Update from Georgia Tech President Ángel Cabrera
February 2025

From the Desk of the President

Georgia Tech

President Cabrera and a delegation of Institute leaders recently traveled to South Korea for a weeklong visit with some of Georgia Tech's corporate partners, including Hyundai Motor Group.

Dear Friends:

A few weeks ago, I traveled to South Korea with some colleagues to visit our partners at Hyundai Motor Group. We met with leadership, toured industrial and research facilities, and explored opportunities for further collaboration on advanced technology and manufacturing that could revolutionize mobility and the automotive industry. The visit left me extremely excited for the future of our state's economy in the global marketplace and proud of Georgia Tech's role in it.

Korean investments in Georgia have been booming for years and show no signs of slowing. New IONIQ 5s started rolling off the lines last fall at Metaplant America, Hyundai's $7.6 billion electric vehicle (EV) factory in Bryan County near Savannah. Right next to this facility, Hyundai is also building a $4.3 billion EV battery factory in partnership with fellow Korean company LG Energy Solution. Together, these two ventures are expected to create more than 8,500 jobs. Up in Bartow County, Hyundai is working with another Korean manufacturer, SK On, to build a major $5 billion battery plant that is scheduled to start production later this year and create another 3,500 jobs. With an investment of $2.6 billion, SK On opened two of its own battery factories in Commerce a couple of years ago, which have since hired more than 3,000 workers.

Georgia has much to offer global companies: a great business climate, a world-class port and airport, an impressive pipeline of talent coming out of our colleges and universities, and a state economic development team and governor who can sell our state and respond to investors' needs. I'm proud that Georgia Tech plays a strategic role in securing these investments. The research and talent we produce add a compelling argument for companies to invest in our state. And when they do, those investments bring great opportunity to our state — and to the Institute.

For example, in 2023, we signed a 20-year collaborative agreement with Hyundai, which led not only to the naming of our football field but also to a dozen joint research projects in EVs and the future of mobility. This partnership provides our faculty with valuable resources, gives our students direct access to employment opportunities, and leads to technological breakthroughs that benefit everyone. Plans are now in the works to welcome Hyundai engineers to our Advanced Pilot Manufacturing Facility and to start a new batch of collaborative research projects in batteries, electronics, robotics, autonomous systems, and more.

Hyundai is not alone. Absolics, a subsidiary of SK On, opened the first phase of a $600 million semiconductor plant in Covington based on a glass substrate technology developed by Georgia Tech's 3D Packaging Research Center, the world's leader in this space. Absolics' investment both leverages our research enterprise and enhances it through continuing joint projects.

While in Seoul, we also visited Doosan Enerbility, a major energy equipment manufacturer, and Samsung — two other Korean corporate partners who have worked with us to develop hydrogen turbines and advanced software — as well as Hanwha Qcells, one of the world's leading solar cell manufacturers. Qcells operates a 300,000-square-foot plant in Dalton, making Georgia the home of the largest solar panel factory in the world outside of China, and the company just opened a new $2.5 billion integrated supply chain facility in nearby Cartersville that produces everything from ingots and wafers to fully assembled panels. During our meeting with Qcells, we discussed new avenues for collaboration — and as I write this, colleagues at the Georgia Tech Research Institute just packaged five perovskite-based solar cells provided by QCells for inclusion aboard the **Intuitive Machines Nova-C lander** headed to the moon in October.

It won't surprise you to know that recent changes in federal policy and rules around research grants are causing much consternation and uncertainty among our nation's leading research universities, and Georgia Tech is no exception. It is indeed difficult to make investments if you don't know what the rules will be in the future and whether the federal government will cover its share of the expenses required to conduct cutting-edge research.

Yet, I'm confident and hopeful about our growing role in America's research and innovation enterprise. No matter how policies change, America will always need to be at the forefront of new technology and manufacturing, and Georgia Tech's size, breadth, and depth across the most promising fields will continue to make us a strategic asset for our nation.

