Dr. Peterson
Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts Founders Day
Thursday, March 13, 2014

- In 2010, about a year after I arrived at Georgia Tech, we celebrated the Institute's 125th anniversary. Actually, the Georgia School of Technology as it was then known didn't formally open its doors to students until three years later. Liberal arts were a part of Georgia Tech since Day 1.

- The opening sentence in "Engineering the New South" states "The Georgia School of Technology that first opened its doors to students in October 1888 was an institutional response to far-reaching social, cultural, and economic changes."

- Those changes have continued for more than a century, and will continue. A strategic component of the way we continue to prepare the leaders and innovators that society needs is the integration of liberal arts into not just our curriculum, but also our student life, our research, and our community outreach.

- The printed prospectus in 1888 included six academic subjects in addition to a shop course: mathematics, physics, chemistry, mechanics, drawing, and English.

- It didn't take long for English to expand. In 1908 the English department began teaching economic theory, general history, political economy, and physical geography. It has continued to expand. Many of the professors and programs have earned national recognition.

- Distinguished Ivan Allen College faculty break boundaries – and move forward the extraordinary interdisciplinary approach for which Georgia Tech is known.

- Ivan Allen College is making a significant contribution to the multi-disciplinary research and innovation that considers the human and social dimension of problem solving.

- Georgia Tech's Ivan Allen College is known for distinctive research and curricula bridging humanities, social sciences, and the technical disciplines.

- Liberal arts are vital to the education of all Georgia Tech students. They develop skills in critical thinking and analysis, writing and communications, and shaping broad and global perspectives.

- The humanities and social sciences disciplines are important in their own right.

- As one would expect for a Georgia Tech endeavor, the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts is an innovator in education and research in the social sciences and humanities and as early as the 1960s was already developing an approach that is distinctively Georgia Tech – using engineering, science, computing and technology as a lens on liberal arts.

- One example is the importance of connecting policy and technology in business, government and the community. Students are prepared to do that through the School of Public Policy.

- The Sam Nunn School of International Affairs strives to connect learning and experience through its interdisciplinary degree programs and policy-relevant research.

- Ivan Allen College's impact is far-reaching.

- Just this week Ken Knoespel received an honorary degree from the University of Umeå in Sweden recognizing his ongoing engagement with Swedish institutions of higher learning.

- Ivan Allen College had a strategic role in the invitation to Georgia Tech to join the prestigious Association of American Universities (AAU) in 2010. Research examining the ways in which scientific exploration affects public policy was a key factor in this important landmark for Georgia Tech.

- And of course, Ivan Allen College is the flag bearer for the Allen legacy of ethical, socially conscience, and social responsible actions.

- Congratulations on 125 years of liberal arts at Georgia Tech. Georgia Tech would not be where it is today without the legacy and ongoing pursuit of excellence of the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts.