

## **Committee on Student Life (CSL)**

**Friday, September 28, 2012**

Room 12-196 12pm – 2pm

Minutes taken by Lisa Stagnone

**Present:** Andy Barlow, Gunther M. Roland, J. Meejin Yoon, Danielle Guichard-Ashbrook, Barbara Baker, Amy (Betsy) E. Riley, Oz B. Agar, Randy Cabezas (proxy for Jit Tan), Andrea Dubin

**Guests:** Melanie Parker, Deborah Liverman, Tamara Raimundi Menghi from Career Services

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### **Presentation by Career Services:**

We are seeking input. Our goals are to

- provide overview of balance academics with interviewing
- overall feedback
- gain input from students, faculty and employees
- partner with committee on solution. Who should we work with? We welcome recommendations.

### Global Education Career Development (GECD)

- Career Services plans and prepares career interviews
- Global Education Students abroad discover opportunities
- Pre-health advising helps students explore and prepare applications primarily for medical school. Approximately 120 -150 per year apply.

### Career Services

- Counseling / exploration
  - Freehand alum Institute summer campus wide workshops
  - Career fair, networking speakers/panels
  - Grad and Professional school advisory
  - Resume critique
  - Campus recruiter
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- We have recruitment on campus, approximately 307 employers conducting 4,323 interviews.
  - If you look at the class of 2012 and where they went, you'd see
    - 53% went into the workforce
    - 35% went on to grad school
    - 9% other (fellowships, education, non-profit)

- The top five employers are McKinsey & Company, Oracle, BCG, Schlumberge, and Morgan Stanley. Changes within the recent years, you'll find were topped by consulting groups. They have robust recruiting efforts. They will tell you how many they are look for during recruitment. Our students tend to go towards consulting.
- Post grads like to keep their options open. 12.6% companies will be applied for getting 6.5 interviews. Many apply to both grad programs and companies.
- Conversion of intern work to full-time employment is 15%.

TIME LINE FOR JOB SEARCH:

- Grad senior job search time, prior to September, 24% of students
- September, 32% are searching
- October 8.8% search
- November 5.1% search

FALL Employer interviews occur:

- Resume collection
- Interview here on site, all day, multiple companies
- Student may also be asked to go on site for 4 to 5 interviews
- Students are going to New York, Boston and northern California (and there they may have 2 to 3 days of interviewing. Sometimes you can't delay these interviews

Survey highlights: (survey included at end of minutes)

- Asked if they "experienced conflict" 65% said yes 22% said no
- Asked if they "tried to reschedule" 43% said yes 57% said no
- "successfully rescheduled" 72% said yes 15% said no
- Did not decline conflicting interview 5% said yes 74% said no  
(they took the interview)
- How many skipped classes 50% said yes
- Number of classes skipped 63% skipped 30% (3 times)  
22% skipped 3-6 times
- Fear of missing classes 44%
- Fear of repercussions 43%

Focus group of grads and undergrads felt that they were missing out on opportunities. They were struggling with deciding what to do. Time commitment and traveling were a problem as well as feeling powerless due to the fact that they didn't feel that they could negotiate regarding scheduling.

Prof. Gunther Roland stated that grad school students have to visit the sites even after they are accepted to programs. In the spring, students need to travel to open houses. They can't get anything accomplished class wise during these times. Students start to worry about grades falling. They don't want it to impact them getting into the programs.

Prof. J. Meejin Yoon stated that if the students try to focus on too many things, it's distracting. They need to focus on one thing at a time.

Melanie Parker stated that the students shouldn't block opportunities. Go after it all. She's seen situations where students apply and got the job but didn't graduate due to their grades being affected with all that interviewing. The student had to start the cycle all over again. From career services view, MIT students are sought out for. They are great students and they should have both options open to them.

Added challenges with jobs versus grad school, grad school you apply and get in. You know right away. Interviewing can go on and on. If you chose grad school the fall is open to other things due to grad students having to apply by January.

Students feel powerless. They are afraid not that they don't have the ability, they are afraid to use it. Students avoid the situation and would rather deal with whatever the outcome is than confront employers.

Prof. J. Meejin Yoon suggested that MIT work on a conflict workshop towards something like this.

Melanie Parker stated that some schools develop a policy. Maybe we don't do a great job with students regarding this. We have information on our website telling students their rights, policies and procedures when it comes to interviewing. Information is available on how to deal with conflict. While they are sitting in our office, we have it flashing on the screens in there – helpful hints. Teachable moments can be accept and negotiate. We need better decision making. The better you make now the better you'll end up in the future.

Oz Agar asked that when applying for jobs, do the jobs come in just during fall? Are their companies hiring in the spring too?

Melanie Parker stated that there are options available in the spring. Companies are on a cycle. They do have target to hire. It's a different type of recruiting but it does happen. Smaller companies higher more in the spring and are just in time hiring. Robust time is in the fall.

Oz Agar stated that maybe an informative campaign with companies is in need. Maybe we should be asking for flexibility. And we can teach students how to negotiate.

Melanie Parker suggested that negotiation can mean the same as communication.

Next Steps:

Benchmark with schools

Education – restriction on when on campus, locations. Maybe special dates blocked out

\*Employer Input – recruiting policies located on the web, developed by MIT

Identify dates that have internal restrictions on them

Sent employers policy to agree to before letting them on campus

Randy asked about the career fairs and interviewing – how many were here

Melanie Parker stated that we had 330 last week and had 70 – 100 interviews. This was between 2 – 3 weeks. Deborah stated that we need to keep into consideration getting space in MIT which is difficult as well as keeping in mind the companies coming here may have restrictions on their ends also.

Barbara Baker suggested that maybe in the future we can get the faculty's calendars and plan around that or maybe have the job fair on the student holidays or gear it towards the Monday holiday.

Melanie Parker stated that this year it was geared on the Friday and spilt into the Saturday which affects our athletes. You can interview the day after the fair but you may not get a decision for quite a while or you may have to have more interviews after that one.

Students recommend action:

- Effective communication and negotiation with employers to resolve conflicts.
- Workshops on communication and negotiation.
- Target outreach to students to heavy internships.
- Education materials on resources available

Prof. J. Meejin Yoon asked if professors know how or what the policies are when students need to miss a class due to interview? I would think it's up to each and every professor to handle it their own way.

Melanie Parker stated that she was not aware of any policies that faculty were referencing.

Prof. Gunter Roland stated that in his studies (physics) student would need to be there during his labs. You can't miss 3 or 4 sections. You would need to be there to do the experiments.

Prof. J. Meejin Yoon stated that in her studies (architecture), most students go on to grad school. She does not think that faculty is even aware of the interviewing and these issues. We should reach out to them.

Melanie Parker stated that she would be available to possibly work with someone on a letter that would go to the faculty on this matter. If you can suggest someone, she would appreciate it. What office do I reach out to?

Prof. Gunther Roland was not aware of this issue either (physics).

Barbara Baker asked what departments are affected? Has that been identified?

Melanie Parker stated the most effected would be engineering and management, consulting. Advocacy through another communication may help. Where would we go? Who could we get to champion for us? The Faculty Chair? We would love to partner with someone to resolve.

Suggestions offered: Undergraduate Education, CAP, groups that intersect.

Oz Agar stated that offering students stats on applying for jobs, how many do you apply for and what is the percentage of job offers may be helpful. Example, if you apply to 14 and you'll get offers from 5. This may stop them from applying to too many and taking up so much time. Run an analysis. You can say "90% that apply to 5 jobs get 2 offers".

The next committee meeting is Friday October 12<sup>th</sup>. Our guest is Chancellor Grimson.

