

Notes from the President

Georgia Institute of Technology

G.P. “Bud” Peterson, President

Spring Update: Looking Ahead on A Path Forward — Together

04/18/18

As we enter the final stretch of our academic year, I want to take the opportunity to bring the campus up to date with regard to our progress on *A Path Forward — Together*, share some of the additional progress we have made in addressing concerns, and explain the implementation process that we have put in place for summer and beyond.

Georgia Tech has taken a number of positive steps to address the concerns outlined in the action team reports, yet we recognize there is still more to be done. In addition to the **progress I shared with campus in December**, I’m pleased to report that we have continued to strengthen our support of students in the following ways:

- Using funds from the **joint allocation provided by the Student Government Association and the Georgia Tech administration**, we have approved multiple proposals that will improve the effectiveness of our Counseling Center through the incorporation of technology. These tools will not only help our students self-monitor their progress, but also build the communication skills that can help each of us to engage in complex conversations about health issues.
- The **Peer Coaching Program**, an alternative to counseling that trains Tech students to provide individual support to their fellow peers, has been expanded, enhanced and more robustly communicated to the student community.
- As part of our effort to foster a welcoming and inclusive culture, we will host a new annual ceremony for our incoming graduate students, introducing them to the history and traditions of Georgia Tech while making connections with fellow graduate students.
- Space for an expanded **LGBTQIA Resource Center** in the Smithgall Student Services Building has been identified and construction will begin this summer. A search for an additional staff member for the center has been initiated.
- Searches to fill the vacant director positions in both the Counseling Center and the Disability Services office are in their final stages and the new directors are expected to be announced very soon.
- We have updated **EthicsPoint** — our independent, anonymous reporting system — to include reports of discrimination, sexual misconduct or other Student Code of Conduct violations.
- The **Office of Health & Well-Being and the Division of Student Life have come together to host three surveys** — a well-being assessment, one on mental health needs and service use, and one on prescription drug use — in order to make informed decisions about where to focus our resources.
- Health & Well-Being and Student Life have formed a working group to streamline, coordinate and enhance the intake procedures for student patients so students do not have to go through separate processes to be seen by counselors and psychiatrists.
- An audit is currently underway to determine where existing facilities can be modified to increase the number of accessible gender-neutral facilities across campus. This is already part of our planning with all new construction.

Secondly, you may recall a **March update** on the status of our Advisory Group, which has been working steadily this semester to sort more than 180 recommendations across three reports, consolidating them into a set of 55 objectives for implementation. The objectives have been reviewed by the Action Team co-chairs, to ensure the original intent of their recommendations remains intact.

Broadly speaking, these objectives fall into three clusters: Academics, Health and Well-Being, and Student and Community Life. To lead the implementation phase, I've asked the following members of the faculty and staff to serve as executive sponsors:

- **Academics:** Bonnie Ferri, vice provost for Graduate Education and Faculty Development, and Colin Potts, vice provost for Undergraduate Education;
- **Health and Well-Being:** John Stein, vice president for Student Life and Dean of Students, and Paul Strouts, vice president for Campus Services; and
- **Student and Community Life:** Lindsay Bryant, senior director of the Student Center, and Gerome Stephens, associate dean and director of Student Engagement.

Collectively, they will direct the process for putting the objectives into practice. We know some will be completed relatively quickly, while others will take time to implement. We have asked the Path Forward Advisory Group to assist in tracking the progress on the objectives and serve as a resource to help maintain momentum.

This has been a challenging year for our campus community, and we will not forget the tragedy that precipitated this period of self-reflection and action. Meeting these objectives will help address the community needs, but we can and will do a better job of anticipating what our students need to succeed, both during their time on campus and post-graduation. I have been encouraged by the level of engagement from people from all across the Institute who are committed to positive, productive change, and I want to thank them for their effort. Together, we will succeed in fulfilling the Institute's commitment to an inclusive, safe, and healthy community.