

Notes from the President

Something Old, Something New

08/18/2009

Some things at Georgia Tech never change. Since my arrival in April, I've learned that the letter "T" has been, and will always be, a highly sought-after token of school spirit, that Junior's Grill serves some of the South's best chicken fingers, and that you can set your watch by the whistle's daily blasts. Some things never change – but as I begin my first fall semester at Georgia Tech, I am eager to experience the traditions that await me in the coming months. I am excited to experience my first Georgia Tech football game on September 5 as our nationally ranked Yellow Jackets face Jacksonville State University. I can only imagine the proud display of community and tradition that awaits me at my first Team Buzz community service day. I also hear there is a tricycle race on campus – the Mini 500 – and it is a "must see" event.

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The fall semester also brings my official Investiture as Georgia Tech's 11th president and the kick-off of the Institute's strategic planning initiative. Each of you is invited to join in the festivities, beginning with the Investiture Ceremony in Alexander Memorial Coliseum on September 3 at 11:00 a.m. Following the Investiture, the campus community is invited to engage in the first public conversation on the strategic vision for Georgia Tech. I hope this day will mark not only a first for the Institute, but also a first for you, as we ask ourselves, "What do we want Georgia Tech to look like in 25 years?"

The Georgia Tech that I see today is a remarkable place where traditions and tenacity meet innovation and independent thought. A place where learning does not just mean "making the grade" in class, but also asking difficult questions formed from the human experience and relentlessly seeking answers through technology. It is a place where life outside the classroom is just as important to learning as the time you spend in class; where you can grow from a Georgia Tech student into a globally minded graduate by participating in one of approximately 70 study abroad programs. The Georgia Tech of today is, in fact, both a university and a research institute – a place where we are all working together to answer some of the world's most challenging questions. You are a part of that tradition. You work and study side by side with some of the world's most renowned scholars. You examine today's accepted wisdom and find yourself on a trajectory to solve problems we've yet to define.

If you, like me, are experiencing your first fall semester at Georgia Tech, I encourage you to reach out to your faculty and peers to learn something new about the Institute and yourself. It's important for you to ask yourself what you want to accomplish while you are at Georgia Tech besides a degree. There are more than 400 student organizations to help you explore your interests as well as a committed group of faculty and staff who care about seeing you succeed. There are unlimited opportunities waiting for you – get started!

If you are a returning student, I encourage you to take a closer look at the Georgia Tech you think you know. You will undoubtedly see the Tech Tower standing tall, the comings and goings of the campus community at the sound of the whistle, and the unmistakable white and gold "GT" on many well-worn t-shirts. But, if you take a moment to examine your Tech experience beyond the obvious, you may realize there are a few "firsts" you have to stumble upon. Have you ever stopped after class to speak with your professor just to get to know her? Have you wondered what Georgia Tech is doing in countries such as India, China, Ireland, France, and Columbia? Have you ever

asked yourself what it means to be successful? Have you ever thought about what makes you, as a Georgia Tech student, different from every other college student in the world?

I certainly cannot answer any of these questions for you. But, I can attest to the fact that Georgia Tech is the place to be if you have questions, because I am confident that if you look closely enough, you will find a community of faculty and staff who sincerely want to help you search for answers. I look forward to learning more about each of you as the entire Georgia Tech community participates in the strategic planning process. Innovation begins when we, for the first time, see something familiar through a new set of eyes. Together we will envision a future for the Tech we've all come to know.

See you September 3.

Regards,
G. P. "Bud" Peterson
President, Georgia Tech