# Balancing Academics and Interviewing at MIT

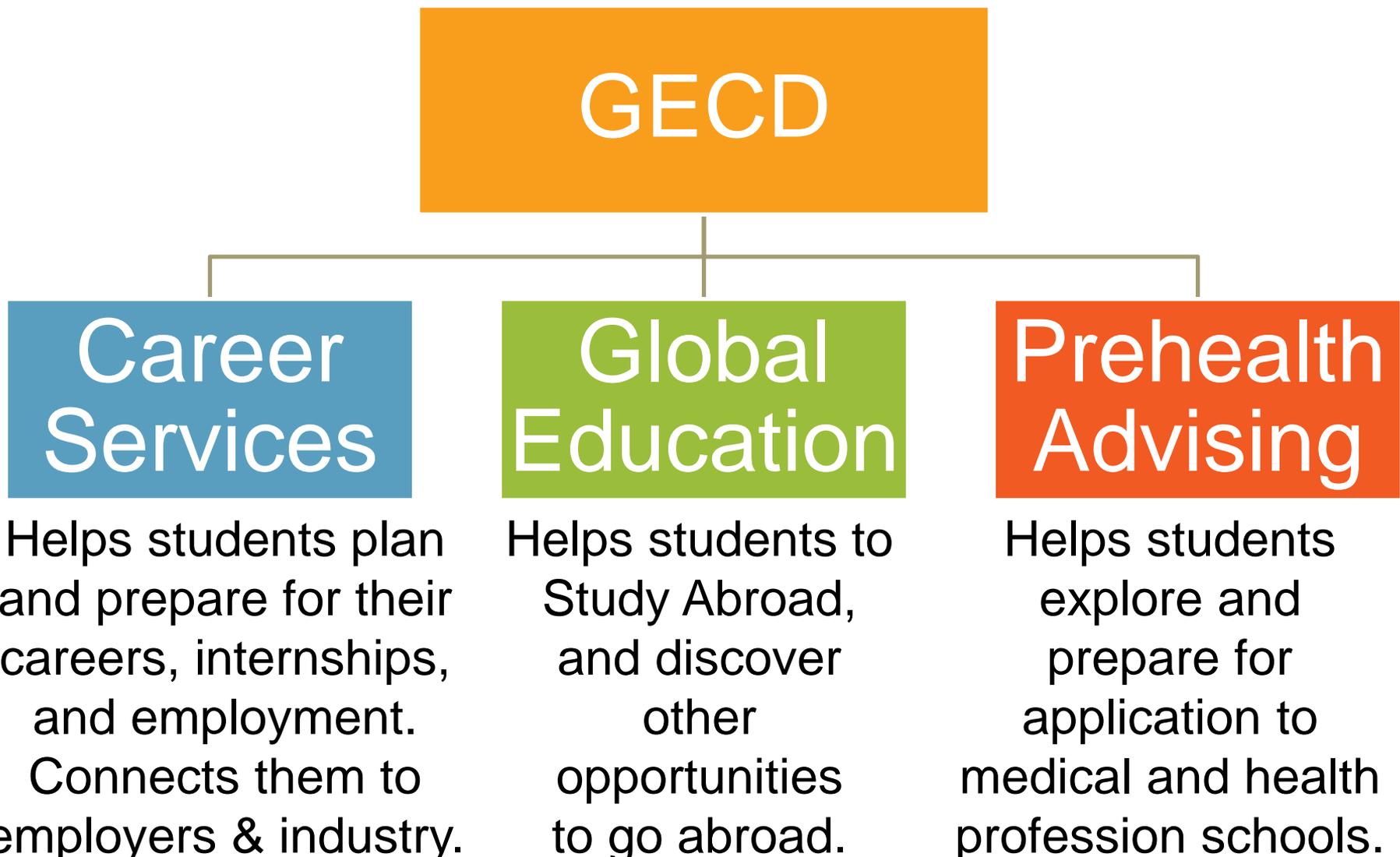
Presentation to the MIT Committee on Student Life

Melanie Parker, Deborah Liverman and Tamara Menghi  
Global Education and Career Development

# Goals

- Provide an overview of the Balancing Academics with Interviewing Investigation Executive Summary report and recommendations
- Obtain overall feedback on the report
- Gain input on student, faculty, and employer recommendations
- Partner with the committee on solutions

# GECD



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graph TD; GECD[GECD] --- CS[Career Services]; GECD --- GE[Global Education]; GECD --- PA[Prehealth Advising];
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## Career Services

Helps students plan and prepare for their careers, internships, and employment. Connects them to employers & industry.

## Global Education

Helps students to Study Abroad, and discover other opportunities to go abroad.

## Prehealth Advising

Helps students explore and prepare for application to medical and health profession schools.

# Career Services

- Career Counseling/Exploration
- Freshman/Alumni Summer Internship Program
- Campus-wide workshops
- Career fairs, networking speakers, and panels
- Graduate and Professional School Advising
- Resume critiques and mock interviews
- On Campus Recruiting

# Issue Timeline

**Feb 2012**

Met with the MIT Committee on Academic Performance (CAP) about increasing trend of undergraduates with Fall academic performance records below minimum due to interviews.

**May -  
Jun 2012**

GECD surveyed students and conducted focus groups on this issue.

**Aug - Sep  
2012**

GECD developed a report and recommendations, which has been provided to the committee.

# Background on On-Campus Recruiting

## Web-based Recruiting

- Accessible 24/7
- Top companies recruit at MIT

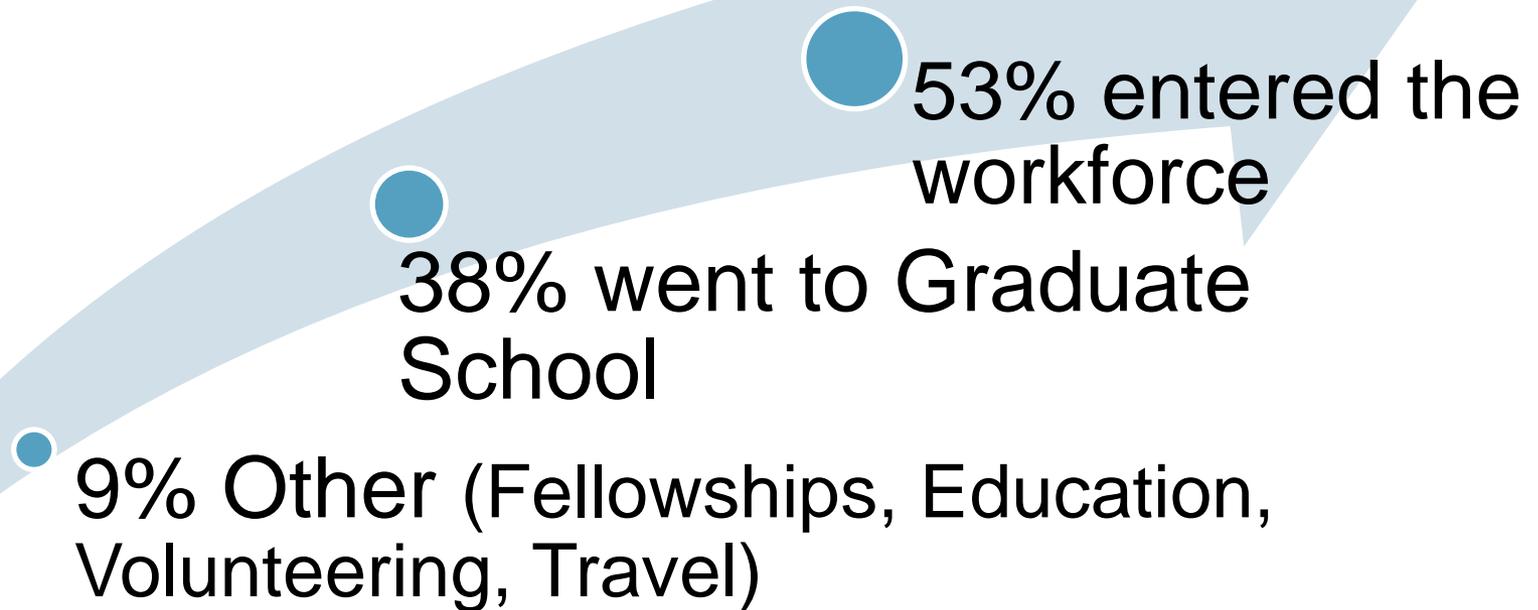
## On-Campus Interviews

- 307 Employers
- 4,323 on-campus interviews

## Survey says

- MIT Career Services is the top source of for finding employment for MIT graduates

# Where Did the MIT Class of 2012\* Go?



Source: 2012 MIT Graduating Student Survey

\*Graduating Seniors only

## Top Employers/No. of Undergraduate Hires

9

McKinsey&Company

8

ORACLE®

7

BCG

THE BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP

7

Schlumberger

7

Morgan Stanley

# Post-Graduation Planning

- Students like to keep their options open.
  - Apply to many companies, with an average of 12.6 companies\* and 6.5 interviews\*
  - Many apply to both companies and graduate programs
- Internships in the Junior year and Fall semester of the Senior year are critical for undergraduates seeking full-time positions.
  - Large companies make hiring decisions in the Fall for full-time hires. (e.g. Exxon, McKinsey)
  - The conversion rate from internship to full time is 15%\*

\*Data from 2011/2012 Graduating Student Survey.

