

Dr. Peterson

A Conversation Among Presidents 2014

Wednesday, April 2, 2014, Cannon Chapel, Emory University

FIRST PREFERENCE QUESTION

3. A growing concern in higher education is the perceived “corporatization” of American universities, whereby interests are being driven more by market forces than by the best interests of students, the intellectual advancement of the academy, and the university’s sense of community. As university leaders, how do you navigate the realities of institutional market forces with the core interests of a university education, which are not always reducible to, or even compatible with, such forces?

Answer:

- All of these forces can work together, and Georgia Tech is a prime example. The Institute was founded on a partnership with industry.
- Just held 4th annual InVenture Prize Competition. Students learn planning, collaboration, research, how a business plan works, presentation skills. First-place winners were a team of women who designed an inexpensive mobile solution to help nearly 2.6 billion people who don’t have access to hygienic bathrooms. InVenture gives students an experience like the kind lived by entrepreneurs in the marketplace. The students are impacting the world.
- Talk about innovation deficit and how we’re addressing it. Reaching out to K-12 to encourage them to consider STEM fields.
- EBB, partnership with BIO industry. Helping to develop solutions to grand challenges in convergent sciences. Partnership with Children’s Healthcare, and now the CDC.
- Importance of Georgia Tech’s partnerships with Midtown Alliance, the City of Atlanta, and the State of Georgia.
- Importance of Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts.
- Comments on importance of basic research, and how it many times becomes innovations (iPhone example — all components built in universities or labs, Steve

Jobs just put them together).

- Projects our students have undertaken to improve cities, the difference Tech graduates have made in the Atlanta skyline, Atlantic Station

Do you see this process of navigation becoming more difficult as education costs continue to rise and school debt becomes more of an issue for many?

- Options: G. Wayne Clough Georgia Tech Promise, Cooperative Education. Many times partnerships with business and industry result in more scholarships or opportunities for students to work with businesses while they're still in school, helping finance their education.

SECOND PREFERENCE

7. How do you feel that the trend in online education is going to affect university education and the social contract between universities and society? What do you feel are the greatest challenges and opportunities in online learning in higher education?

Answer:

- Impacting on-campus students—they're benefitting from new teaching methods learned during MOOCS, like the flipped classroom, integrating graphics, segmenting materials in smaller sections.
- There are things you gain through participating in a college community that can't be replaced online. MOOCS, or whatever they evolve to be, will not replace the on-campus experience.
- Those participating in MOOCS are usually farther away — one way to reach the world.
- However, it is interesting that sometimes you cannot predict the type of enrollment you have. OMS-CS, most from U.S. Predictably, they are older than the average student enrolled in the on-campus program.

- Story of girl in Pakistan studying online, being helped by classmates around the world.
- Benefit of learning something, even if they don't finish.
- Greatest challenges: Those doing well are the ones who are already motivated. Need to find a way to engage others. Need to find better ways to monetize.
- People still want interaction. They're doing that on their own, forming study groups and meeting at coffee shops.

THIRD PREFERENCE

5. When we consider the social contract between universities and society, we may be tempted to restrict our view to our local society -- such as the United States -- and not consider as much our responsibility as members of a shrinking, highly interdependent, global society. We now know more than ever how our actions affect those on the other side of the world, and how we ignore global issues at our own peril. Atlanta in particular is a city with close and historic ties to Africa and other parts of the world. What is the role of universities in relation to global issues and global citizenship? Do we have a social contract that extends out to the entire world?

Answer:

- Georgia Tech's global focus: Our reach extends well beyond the Atlanta campus — through our global locations, our faculty's teaching and research, and our nearly 140,000 alumni living and working around the world.
- Our students represent 115 different countries, and Georgia Tech offers more than 80 exchange programs and 30 faculty-led programs, sending 1,200-plus students abroad each year. More than 46% of Georgia Tech students have an international experience before graduating.
- Our presence around the world. Your comments about factors we should consider when offering programs in other parts of the world.
- Students working on global challenges—energy, water, sanitation, disaster relief,

logistics, technology, health.

- Africa-Atlanta
- France-Atlanta

Other Questions

1. The most influential agent in defining and driving the social contract is the Federal government with programs supporting research, scholarship, financial aid for students, and medical reimbursements. Our cities and business leaders also are influential in shaping the contract, usually to better impact local economic development. How is the university fulfilling its role to the government and private sectors, and how might it fulfill its role to those parts of society, and parts of the world, who are currently without a voice?

