

Who: Executive Round Table
Executive Round Table is made up of 50 percent students, 25 percent faculty
executives dedicated to high standards of leadership and ethics.”

When: Thursday, January 16 in the Gordy Ballroom at Wardlaw

Schedule: 6:00 p.m. to 6:45 Social
6:45 p.m. to 7:30 Dinner and ERT president’s remarks
7:30 p.m. to 7:50 Keynote speaker
7:50 p.m. to 8:15 Round Table discussion
8:15 p.m. to 8:30 Discussion and questions

Note: When I talked to the ERT dinner program chair, he stressed that the speake

Good evening. It is a pleasure to meet and speak with the members of the Executive Round Table. Each year I look forward to speaking to your group because I believe Executive Round Table to be one of the most valuable organizations at Tech. There are few campus entities devoted to preparing students for future leadership. Even fewer that collaborate with both industry and faculty to achieve that end. Executive Round Table does both, and I would like to express my appreciation to all of you for making the time and commitment to this worthwhile collaboration.

My topic tonight is “Building a Better Community at Georgia Tech.” I chose this particular topic because I think it is one that concerns many Tech students. In fact, during Q&A sessions with students, I am almost always asked, “What can we do to improve the sense of community on campus?”

Before I address that question, I’d first like to pose another: What is a campus community? Does it consist of students only? Students and faculty? Students, faculty, alumni, and staff?

In my opinion, a campus community is all of the above—students, faculty, staff, the Administration, and alumni.

Together, we define the Institute as a whole.

Thirty years ago when I attended Georgia Tech as both an undergraduate and master's student, I felt myself an integral part of the campus community. Tech was smaller then and less specialized—and even though I didn't know everyone on campus—I felt a bond with alumni and my fellow students and a certain kinship with the faculty, staff, and Administration.

Today, that sense of community has changed. I won't say that it's completely gone—just that it's changed. Today, there is less one big community than an amalgamation of small communities. For example, there is a strong sense of community between Greek students, between minority students, between student athletes, between co-ops, and between graduate students in specific programs. However, these students do not feel the same bond outside of their individual groups.

I have seen some small glimpses of overall campus unity—most frequently during big campus sporting events. Ironically, there is one area where I always see campus unity—the determination that so many students have that they are receiving the Shaft. Of course, that is an area where I'd rather not see unity!

I am tempted to say that the lack of overall unity reflects the times that we live in. However, I have seen powerful communities at other modern research universities and believe that achieving campus unity—although it will take a lot of effort—is eminently possible.

The question becomes how.

One method is through campuswide cultural activities. One event already in existence is the Spring Arts Festival. It is potentially a great tool for bringing the campus together. However, currently, the Arts Festival has yet to be embraced by the entire campus community.

Another method is through campus community service. I think community service is a valuable tool for this endeavor because it helps prepare students for future work on behalf of the community. Logic dictates that habits learned while in college will carry over to one's professional life. You could even make the argument that Tech is failing its students due to the lack of emphasis on community involvement. For example, writer J.A. Rosenkrantz states, "Your education has been a failure no matter how much it has done for your mind, if it has failed to open your heart."

Former president of Brown University Howard R. Swearer states that community service and education should be linked. "We want Brown to be a community of compassionate people, involved in serious intellectual pursuits, but never divorced from one of the principal purposes of education, to prepare young people for responsible citizenship."

Today, Brown students complete their academic studies and build campus unity through community service projects. The Swearer Center for Public Service provides students with opportunities to: increase their community involvement and strengthen their leadership skills through direct service; connect community-based work with academic study; and build meaningful partnerships between the University and local, national, and international communities.

Duke University has also selected community service as a means to bring the campus together. Students are encouraged to participate in at least one community service activity per year and projects range from community health outreach to spring break service projects to a summer community service internship program that pays students to work in the community.

At Georgia Tech, we also are involved in community service. The Techwood Tutorial program provides tutoring and mentoring for area students and has been in existence for more than 30 years. Other programs include MOVE, Partners in Education, and Best Buddies. In addition, our Community Service Center also refers students interested in community service to various agencies in need. However, once again, community service at Tech is somewhat disjointed. It does not bring the entire campus together.

Part of that reason may be that, unlike Brown, community service is not incorporated into the mission of our university. In addition, community service is not rewarded. One last reason may have to do with the reasons students attend Georgia Tech. In a nationwide survey of freshmen, 100 percent of Tech's freshmen said that they were attending college in order to get a better job. In addition, 91 percent said they were attending college in order to make more money.

Georgia Tech does very well at preparing students for the workforce and a successful career—therefore fulfilling the expectations of our students. My question for you today is this: *Should we continue upon our present course or should we endeavor to instill both a sense of heightened campus*

community as well as a sense of civil responsibility within our students? And, if the answer is yes, how should we go about it?

Thank you.