# Graduating Senior Job Search Timeline

## Undergraduate

Month	Begin Search	Received Offer
Prior to September 2010	24.8%	16.1%
September 2010	32.0%	4.3%
October 2010	8.8%	13.5%
November 2010	5.1%	15.8%
December 2010	3.5%	6.3%
January 2011	5.9%	6.3%
February 2011	4.3%	4.9%
March 2011	3.7%	8.2%
April 2011	3.5%	10.9%
May 2011	2.9%	8.9%
June 2011	2.4%	3.3%
July 2011	0.5%	1.0%
August 2011	0.0%	0.7%

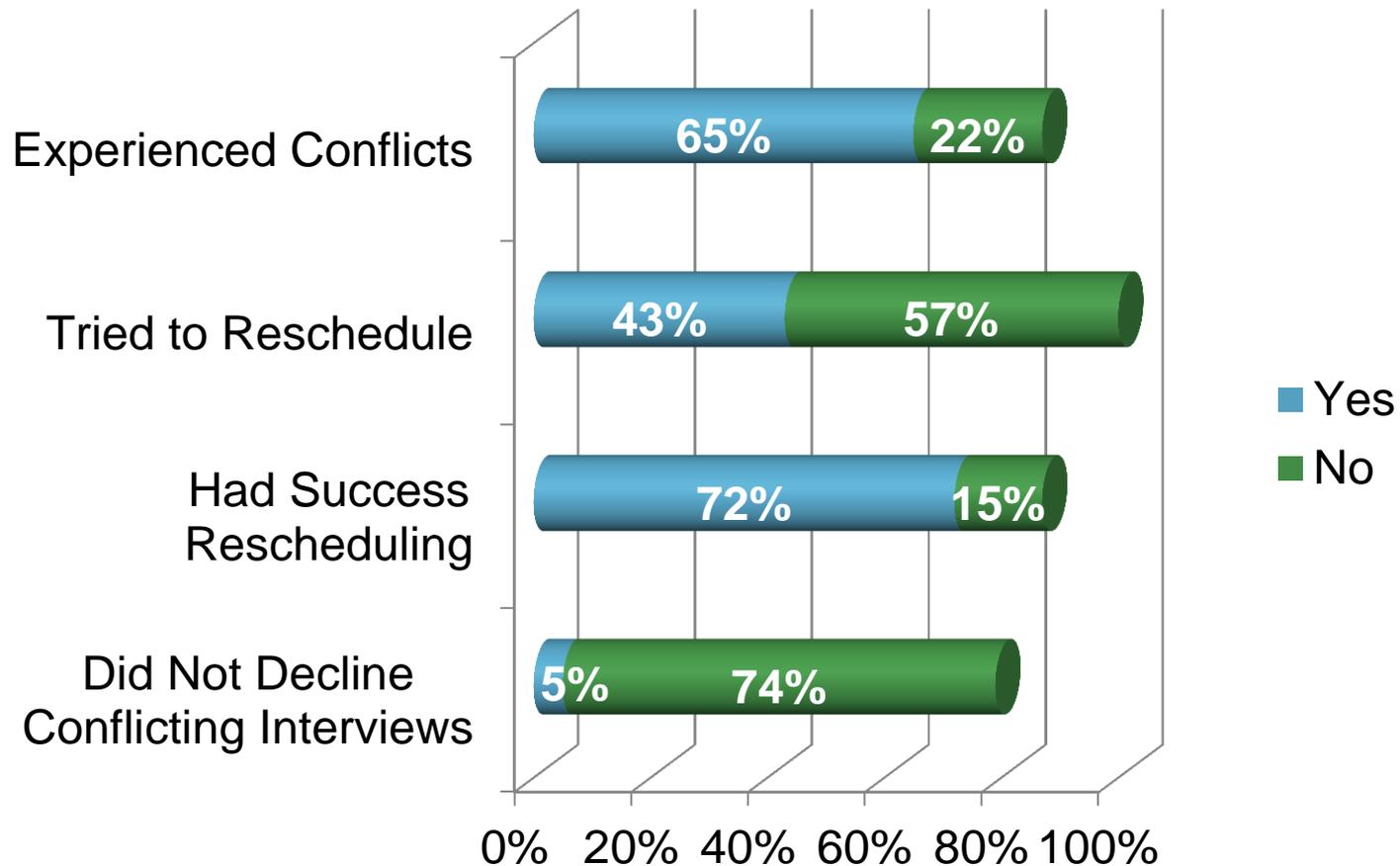
\*Data from 2011 and 2012 Graduating Student Survey

# Employer Interviews

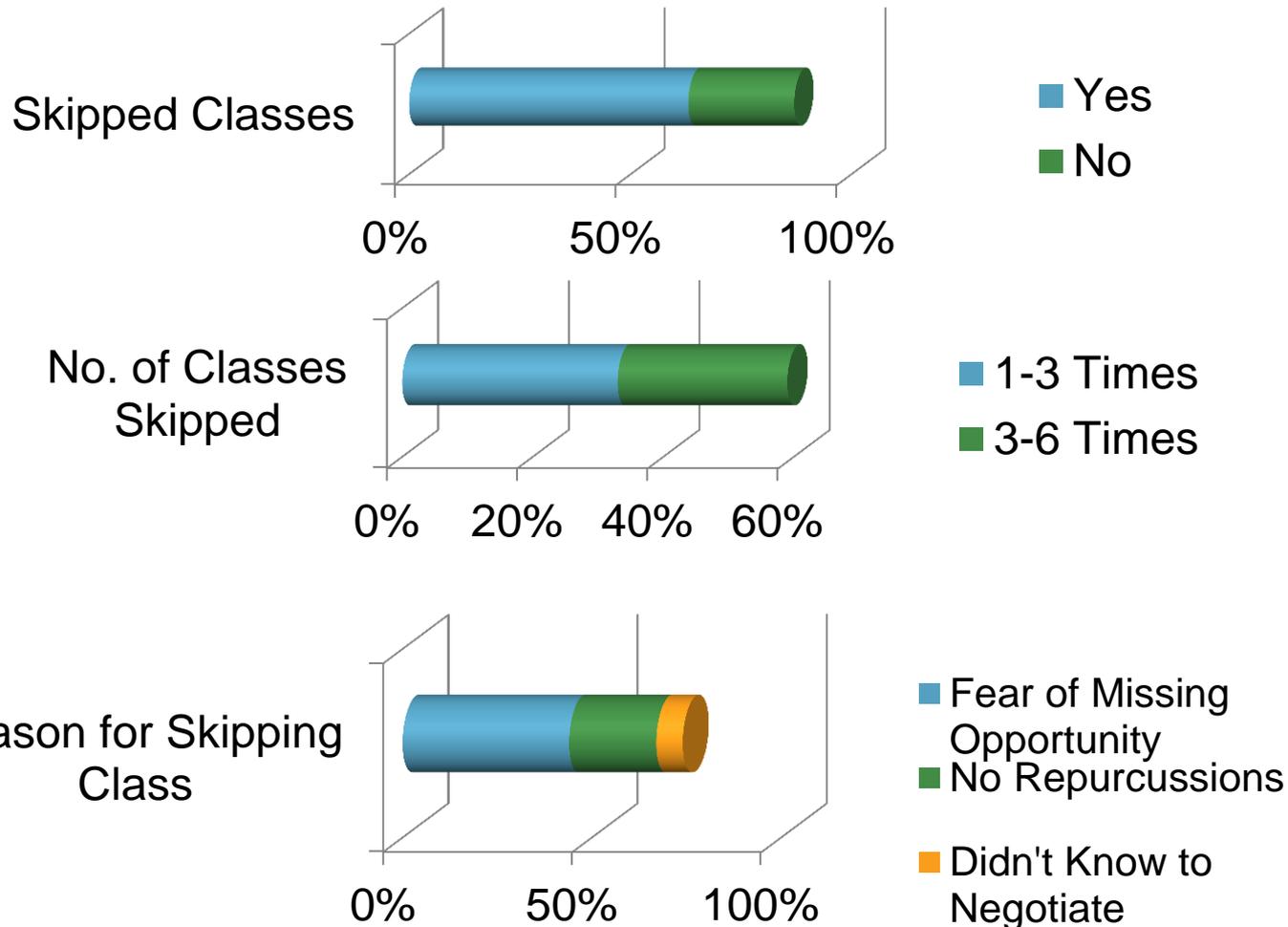
- Typically, on-site interviews are a full day and some companies will have on-site interviews for multiple days.
- For West Coast interviews, students will need at least 2 days for the interview and travel.
- Most companies are flexible with students by giving multiple interviewing times, i.e. different weekend/days/weeks in a month.
- At times, it may not be possible for students to delay interviews for more than a month.

