

REMARKS BY GEORGIA TECH PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH
Minorities in Management Forum, October 22-23, 2002

Welcome, evening session, October 22, 2002

I'm pleased to welcome all of you to the Minorities in Management Forum. We have had an outstanding response from those who were invited, and it is great to see such a large group here.

When Georgia Tech opened its doors in 1888, it was an exclusively white, male operation, and for the first half of its life, it stayed that way. But during the second half, that has been changing. In 1952, we opened our doors to the first female students, and in 1961 to the first African American students. In fact, Georgia Tech was the first university in the Deep South to integrate peaceably without court order. Students, faculty and staff agreed that anyone who could do the work belonged at Georgia Tech. In typical Georgia Tech fashion, we went about it rationally and calmly. The role of the police that day was to keep the news media on the south side of North Avenue so that campus life could proceed without disruption.

Today, our student body is 27 percent female and 35 percent minority, and white males have slipped below 50 percent to become a plurality rather than an outright minority. We are a recognized leader in graduating African American engineers, with the publication *Black Issues in Higher Education* naming us first in the nation. The National Society of Black Engineers says we are by far and away the institution of choice for African Americans considering graduate studies in engineering. And we are very proud of that distinction.

The student body is quicker and easier to diversify than the faculty and staff, because it turns over faster. But we have made progress in diversifying our faculty and staff as well. Today women account for 20 percent of the faculty and minorities account for 21 percent. Our staff is 45 percent female and 38 percent minority.

This fall we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the admission of women, and last fall we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the admission of minorities. So it is a good time not only to take stock of how far we have come, but also to look ahead to define the work that still needs to be done and make plans to accomplish it. But the task won't be done until we have a genuine campus atmosphere of inclusion, respect and community, and until all members of the Georgia Tech community – students, faculty, and staff –

feel that they are provided with opportunities to learn and develop their full capabilities.

We are a leader in graduating minority students not because we have lowered the bar for minority students, but because we provide a broad array of services that give minority students the support they need to succeed and excel. And I believe that is what we must do for our staff. I have often said that Georgia Tech needs and deserves a staff that is as excellent as its students and faculty, and that as the caliber of our students and faculty increases, we also need to make provision for the caliber of our staff to increase. That means providing opportunities for our staff to acquire the education and skills they need to assume higher levels of responsibility. And when we help our staff as individual, they in turn use their new skills and abilities to improve Georgia Tech.

The Minorities in Management Forum is designed to help us focus specifically on the task of helping our minority staff acquire the additional skills and education they need to advance their careers at Georgia Tech. This evening we are going to begin with a broader, inspirational look at the goal of making Georgia Tech's management team more inclusive, then tomorrow we are going to get down to brass tacks and discuss how we are going to move in that direction.

This evening we have a very special guest speaker to start us thinking. James Bostic, Jr. is the executive vice president of environmental, government affairs, and communications at Georgia-Pacific. And the list of his honors and achievements is long.

He is from South Carolina and attended Clemson University, where we went straight through from his bachelor's degree in textile chemistry to his Ph.D. in chemistry. As a graduate student, he had a Ford Foundation Doctoral Fellowship for Black Students, and the same year he completed his Ph.D., he was named to the Outstanding Young Men of America. He was named again three years later.

Following his graduation, Jim Bostic began a varied and distinguished career. As a White House Fellow, he was assigned as a special assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture. And he did such a great job that they hired him to be Deputy Assistant Secretary in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Then he spent eight years at Riegel Textile Corporation, where he kept proving his excellence and value as an employee and a leader, and they kept promoting him. By the time he left Riegel Textile Corporation to join Georgia-Pacific, he had been president of two divisions.

At Georgia-Pacific, he began work as general manager of the Convenience Products Division in 1985. And through the years since then he has earned a steady string of promotions to positions of increasing responsibility. He was director of sales operations for the Consumer Tissue Group, then general manager of the Commercial Products and Systems Division. Next he became vice president, then group vice president for Butler Paper and Mail-Well. After three years as group vice president for Communication Papers, he became senior vice president then executive vice president of Environmental, Government Affairs and Communications – his present position.

