

## Notes from the President

Georgia Institute of Technology

G.P. "Bud" Peterson, President

Supporting the Georgia Tech Family

12/04/18

<https://youtu.be/sFoB4oVAGk4>

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff:

Over the past few weeks, Georgia Tech has lost three members of our community. I know that I speak for the entire Institute when I offer our condolences to the families of the students we have lost who undoubtedly are struggling with the grief, shock and utter anguish stemming from this tragic news.

Losing a student is, by far, the most heart-wrenching occurrence I have experienced in my 40-plus years in higher education administration. As the father of four, including two Georgia Tech graduates, I feel this pain on an even more personal level. No family is immune to the challenges that life brings. I share with you the agony that so many in our community feel. In reality, we are like a family, our Georgia Tech family – and families watch out for and take care of each other.

Here at Tech, our students, faculty, and administrators are committed to strengthening the culture, with the goal being that no one should have to experience the anguish associated with these types of events. At times such as this, it might ring hollow to say that we have and are continuing to take steps to provide support to vulnerable students who are weighed down by the very real demands of navigating the challenges of life here at Georgia Tech. But the reality is that we have implemented a number of programs over the past few years – examples include a resource center, a 24-hour phone consultation line, enhanced counseling services, our Tech Ends Suicide Together program, and suicide prevention gatekeeper training, QPR. However, no program or service can serve as a complete antidote to the hopelessness that some feel.

Along with our pledge of continued support to all in our community, I am now asking for your help. We are a large community, with more than 26,000 students on the Atlanta campus and more than 8,800 faculty and staff. And while in this age of technology we are comfortable with the concept of "alone together" in our studies and research, it does not work when people need emotional support, someone to help them, to listen or to point them to the many resources available to them.

Tomorrow, Dec. 5, is Reading Day. We also are designating it "Open Door Day." Our faculty, the counseling center, and other offices are all opening their doors to students who want to talk. Counselors will also be available to meet with students in a number of locations around campus. In addition, there are multiple ways that students can talk or take a few minutes to relax, with pet therapy, a movie, or informal conversations. To those of you who are feeling the pressures of finals or other personal challenges, please know that you are not alone. We're here for you.

As an additional resource for our community, I am including a link to a Distressed Students Guide webpage provided by our counselors: [counseling.gatech.edu/content/distressed-students-guide](https://counseling.gatech.edu/content/distressed-students-guide).

While we as a university have invested in a breadth of resources, our people are our greatest resource. Please take care of yourselves and each other, and know that we care. That is the power of family; that is the power we have as a community here at Tech.

Sincerely,  
G.P. "Bud" Peterson  
President