# Survey Highlights

## Student Interview Conflict Experiences



# Survey Highlights



# Focus Group Themes

- **Fear of losing out on an opportunity exists for students.**  
Students struggle with prioritizing their academic commitments over their future employment/graduate school options because they fear losing out on an opportunity.
- **Site visits pose an added challenge.**  
Site visits pose a challenge due to the time commitment involved in traveling.
- **Students feel powerless.**  
They are hesitant to negotiate with interviewers about scheduling conflicts or with professors in getting flexibility about class attendance and assignments.

# Next Steps Based on Findings

- Benchmark with schools to learn about their recruiting policies and practices
  - Brown, Caltech, Carnegie, Columbia, Dartmouth, Harvard, Purdue, Stanford, UPenn, and Yale
- Develop educational materials and resources addressing the interviewing challenges for students for:
  - Employers
  - Students
  - Faculty

# Benchmark Information Gathered

There are recruiting restrictions that exist at other schools that are not in place at MIT

- Restrictions on when off-campus 1st round interviews can take place to avoid over-booking of interviews. (Columbia)
- Location and date restrictions for 2<sup>nd</sup> round interviews (Brown, Cornell, Harvard, Princeton, UPenn, Yale)
- Specific dates are blocked out for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> round interviews, in some cases specifically for exams and study periods (Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Princeton, UPenn)

# Recommended Actions with Employers

- Further develop MIT's on-campus recruiting policies and restrictions located on web
- Identify dates interviewing should be restricted on and off-campus based on MIT's academic schedule and exams
- Send employers policies to agree to before providing them access to on-campus recruiting. Include context for why policies have been developed.

# Recommended Actions with Students

- Provide information to help students more effectively communicate and negotiate with employers and communicate with faculty on conflicts
- Possible actions:
  - On-campus recruiting training/orientation
  - Workshops on how to effectively communicate and negotiate with employers
  - Targeted outreach to students with heavy internship/job interview schedules to provide support
  - Educational materials to educate students on policies/resources and offer advice on this issue

# Recommended Actions with Faculty

Inform administrators, departments and faculty of the following possibly through a faculty newsletter.

- The increase in students claiming interviewing negatively impacted their studies.
- GSS data on internships, jobs and interviewing.
- Student rights and responsibilities in the interview process.
- GECD on-campus recruiting and interviewing policies for employers.
- GECD website resources and content to help students on this topic.

# Questions for the Committee

- What is your overall reaction to this issue and the information?
- What are your thoughts on the recommendations for:
  - Students?
  - Faculty?
  - Employers?
- Are there specific strategies that will be useful when working with faculty on this topic?
- How could we partner to resolve this issue?

*Global Education & Career Development  
empowers students for lifelong success.*

**Find your path. Start the journey.**



**Global Education & Career Development (GECD)**  
**Balancing Academics with Interviewing Investigation Executive Summary**  
**Prepared for the Committee on Academic Performance (CAP)**  
**August 2012**

**Overview:**

In response to the Committee on Academic Performance's request for additional information surrounding student claims that interviewing conflicts with students' ability to sustain academic commitments, Global Education and Career Development (GECD) formed a committee to determine whether this is a widespread problem at MIT. The committee's goals were to learn more from students to determine the scope of the problem and propose solutions. To do this, GECD conducted an online student survey, followed by a student focus group.

**Survey Results:**

A 15 question survey titled "Balancing Interviewing and Academics" survey was sent to individuals with a reported graduation date of December 2011 to June 2015. The total number of invited undergraduate and graduate students and recent grads was 4,868 and the survey received 768 responses, for a 16 percent response rate. Of the total respondents, 59 percent were undergraduates (27 percent sophomores, 35 percent juniors, and 39 percent seniors) and 41 percent were graduate students. Please note that responses to each question were not required which explains the variation in response rates and data points highlighted below. For the purpose of this report, we will focus on addressing undergraduate responses.

**Survey highlights for Undergraduate Responses Include:**

- Of the undergraduate respondents, 86 percent (see Graph 1) reported having an interview during the 2011-2012 Academic Year.
- Of the undergraduate respondents with interviews in the 2012 Academic Year, 65 percent (see Graph 7) reported they had an interview that conflicted with their class schedule.
- Forty-three percent (see Graph 8) did not try to reschedule their interviews. Of 57 percent who did attempt to reschedule, there was a 72 percent success rate.
- Seventy-four percent of respondents chose not to decline interviews that conflicted with classes totaled (see Graph 9).
- Classes were skipped by 63 percent of respondents (see Graph 11) in order to participate in on-campus or off-campus interviews.
- Of those who reported skipping class, 33 percent (see Graph 13) skipped class 1-2 times and 26 percent skipped class 3-6 times.
- Fear of missing out on an opportunity was reported by 44 percent of respondents (see Graph 14). In addition, 23 percent indicated that they skipped class because there were no repercussions.

**Focus Group Findings:**

Of the students who participated in the survey, 12 students were invited to be in the focus group, of

which eight participated (four undergraduates and four graduate students). Seven questions were posed to this group.

#### Class Attendance:

Students indicated that they use their own metrics to decide whether it is in their best interest to miss a class in order to interview. There is no universal policy on missing class as some courses require full attendance or provide an allowable limit for absences. Sixty-five percent decided to miss class for an interview rather than negotiate an alternate interview date with an employer, and of those about half notified a professor or TA in advance.

#### On-Site Interviews at Companies or Graduate Schools:

Students reported that they see value in participating in on-site interviews, both as a way to make an impression on the employer or graduate school and to better evaluate future job/school offers. On-site interviews present added challenges in that they are more time consuming due to travel and overnight stays which result in more classes and assignments to make-up. It was reported that employers and schools make travel arrangements for students and may or may not give sufficient advance notice to students in order to make appropriate accommodations for his or her absence.

#### Negotiating for Alternate Interview Times:

Students stated they lacked confidence in negotiating options with employers in regards to scheduling interviews. They used words like “weak” and “powerless.” Negotiating presented a stressful situation for students, and they expressed a need for more support and guidance in making difficult decisions and advocating for themselves. They did not seem to know what resources at MIT are available to them.