He has a second and equally impressive career in community service. e has served on the boards of a wide range of organizations, from Zoo Atlanta to the American Red Cross, from the Urban League of Greenville, South Carolina, to the Committee on Minorities in Engineering of the National Academy of Engineering.

He presently sits on the boards of seven organizations, including: the Clemson University Foundation, the Georgia Conservancy, the National Parks and Conservation Association, the President's Commission on White House Fellowships, Progress Energy Inc., the Westminster Schools, the Atlanta Committee for Public Education, and the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, on which I am proud to say I serve with him.

Jim Bostic is truly an exceptional leader and an outstanding role model for others to follow. I'm proud to welcome him to Georgia Tech to help us think as individuals and as an organization about bringing more diversity to our management team at Georgia Tech.

Morning session, October 23, 2002

I'm glad to see all of you back after an inspiring time together last night. This morning we are going to get down to work and think together about how to make sure our minority staff at Georgia Tech have a level playing field for promotion and an opportunity to acquire the education and skills they need to compete on that field.

Last night I mentioned Georgia Tech's success in recruiting African American graduate students. And I had letter a little while back from one of those students, who wrote that while he saw minorities actively engaged in many aspects of life on Georgia Tech's campus – in the classrooms and labs as students and faculty, in the bookstore and dining halls as staff. But when he passed the offices of senior-level administrative staff, he mostly saw white males. He found that a little bothersome, and he wondered

whether Georgia Tech was doing everything we could be doing to provide opportunities for minorities in management.

That letter got us thinking. So the next thing we did was to take a survey of our staff. We wanted to find out what their perceptions were of Georgia Tech as an employer – whether they thought we were fair and provided them with opportunities to expand their skills and advance in their careers. You are going to learn about the results of that survey greater detail a little later this morning. But we were pleased that overall the results were positive. For the most part, employees were satisfied with their jobs and with Georgia Tech.

They agreed that in general their own managers were committed to fair hiring practices and performance ratings. However, some of them had a very cynical perception of the hiring process for senior management positions. They weren't sure the process is fair, because they suspect that the candidate who will get the job has already been identified before the hiring process has begun. Other respondents indicated a sense that minorities must be better qualified than whites to get equivalent positions, and a few expressed the belief that minority applicants do not apply for jobs at Georgia Tech because of a perception that they will not face a level playing field.

These results dovetailed with the letter I had received from the graduate student. Now, perceptions may not always be true to reality, but they are always rooted in reality. And they prompted us to take a closer look at the whole issue of minorities in management at Georgia Tech. I want to thank all of you for participating with us in that effort, and take a few minutes this morning to set the stage for today's discussions.

Georgia Tech's goal is to create a campus environment of inclusion, respect and community, where diversity is not only pervasive, but is managed as a valuable asset that makes a positive contribution to every aspect of campus life. For that to happen, the support for diversity concerns has to begin at the top. So, you will find that diversity is one of the seven goals in our Strategic Plan for Georgia Tech, which you can find online at president.gatech.edu. And I want to read a few sentences from the plan, because it is an important statement of the broader picture we are trying to achieve:

"Building a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff enriches Georgia Tech and the society in which we live. In a global environment that thrives on innovation, diversity is also a competitive advantage, providing a broader, richer, more fertile environment for creative thinking and problem solving. Georgia Tech must continue to build a campus that understands that 'diversity' reaches across racial and socioeconomic boundaries and embraces to life experiences of each individual."

There are many ways that we are trying to achieve that goal relative to our staff at Georgia Tech, starting with our human resources policies. These policies state that “the Institute will continue to recruit, hire, train and promote into all job levels the best qualified persons without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status.” And they call on each administrative office at every supervisory level to take responsibility for avoiding bias or discrimination in the workplace.

