from a heavy group project influenced course, with help from the instructor. Having said that, I honestly have no recollection of any of the material from the class itself, even though I desperately wish that I could retain it. Again, this class was taken in early 2009, and I had no way of knowing that after transferring I would be required to take a higher level for my particular major.
Fast forward two years later, and I am faced with taking the course during my final semester. I could not even attempt it earlier, as it would be impossible to learn the language quickly enough to advance to the 1002 level, and I have taken summer classes every semester that I have been in school, including 19 hours this previous summer, which needless to say, was very intense, and sometimes, a bit overwhelming.

Ultimately, faced with these challenges, I find it very difficult to complete Spanish 1002, and as a result, and my absolute lack of basic knowledge, had to withdraw from the course this semester. I have worked diligently through my college career, all to get to this point, and it saddens me that this is holding me back from graduation. I put forth great effort into any project I undertake, both school related, and otherwise. I certainly never want anyone to believe, or think or myself as someone who does not put forth full my effort. I may occasionally redefine, or rearrange my obstacles, because I know that they can always be overcome through dedication.

In conclusion considering these challenges, I find it impossible for myself to successfully complete the this class, and consequently graduate. I am so close to the end of my undergraduate career, and the culmination of four years coursework. I am pressured with so many obstacles, including finances

However, regardless of all these circumstances, my only wish is for my mother to be able to watch me graduate, as that means more to me than anything tangible. I have stayed dedicated, and true to my schoolwork with the one, and only intention of graduating, and going on to represent GSU in the best possible way, in my career, and life; because I believe wholeheartedly in my college, as well as my education. I truly mean it when I say thank you to the
committee reviewing my request, simply for allowing me to have a voice to plea my case. Again thank you so much, and I look forward to hearing from the committee soon.
Foreign Language Course Substitution
Procedure for Students with Eligible Disabilities

Students with majors in the College of Arts and Sciences typically have a foreign language core course requirement for graduation. In some instances, a disability is such that it interferes with the ability to acquire a new language through participation in collegiate level courses.

Who is Eligible?
Most commonly this accommodation applies to a limited number of students with learning disabilities or other cognitive disabilities that significantly affect language. It may also apply to students who are deaf, hard of hearing or who have speech disorders.

Before beginning the petition process, students should consult with their disability service provider to determine whether a foreign language course substitution might be supported because of significant language-related limitations caused by their disability.

Students with learning disabilities who have been evaluated by the Regents Center for Learning Disorders should refer to the “Recommendations” section at the end of their testing reports to determine whether the center recommended a course substitution. Students with LD who have been tested by other professionals or students who are deaf, hard of hearing or who have speech disorders will need to request a review of their disability documentation through the Disability Services Office to determine whether a course substitution can be supported by this office.

Procedure
Foreign language course substitutions are granted by the College of Arts and Sciences after reviewing students’ petitions and their supporting documentation. Students seeking a course substitution should:

- Obtain the form, “Petition for Modification of Degree Requirements,” from the document rack outside the office of the College of Arts and Sciences, located on the 7th floor of the General Classroom Building.
- Follow the instructions on the form for submitting your request, keeping the following points in mind:
  - Verification of a disability that significantly impacts acquisition of a foreign language must be provided in the form of a letter sent directly from your Disability Services Office professional to the College of Arts and Sciences.
  - The substitute course curriculum must significantly address the understanding of a foreign culture. (Some examples of courses that meet this criterion include Cultural Anthropology, and certain courses in psychology, sociology, social work and other disciplines that focus on understanding a foreign culture.) Including a course description is recommended.
  - Follow the directions on the Petition for Modification of Degree Requirements form carefully. Failure to provide clear support for your
request, as well as appropriate courses for substitution, will likely result in denial of the petition.

- **The student must write a narrative explanation of the reason supporting their request**, in addition to the verification of the impact of the disability from the ODS service provider.

- Remember that a single course cannot fulfill two separate academic requirements (i.e., a single course cannot fulfill both a requirement for your major and also for a core course requirement)

- **Start well in advance.** You may need additional time if further testing or information is required to support the impact of the disability. Also, the committee meets only a few times per semester.

- Notify your ODS service provider well in advance of the need for their supporting letter.
The College solicits the department chair’s support of the student’s appeal.
-----Original Message-----
From: Shundra Rene Mondy
Sent: Thursday, March 03, 2011 1:15 PM
To: Cheshier, David
Subject: Petition For Deviation From the Printed Catalog

Hello Dr. Cheshier,

I am writing in response to 2 petitions that were submitted by an undergraduate major who is minoring in

On the first petition, he is requesting to waive the College of Arts and Sciences policy that requires students to obtain a C or better in all minor course work. And, on the second petition, he is asking to substitute the foreign language requirement in area F.

The recommendations that we receive from the College of Business and Disability Services office will be most helpful to the committee’s discussion when they review these on March 10th. The committee asked that I also inquire with the student’s major department and ask you for your recommendation on a decision to cover all basis, but you are not required to do so.