#### Graduate School:

Graduate school interviewing and site visits were raised as a concern by two of the eight students in the focus group. One mentioned that medical school interviewing dates could be negotiated, but there were so many that it affected academic commitments. The other student brought up the point that, even after being accepted, it is extremely important to go on site visits to make connections at the graduate school that will be helpful to their career. The *June 2011 Graduating Student Survey* suggests that graduate school interviewing might also be a problem at MIT in light of the fact that nearly 40 percent of baccalaureate and 12.4 percent of master’s graduates planned to attend graduate or professional school.

#### Themes:

The following are key themes that were gathered through the “Balancing Interviewing with Academics Survey” and focus group on the impact of interviewing on academic performance.

- Students struggle with prioritizing their academic commitments over their future employment/career as there is a fear about losing out on an opportunity. The competition at MIT is high and students do not want to pass up on an interview or risk seeming uninterested by requesting to reschedule an interview. The same holds true for individuals applying to graduate schools.

- Site visits, in addition to on-campus interviews, pose a challenge, in some cases more so due to the lengthy time commitment involved for traveling and overnight accommodations.
- Students feel that they do not have the power to negotiate with employers or graduate schools about scheduling conflicts or with professors in getting flexibility in turning in assignments or missing class.

**Recommendations:**

Based on the findings from the survey and focus group it is apparent that the further development of policies, resources and education for students, employers and faculty/administrators would be helpful in lessening this challenge for MIT undergraduate and graduate students. We would seek assistance from other administrative offices and departments as appropriate for the following recommended next steps:

1. Benchmarking:

Collect information from peer career offices on how these issues have been addressed and identify best practices for developing policies/guidelines for employers and students around interviewing and academics.

- a. Key schools that would be benchmarked with are those in the Ivy+ and other peer schools such as Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Princeton, Univ. of Pennsylvania, Yale, Stanford, Caltech, Carnegie Mellon and Purdue.

2. Student Education:

Develop information and resources to help students more effectively communicate and negotiate with employers and faculty on interviewing and academic conflicts, such as scheduling on-campus interviews, site visits and decision point deadlines. Examples include:

- a. Create an on-campus recruiting training or orientation for students available on the web.
- b. Provide in-person and online workshops on how to effectively communicate with employers in the application and interviewing process and how to advocate on their behalf. Provide case scenarios for students to review and reflect on and provide example responses for how to best handle typical scenarios.
- c. Outreach to students who have heavy internship/job interview schedules to provide them with added support and ensure that they are effectively balancing their interview schedule with their academic commitments.
- d. Develop educational materials and digital display messaging in the interview waiting space to educate students on policies and resources and offer advice to help them be successful in balancing interviewing with their academic commitments.

3. Employer Education:

Further develop on-campus recruiting policies and information for employers that inform employers of the challenges MIT students experience and provide suggested ways employers can successfully engage students in the interview process. Examples include:

- a. Web content for employers that include suggested timeframe for informing students of site visits
- b. Providing alternative interviewing methods if student has a class conflict such as video interviewing, etc.
- c. Contacting employers not in adherence of MIT recruiting policies to advocate on the behalf of students. If necessary an employer's access to on-campus recruiting resources and services may be suspended. Note that this is a continuation of GECD's current practice.

4. Faculty/Administrator Education:

Inform administrators, departments and faculty of the GECD on-campus recruiting and interviewing policies for employers and students. Examples include:

- a. Alert faculty of web content to refer students to if struggling with balancing academics with interviewing.
- b. Provide information on the interviewing experience to keep administrators and faculty informed of this aspect of student life. Ex. data, policies, student rights and responsibilities, etc.

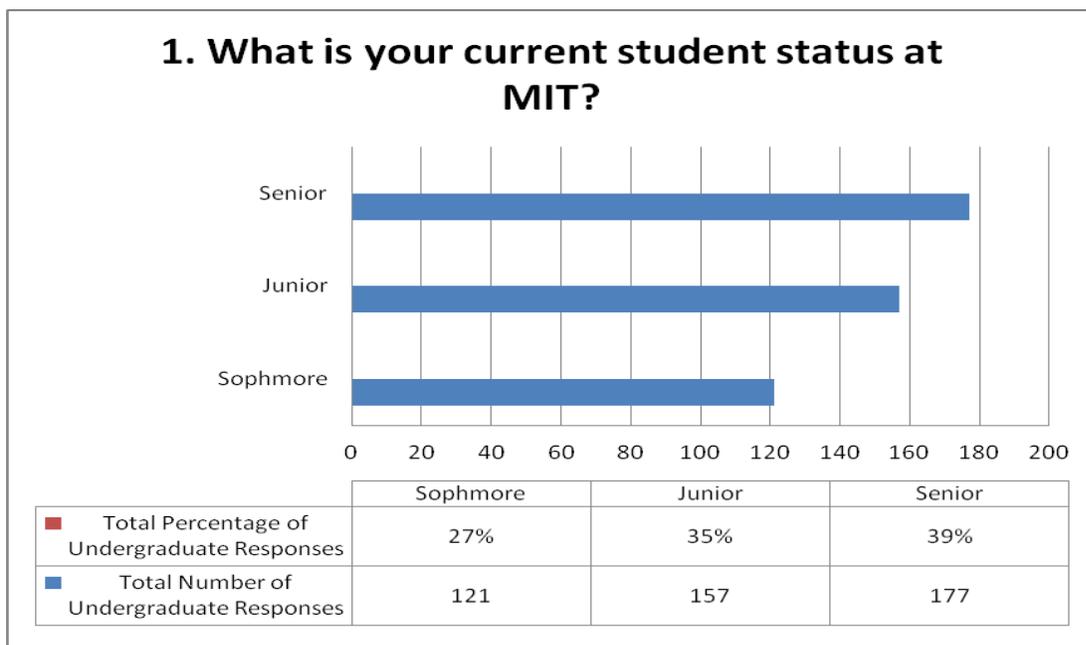
5. Parent/Family Education:

In acknowledgement of the role that parents and families play in the lives of Millennials, GECD and other administrative offices may also want to consider providing education on interviewing policies, student rights and responsibilities to help them better support and assist their student with balancing academics and interviewing.

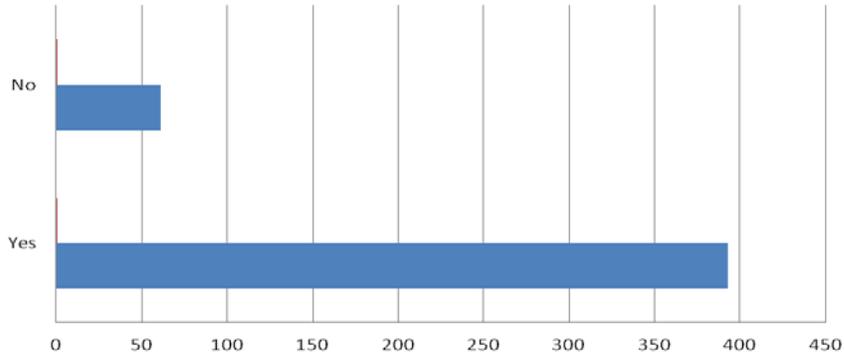
- a. Share information with parents about the interview process for graduate schools and jobs.
- b. Provide information to parents on how to help their student balance their academics with interviews and what to do if their student expresses concerns about the process.

