

Dr. Peterson
New Faculty Welcome

Friday, Aug. 10, 2012

Georgia Tech is fortunate to have some of the brightest and best-qualified students in the world, and we have an obligation to create an environment where they can succeed and reach their full potential. We can enrich the student experience by taking advantage of new technologies and instructional methods, while creating opportunities for increased student/faculty interaction.

Fall 2012 marks the beginning of the third year in the implementation of Georgia Tech's 25-year Strategic Plan, Designing the Future. Faculty, staff, and students have come together to bring the plan to life in 16 strategic initiatives, along with many other short- and long-term goals throughout the Institute. Woven throughout our plan is the priority of teaching, and a commitment to infuse innovation in the university's educational experience. The Strategic Plan outlined five overarching goals, with the first to "Be among the most highly respected, technology-focused learning institutions in the world." Included in that goal are strategies to enrich the student experience and innovate in instruction methods, course design, and curricula.

One of the most visible ways we have transformed undergraduate education is through the opening of the Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons. Since it first opened, it has had millions of student visits, with 12,000 student visits each day. Undergraduate students especially are making the building their academic home. They talk about its central location, its "crispness," the openness of the space, and its flexibility in classroom and common area arrangements. Over the first two semesters, there were over 400 undergraduate sections taught in the building. Faculty offering graduate courses showed a strong interest to teach in Clough Commons as well, and the facility was able to accommodate 47 graduate courses, serving almost 1,000 graduate students. Clough Commons offers resources students need for learning and increased

opportunities for collaborative learning and interaction with faculty. The building is symbolic of a new direction in undergraduate education.

Georgia Tech is blessed with some of the brightest and best-qualified students in the world, and we have an obligation to create an environment where they can succeed and reach their full potential. We're taking steps to enrich educational opportunities, including more flexibility in the curriculum, new learning methods, along with programs like study abroad and our cooperative education program, which turns 100 this year. We have also reorganized the Office of the Provost, creating a flatter organization focused on the needs of students and faculty. We now have a vice provost for undergraduate education, as well as one for graduate education.

I encourage you to take full advantage of Georgia Tech's Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL), a valuable resource for faculty, Georgia Tech celebrates excellent and effective teaching, and we are committed to providing you with the resources that you and your students need.