Thanks! I hope that your Spring Break is good!

Rene

S. Rene Presti, MS, CRC
College of Arts and Sciences
Office of the Dean
General Classroom Building 730
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
(404) 413-5125
(404) 413-5117 fax

-----Original Message-----
From: David Mark Cheshier
Sent: Thursday, March 03, 2011 5:21 PM
To: Presti, S. Rene
Subject: Re: Petition For Deviation From the Printed Catalog

Hi,
I've reviewed both of the petitions submitted by [blank]. I agree that the main drivers of these petitions will rest with the information provided by the Robinson College of Business and Disability Services, and am not able to add additional information from my department's perspective that would decisively shape the issues one way or the other.

Our practice in the Department of [blank] has been pretty strictly consistent with the policy in place over in RCB; that is, in courses which require a grade of "C or better" we have not been willing to accept a "C-" as fulfilling the requirement. In a number of cases we have denied petitions of this practice from students who argued that what we have seen as the plain language of such requirements was unreasonably ambiguous. On the other hand, I'd defer to RCB given their normal ways of handling petitions of this sort, and to the A&S Committee reviewing the petition given their best judgment of the merits he lays out in describing his personal situation, and their likely history in seeing similar petitions that have been appealed out of departments.

And on the language petition, of course, if [blank] receives or has received a certification from ODS, then I'd support operating consistent with their diagnosis and recommendation.

Best,

David

Dr. David Cheshier
Chair, Department of [blank]
College of Arts and Sciences
College Petitions Committee
Recommendation following the Hearing

3/18/11
March 18, 2011

Dean Lauren Adamson  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Georgia State University

Dear Dean Adamson:

The Undergraduate Petitions Committee has met and deliberated on the petition for modification of degree requirements filed by , regarding the Area F foreign language requirement. The Committee unanimously recommends that petition be denied, although it should be made clear that this recommendation is based not on the merits of the petition, but on the omission of certain key materials from it. The Committee has no reason to believe that claims are not legitimate or that his request is not justified, but because there is a clearly delineated procedure for making such a request, we also find no reason to uphold a petition that does not follow that procedure.

In particular, the “Foreign Language Course Substitution Procedure for Students with Eligible Disabilities” clearly states the following: “Verification of a disability that significantly impacts acquisition of a foreign language must be provided in the form of a letter sent directly from your Disability Services Office professional to the College of Arts and Sciences.” It is this document that is not included in the petition. At the hearing, the student’s explanation for this was that his financial situation does not allow him to undergo the updated testing that Disability Services requires before they would write such a letter. Unfortunately, this creates a situation where, in effect, the student is implicitly petitioning for a variance from the ordinary procedure for petitioning, and we have no means to determine the accuracy of his financial claims or any procedural/policy guidance to indicate whether such matters should be taken into consideration.

In any event, this still leaves the Committee, whose members do not have the expertise relevant to this particular area, to be strongly inclined to defer to Disability Services, and the lack of guidance from them leaves us with no alternative but to table the request.

A second, though less significant concern, is that the student did not propose and justify a specific course substitution, which is also required by policy. At the hearing, he suggested that a number of courses would probably be suitable, but, as with the issue of testing, the burden is on the student to produce and demonstrate what is required when filing a petition.

Again, we would recommend that the petition, as it is, not be upheld, but that the student be encouraged to complete the required steps so that it could have a more suitable review.

For the Committee,

Jonathan R. Herman
Undergraduate Petitions Committee Chair
College Issues Decision

3/18/11
March 22, 2011

Dear [Name],

I am writing in response to the petition for modification of degree requirements that you filed, regarding the Area F foreign language requirement.

I reviewed your appeal, further information from the department of [department name] and the recommendation from the Petitions Committee. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with my conclusions regarding your appeal.

Your appeal indicates that your request is based on an existing medical condition that affects your ability to [specific condition], however, you did not register with the university's Office of Disability Service (ODS). The university policy requires that students who are seeking accommodations based on a disability register with ODS to ensure appropriate accommodations. As that policy states:

“Students with disabilities are asked to contact the office (ODS) for an intake packet and provide ODS with proper documentation for assistance and to ensure that appropriate accommodations are made. The office (ODS) answers questions regarding accessibility and accommodations at the university, maintains computer labs with accessible hardware and software, provides testing accommodations and can assist with filing disability-related grievances and complaints within the university once a student has registered with ODS.”

Since you are requesting an accommodation without completing the ODS certification process, I am unable to support your request.

As indicated in the University Student Grievance Policies and Procedures, if either party is dissatisfied with the decision rendered by the Dean, that person has the right to appeal the decision in writing to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs within twenty working days of the date of this letter.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Carol Winkler
Associate Dean for the Humanities

cc: Tammy Patterson-Hill
    David Cheshier
    Bruce Pilling