**Global Education & Career Development (GECD)**  
**Balancing Academics with Interviewing Investigation Executive Summary**  
**APPENDIX**

**I. Balancing Academics with Interviewing Survey and Responses**

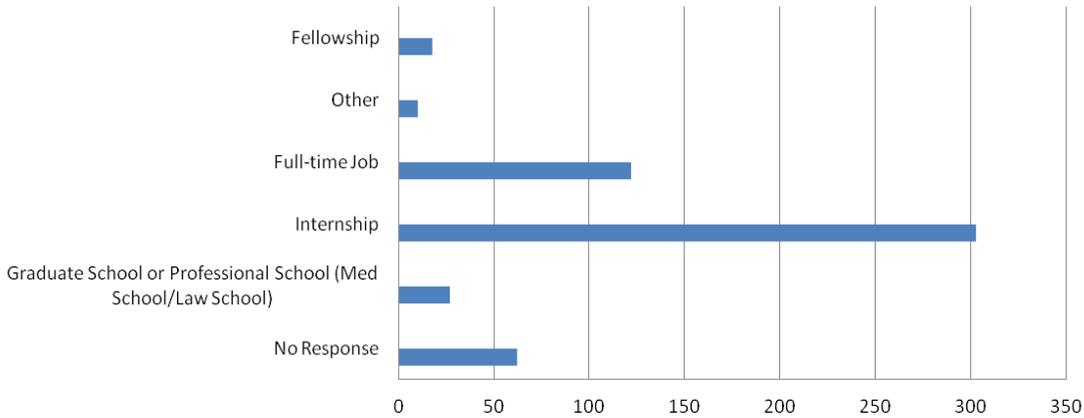


**2. Did you have an interview (Phone, In-Person either on-campus or off-campus, or via Skype/virtual) during the 2011-2012 Academic year?**



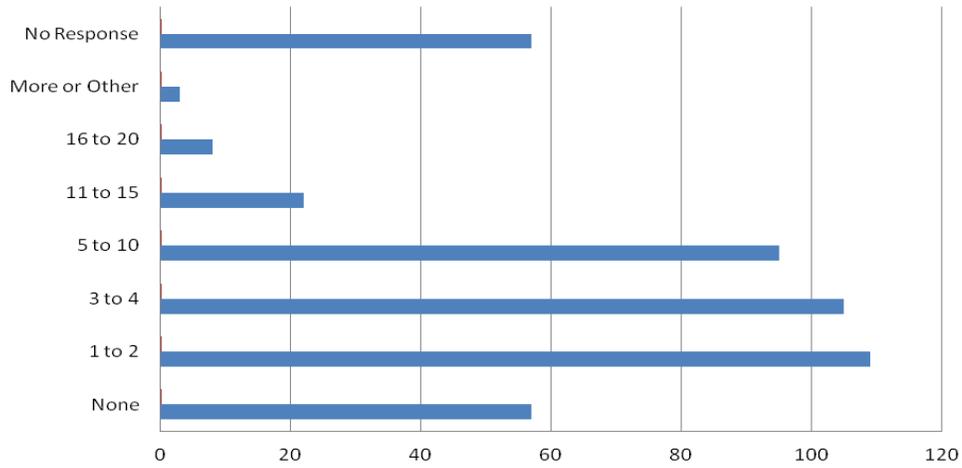
	Yes	No
■ Percentage of Responses	86%	13%
■ Number of Responses	393	61

**3. If yes, please select as many of the following interview type options that apply.**



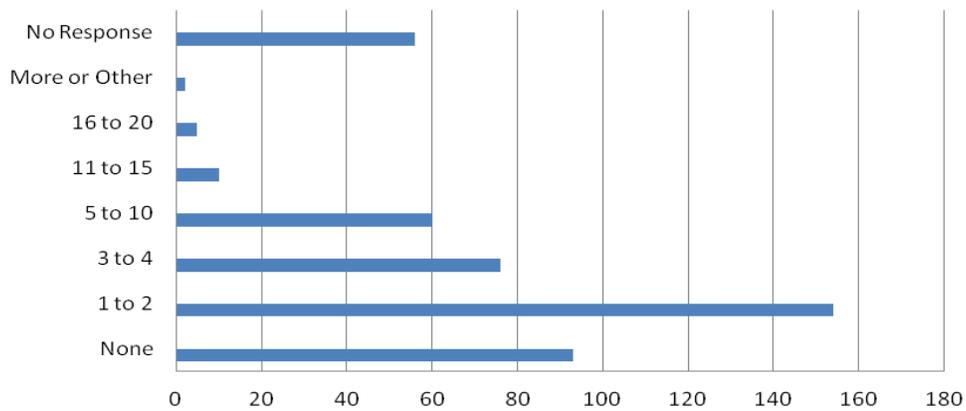
	No Response	Graduate School or Professional School (Med School/Law School)	Internship	Full-time Job	Other	Fellowship
■ Percentage of Responses	11%	5%	56%	23%	2%	3%
■ Number of Responses	62	27	303	122	10	18

#### 4. How many phone interviews did you have during the 2011-2012 Academic Year?



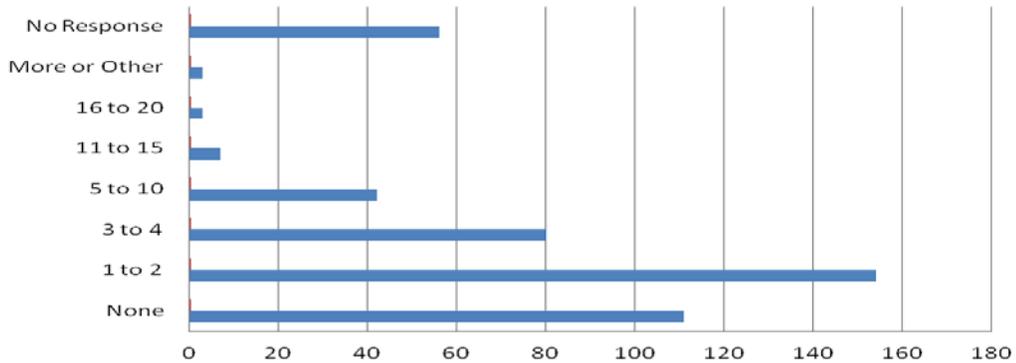
	None	1 to 2	3 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 15	16 to 20	More or Other	No Response
■ Percentage of Responses	13%	24%	23%	21%	5%	2%	1%	13%
■ Number of Responses	57	109	105	95	22	8	3	57

#### 5. How many On-campus interviews did you have during the 2011-2012 Academic Year?



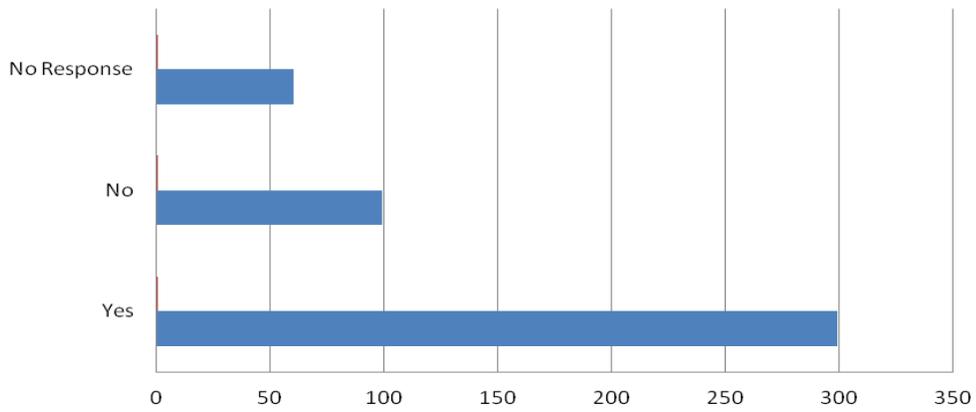
	None	1 to 2	3 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 15	16 to 20	More or Other	No Response
■ Percentage of Responses	20%	34%	17%	13%	2%	1%	0%	12%
■ Number of Responses	93	154	76	60	10	5	2	56

**6. How many Off-campus interviews did you have during the 2011-2012 Academic Year?**



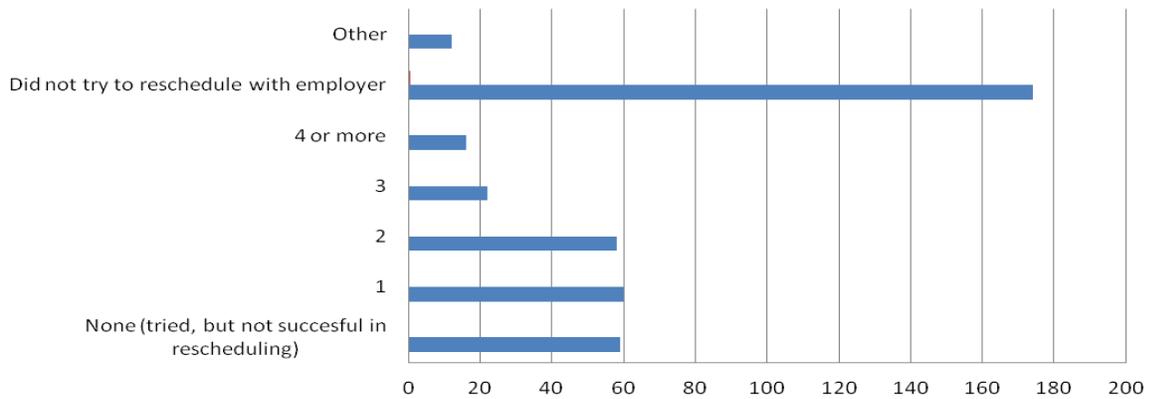
	None	1 to 2	3 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 15	16 to 20	More or Other	No Response
■ Percentage of Responses	24%	34%	18%	9%	2%	1%	1%	12%
■ Number of Responses	111	154	80	42	7	3	3	56

**7. During the 2011-2012 Academic Year, did you ever have an interview time conflict with your class schedule?**



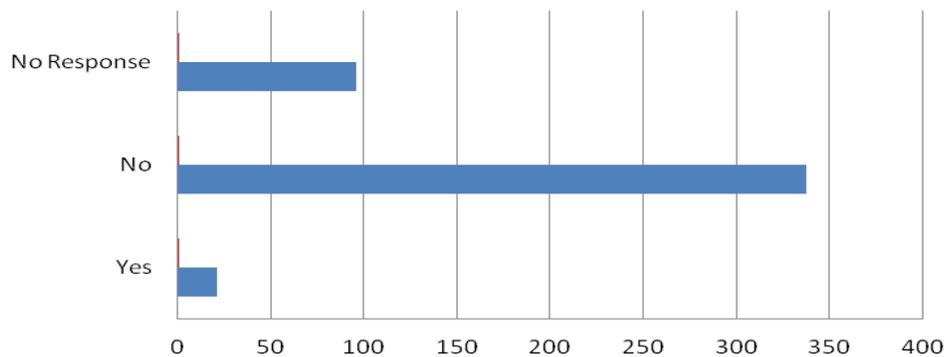
	Yes	No	No Response
■ Percentage of Responses	65%	22%	13%
■ Number of Responses	299	99	60

**8. How many times were you able to successfully schedule an alternate interview time-slot with the employer to accommodate your class schedule?**



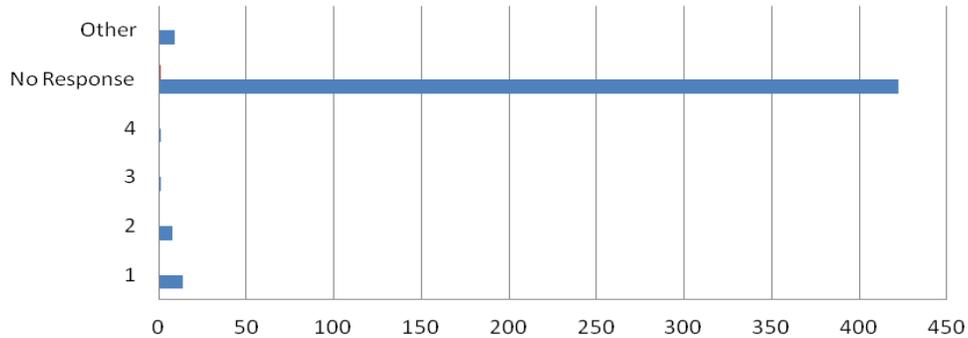
	None (tried, but not successful in rescheduling)	1	2	3	4 or more	Did not try to reschedule with employer	Other
■ Percentage of Responses	15%	15%	14%	5%	4%	43%	3%
■ Number of Responses	59	60	58	22	16	174	12

**9. If the interview time-slot conflicted with your class schedule, did you choose to decline the interview?**



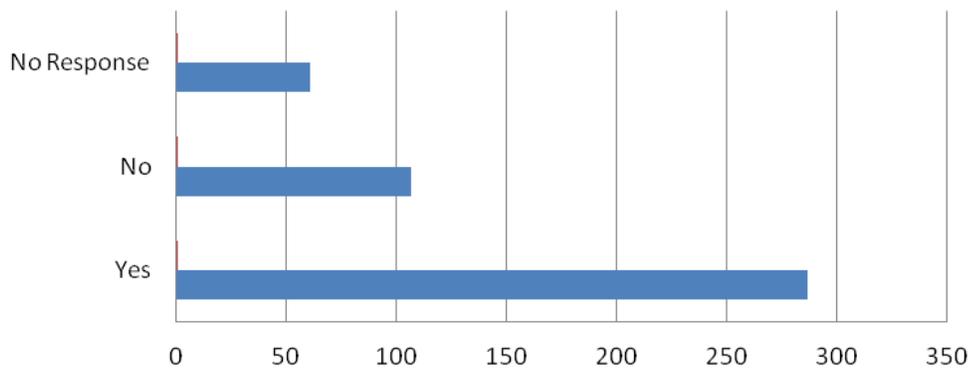
	Yes	No	No Response
■ Percentage of Responses	5%	74%	21%
■ Number of Responses	21	338	96

**10. If you answered "Yes," how many times did you decline to interview with employers for this reason?**



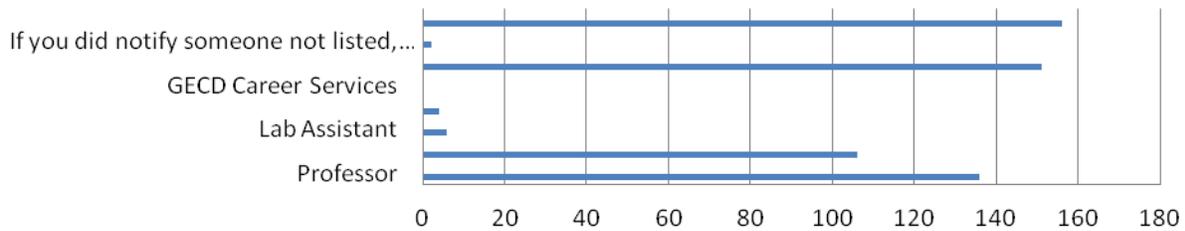
	1	2	3	4	No Response	Other
■ Percentage of Responses	3%	2%	0%	0%	93%	2%
■ Number of Responses	14	8	1	1	422	9

**11. During the 2011-2012 Academic Year, did you skip class for an On-campus or Off-Campus interview?**



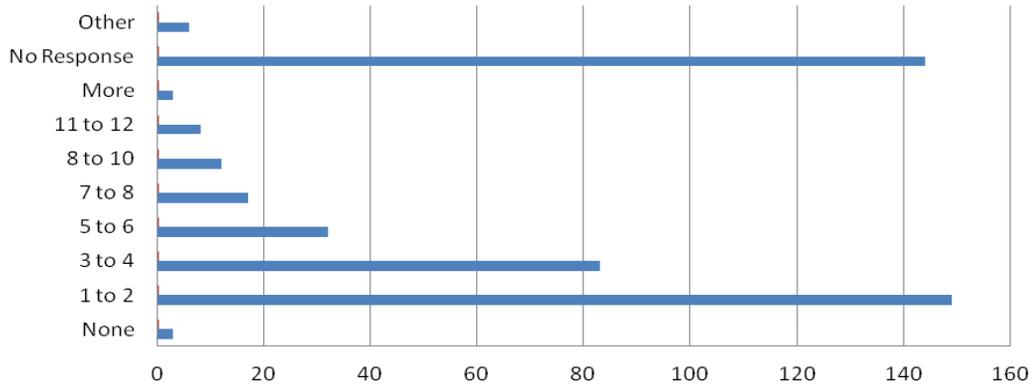
	Yes	No	No Response
■ Percentage of Responses	63%	24%	13%
■ Number of Responses	287	107	61