Answer:

- In a recent speech, AAU President Hunter Rawlings held up an iPhone and made the following observations: “It depends upon seven or eight fundamental scientific and technological breakthroughs, such as GPS, multi-touch screens, LCD Displays, lithium-ion batteries, and cellular networks. How many of those discoveries were made by Apple? None. They all came from research supported by the federal government and conducted in university and government laboratories. Apple makes a great product, but it depends upon government-sponsored science, much of it curiosity-driven, not economically-driven.”
- The U.S. has long been a global innovation leader, but an ***innovation deficit***, brought about by eroding federal investments in research and higher education, is jeopardizing that position.
- Countries such as China, Singapore and South Korea, meanwhile, have dramatically increased their own investments in these areas. During the past two decades, the rate of American research and development investments has been surpassed by those countries by two to four times.

- The U.S. has fallen to 12th among developed countries in the share of young adults who hold college degrees.
- Georgia Tech's Semester in the City program requires students to examine how one neighborhood works and how it could work better. Students then work with residents to develop plans for and, they hope, enact change in the community. There have been challenges, but there have been successes, too. A mentoring program designed by another student has continued for years at the local Boys and Girls Club.
- The Georgia Tech Promise program puts a Georgia Tech education within reach of every qualified Georgia resident, regardless of family income. More than 250 students, with an average family income of \$21,000 per year, are currently participating in the program.

2. How do you react to Pres. Obama's call for "rating" the value of American colleges and universities according to the two criteria of student accessibility and student success? What should the contract expectations be around support for students and their post-graduation success?

(picked up points from last 2 pages of AAU talking points)

Answer:

- As an Association of American Universities (AAU) member, Georgia Tech believes in working with its regional accreditors to provide evidence of student success in three key domains: the student learning experience, evaluation of student academic performance, and post-graduation outcomes.
- Institutions should determine the methods and instruments used to measure progress in those three areas as articulated in the "Principles for Effective Assessment of Student Achievement." That document has been endorsed by the seven regional accreditors and the six national presidential higher-education associations.

4. John Dewey wrote, "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society." He was talking about the need for an education of both "knowledge and character" -- in the words of Martin Luther King Jr., -- or an education of both "heart and mind" -- in the words of H.H. the Dalai Lama. Nevertheless, although most universities actively promote these ideals, the educational focus remains overwhelmingly on academic achievement.

Now that research is increasingly showing us the benefits to mind and body of the inner qualities of mindfulness, compassion, empathy, gratitude, forgiveness and self-discipline, if the university were to focus more on educating students in these skills such that they become global citizens who use their education to contribute to society, would that provide a route to reinvigorate the social contract between the university and society?

Answer:

- Our students represent 115 different countries, and Georgia Tech offers more than 80 exchange programs and 30 faculty-led programs, sending 1,200-plus students abroad each year. Today, more than 46 percent of Georgia Tech students have an international experience by graduation. They have many opportunities to see the world from other people's perspective.
- At Georgia Tech, we are preparing students to be innovators and leaders. The skills they learn can be transferred to help mankind.
- PneumoniaCheck, a device created by engineers at Georgia Tech, may help prevent thousands of people from dying of pneumonia each year. Pneumonia, an inflammation of the lungs, kills about 2.4 million people each year. The problem is particularly devastating in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Eastern Mediterranean, where a child dies of pneumonia every 15 seconds.

- Most students arrive at college with the idea that they want to change the world. We need to empower them to make that dream a reality.
- A robust support for the arts, known as Arts@Tech, is helping students cultivate creative and analytical talents. This spring Georgia Tech held its third annual Clough Art Crawl, transforming one of our main academic buildings into an art gallery featuring poetry, photography, painting, film, music performances, and sculptures by undergraduate and graduate students.

6. The world has changed in many ways since the development and rise of the first universities, yet many of the core aspects of universities have remained the same over time. As university leaders, you are in a unique position to push against institutional inertia if and when such a push is necessary. What are the most important shifts you feel that universities should make in order to maintain or even advance their social contract given the changes in society and in our world today?

Answer:

- While STEM education is at the core of Georgia Tech's mission, we need to be constantly mindful of the importance of liberal arts as well if we're to continue producing the kind of well-rounded students with a "big picture" perspective that we all want.
- Georgia Tech encourages and celebrates its more than 400 student organizations, in which our students can indulge their passions in such wide-ranging activities as a cappella singing, aviation, fencing, and politics.
- Universities can encourage students to get involved in the world around them and think beyond the campus boundaries.
- We can help instill values and attitudes that prompt students to reach out and meet the needs of society. A good example of this at Georgia Tech is the Campus Kitchen project, in which students take food donated by Georgia Tech dining halls, prepare it, and donate it to local shelters in Atlanta.

- Georgia Tech takes great pride in our partnerships with government and industry to lure new businesses to our city, state, and region.