

Dr. Peterson**Mobile Veterans Center**

10:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 5, 2014, Tech Walkway

- Good morning. We are honored to have our special guests from the Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as some of our veterans on campus. While Atlanta is a major metropolitan area and veterans here have convenient access to veterans services, the more rural areas of the state of Georgia do not. The Department of Veterans Affairs Mobile Vet Centers extend the reach of the Vet Center services to thousands of others.
- Our armed forces not only protect our way of life, but also help defend those who are unable to do so themselves. They carry this burden so we may all pursue our shared values of liberty, justice, and self-determination. This is a debt that cannot be repaid.
- At Georgia Tech we have close to 300 veterans among our faculty and staff. About 275 students are enrolled in our ROTC programs, and 120 students are veterans.
- Veterans have had a significant impact on Georgia Tech throughout our history. Our curriculum changed dramatically during World War II, and after the war there was a huge influx of veterans to the campus, largely due to the GI Bill. To meet the needs of an expected doubling of enrollment by the late 1940's, we undertook a massive campus expansion.
- At the same time, Tech experienced an increase in research, transforming the Engineering Experiment Station. In 1944 Georgia Tech became the first public school in the South to create a Veterans Guidance Center to assist our servicemen and women in everything from entrance exams to counseling.
- Diversity is an important tenet here at Tech and that includes diversity of life experiences. Our veterans contribute to that diversity in many ways. With an average age of 27 for our veteran undergraduates and 34 for graduate students, they are typically a bit older than our traditional students. They bring a rich background of life and work experiences to our campus that can enhance not only their education, but also enrich the educational experience of their colleagues.

- Numerous times through the years Tech faculty, staff, and students have come together to create and enhance programs, and to bridge understanding of veterans. We're still doing that. Last spring, the Division of Student Affairs established a Veterans Resource Center to serve Georgia Tech's growing veteran population and in September, Dr. David Ross, a 20-year Air Force veteran with a commitment to veterans' affairs, came on board as its first director.
- Georgia Tech is the second-biggest recipient of Department of Defense research funds (after Johns Hopkins).
- We have an active Military Affinity Group.
- We have a new Veterans Education Training and Transition program through Georgia Tech Professional Education.
- Our cutting-edge research works on problems such as traumatic brain injury, regenerative medicine/tissue engineering for wounded service members/veterans, prosthetics and orthotics and countless innovations for virtually all parts of the military.
- We will continue to partner in research, education, and community outreach.