## 12. If you answered "Yes", who did you notify that you would be skipping a class?



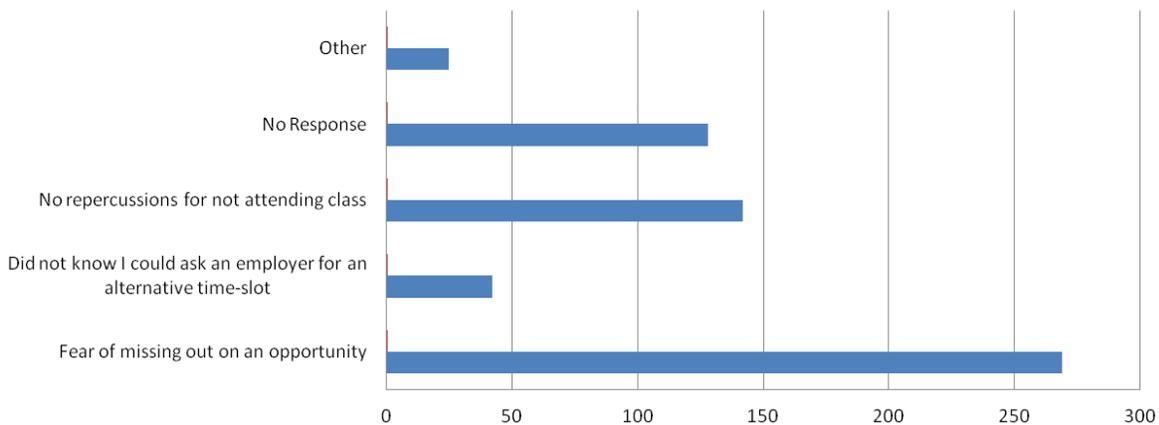
	Professor	TA	Lab Assistant	Student Support Services	GECD Career Services	I did not notify anyone	If you did notify someone not listed, please specify	No Response
■ Percentage of Responses	24%	19%	1%	1%	0%	27%	0%	28%
■ Number of Responses	136	106	6	4	0	151	2	156

## 13. How many times during the 2011-2012 Academic Year did you skip class to attend an interview?



	None	1 to 2	3 to 4	5 to 6	7 to 8	8 to 10	11 to 12	More	No Response	Other
■ Percentage of Responses	1%	33%	18%	7%	4%	3%	2%	1%	32%	1%
■ Number of Responses	3	149	83	32	17	12	8	3	144	6

## 14. What was the deciding factor to ultimately skip class?



	Fear of missing out on an opportunity	Did not know I could ask an employer for an alternative time-slot	No repercussions for not attending class	No Response	Other
■ Percentage of Responses	44%	7%	23%	21%	4%
■ Number of Responses	269	42	142	128	25

## II. Focus Group Information

### Focus group respondent demographics

Twelve students were invited to be in the focus group of which 8 participated:

- Sophomore in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (Course 6)
- Junior in Biology (Course 7) & Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (Course 6)
- Senior in Biology (Course 7) & Foreign Languages and Literatures (Course 21F)
- Senior in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (Course 6)
- Grad student in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (Course 6) & Management (Course 15)
- Grad student in Chemistry (Course 5)
- Grad student in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (Course 6)
- Grad student in Civil and Environmental Engineering (Course 1)

The focus group was held on Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup> from 12pm until 1pm in 24-115 and lunch was provided. As a token of appreciation, participants were given a \$10 gift card for attending the session.

Participation in the focus group was completely voluntary. No identifying information is used in our reporting.

### Focus group questions

1. How would you describe the classes that require class attendance versus the classes that do not? How often do you miss class in general? How often for interviews?
  - Don't want to miss smaller classes
  - Don't want to miss science and discussion heavy classes
  - Will miss if participation grades are voluntary
  - Will miss if participation is not required
  - Will miss if class is lecture heavy
  - HASS grades are participation-based, but you can negotiate with faculty
  - Go to class for quiz, then leave
  - Depends on how good the lecture is – if bad, then skip
  - Depends on how good the notes are – if good, then skip
  - Sometimes you are “able” to skip, but then the work builds up and you feel overwhelmed; so try to arrange interview close to the weekend so you have time to catch-up
  - Friend had to cancel an on-site interview because a science prof was going to fail him for not attending class
  - Grad school visit was paid for, so you don't want to miss it
  - Visit conflicted with humanities class, so student was told to drop the class; if missed four classes, her grade would drop 15 percent
  - Grad classes, attendance is up to you; undergrad is more required
  
2. In your opinion, how big of an issue is balancing interviewing with academics for you or your peers?
  - Unfortunate that most heavy interviewing periods coincide with heavy academics
  - Students don't know their rights
  - Interviewing and securing a job means a lot to students, and employers don't understand; can't put themselves in the students' shoes
  - Good if you can negotiate - Microsoft offered to fly student out to CA, but would be missing two exams, so student was able to negotiate a new interview date
  - Some students feel like they have to choose because employer doesn't care – employer has others they can interview
  - Med school interviews – dates are flexible but there are so many interviews that it makes it difficult to keep up with coursework. Even if you reschedule, just the fact that you're missing classes is difficult
  
3. Are there any particular companies or industries that balancing interviews with classes is particularly difficult?
  - Small engineering companies locally are more casual about scheduling dates

- Big companies depend on their HR department to schedule and make arrangements (buy tickets) so harder to negotiate
  - Consulting seems flexible
  - Start-ups can be very disorganized with limited job openings, so there's more pressure to accept because they might hire someone else
  - Student asked if they have lots of interviews, should she bring that up as a negotiation tool
4. How much notice do companies give for site visits? Have you been able to negotiate the timing of your site visits?
- Companies in NY may give less than one weeks' notice
  - Can sometimes negotiate to use Skype instead
  - Some see on-site as an opportunity for a vacation
  - Some give three days' notice, some give three hours' notice – student asked where do you draw the line; when are you able to negotiate
  - Expressed students need help with self-confidence to say no
  - Students asked what do you do about unsupportive professors
5. What type of accommodations have you heard professors offer to allow students to participate in interviews and make-up missed class?
- Prof allows you to hand in work late
  - Just communicating with prof that student would have to miss class for interviews up-front in the semester was helpful; prof gave a make-up assignment for missed time
  - Students don't think ahead to choose classes based on leniency; suggest that they should have worked with an advisor to help determine workload
  - TAs can give make up exams and a range of accommodations
  - Students should communicate well and use S3 as a last resort
  - Frustration that students are made to choose sometimes between grades and career
6. How can employers make the interview process easier for students?
- Be less pushy in terms of schedule
  - Be more selective for on-site
  - Let candidates know how many are interviewing and what the process is (ie. 7-step process?)
  - Have more options; 4-5 options and ask which works for you?
  - Prefer on-site rather than Skype because it can be more informative
  - Suggest we give employers dates that students are not in class (patriots day, spring break, etc) as good dates for on-site interviews
  - Felt having a fair on the first day of class was a bad idea
7. What more should GECD know about this issue that wasn't already asked that will help the office best support student success academically and in the interviewing process.
- Students feel weak

- Suggest posting student rights/policies; last minute prep and signs in ER waiting area
- Teach negotiation skills
- More training would ease some of the fear
- Teach students about where to go for help (ex. S3)
- Approach students a couple of semesters early about balancing their academics with interviews
- Students need last defense; where faculty can't argue (S3)
- Training to assist in communication with employers to leave options (not commit, but not decline)
- Practice interviews
- Talk to S3 to see about referrals with GECD – one student told by faculty that S3 cannot help her
- Email “your rights with interviews” once a semester with no silly graphics, nicely formatted and bulleted, not a link to a webpage