Our readiness to work with federal agencies on research of strategic value and to partner with industry to deploy it and create economic advantage is at the heart of our work, our impact, and our history. The Institute was founded in 1885 with the specific purpose of helping to modernize and industrialize the economy of the South. Almost a century and a half later, we're still at it, working hard to make not only our state, but also our nation, more competitive.

Thank you for all you do to make this work possible.

In Progress and Service,

María Corina Machado Receives Ivan Allen Jr. Prize

Georgia Tech awarded the 2025 Ivan Allen Jr. Prize for Social Courage to María Corina Machado, the Venezuelan political leader and human rights activist. Though Machado remains in hiding and is unable to leave the country, she was able to join the ceremony virtually, and her children, Ana Corina Sosa and Ricardo, accepted the award on her behalf.

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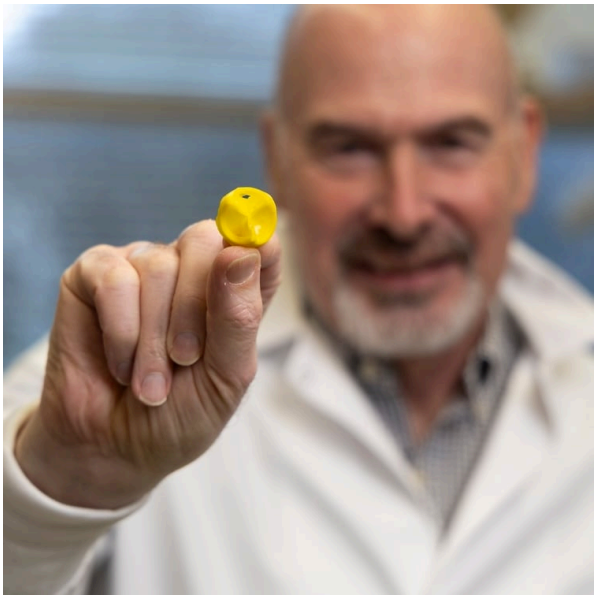

New Implant Helps Patients Regenerate Their Own Heart Valves

A team at Georgia Tech has developed a first-of-its-kind, 3D-printed heart valve that absorbs into the body permanently and could help millions of people regenerate their own heart valves. Made to fit an individual patient's anatomy, the device could eliminate the need for future valve replacement surgeries and may represent a groundbreaking shift in heart valve care.

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Atlanta United's Efraín Morales Balances Soccer and Studies

Like many kids, Morales grew up with a dream of becoming a professional athlete. As a Suwanee, Georgia, native, he also dreamed of attending Georgia Tech. Now, he does both.

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Thank the Backstreet Boys: A Teacher's Journey to Education Research

If not for the Backstreet Boys, Jeonghyun "Jonna" Lee might not be a researcher at Georgia Tech. Follow her path from teaching English in Seoul to leading a research team in the College of Lifetime Learning.

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Facchetti Elected to the National Academy of Engineering

Antonio Facchetti, professor and Hightower Chair in the School of Materials Science and Engineering, was elected to the 2025 class of the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) in recognition of his contributions to commercially viable electronics. Election to the NAE is among the top professional honors for engineers.

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Lieuwen Named Executive Vice President for Research

Following a nationwide search, Georgia Tech has named Timothy Lieuwen the executive vice president for Research (EVPR). A Regents' Professor and the David S. Lewis Jr. Chair in the Daniel Guggenheim School of Aerospace Engineering, Lieuwen has spent more than 25 years at the Institute and has served as interim EVPR since September 2024.

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Manufacturing the Workforce of the Future

Georgia Tech's Advanced Manufacturing Pilot Facility functions as a teaching laboratory, technology test bed, and workforce development space for manufacturing innovations. Since 2022, the facility has improved the manufacturing process at all parts of the talent pipeline — from giving corporate researchers space to test and adopt technologies to training and upskilling employees.

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