But compliance policies like these represent just the first level of creating what Pearl Alexander calls the “big picture.” To be effective, they must exist and serve as a tool within a larger framework that values and nurtures and manages diversity. At Georgia Tech, that bigger picture is represented by our Campus Diversity Strategy.

The Campus Diversity Strategy has four components:

- 1) Management accountability, which means that we are going to monitor our organizational climate and the competency of our leadership to promote and manage diversity.
- 2) Employee involvement, by which we mean that we will be inclusive, and we will work to empower our employees to be their very best and to pursue their careers.
- 3) Management commitment, which means that we are going to put the policies, practices and resources in place to foster healthy diversity.
- 4) Communication practices, which means that we are clear in communicating our expectations with regard to respect and opportunity for all members of our community, that we are open and honest in our communications with each other, and that our communications are cross-sectional.

There are a number of components to our efforts to implement our Campus Diversity Strategy. First is the Campus Diversity Council. The Council’s goal is to create an atmosphere of inclusion, respect and community on campus. To do that, we review strategies for increasing and managing diversity and work on projects to improve minority and female retention among our staff, faculty, and students. The Council also supports the Diversity Forum, which is a way for you to provide feedback on this important issue and for us as a community to put diversity topics on the table for open discussion.

Then we have the Office of Diversity Management, which is really the heart of diversity efforts on our campus. This office monitors the employment process for equity and nondiscrimination, and provides a forum for dispute resolution. The Office of Diversity Management also offers recruitment resources to help generate a diverse pool of job

applicants, and offers a course called “Preventing Workplace Discrimination” through the Office of Organizational Development.

The Office of Diversity Management has also put together a manual of Best Practices in Diversity, which examines the best practices in industry, at peer universities, and at Georgia Tech. The report summarizes the ten overall best practices for us to be working on across campus – practices that can often be implemented at the departmental level.

Another important component to promoting diversity throughout our staff at all levels is STRAP, which stands for Staff Tuition Reimbursement Assistance Program. STRAP gives staff and opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills they need for career advancement. Basically, if you take courses for credit at a technical institute, college or university, and those courses relate to your job or career path at Georgia Tech, we will reimburse you for the tuition cost. It is a win-win situation – a win for the staff member, who gets the education to advance their career, and a win for Georgia Tech, because we get the advantage of a better-educated, more productive staff. The University System of Georgia also offers a tuition waiver at system schools or tuition reimbursement for full-time employees of the system who take courses related to their jobs.

We also have a mentoring program to help staff members develop their career goals and understand the knowledge, skills and responsibilities that are required in the positions they aspire to. Dr. Joycelyn Elders, the prominent African American pediatrician who was surgeon general of the United States for a time, said that when she was young, it never occurred to her to think of becoming a doctor, because she never saw an African American doctor. She said, “You can’t be what you don’t see.” Our mentoring program gives staff a firsthand opportunity to see what they want to be.

These are some of the things we do to promote diversity among our staff and help ensure that staff members have opportunities for promotion and advancement at Georgia Tech. The respondents to our staff survey had several suggestions to help us to improve our efforts to attract, retain, and promote minorities. And we are hoping you are going to help us with more ideas during the course of your discussions today.

If you look around at our present management staff, a significant number of them have been in the workplace for a while. They’re at the peak of their career, they’re getting gray hair. They are going to be retiring in the next five or ten years. This opens up new opportunities for Georgia Tech to achieve greater diversity in at the senior levels of our staff, and it opens up new opportunities for you to advance in your careers. But both Georgia Tech and you have to be ready when that time comes.

Our goal as an Institute is to continue to increase the caliber and excellence of our staff. To do that, we are going to hire the very best and most qualified individuals we can find. But we also want to increase the diversity of our management team at the same time. That means giving you professional development opportunities to prepare yourself for higher levels of responsibility. And it means strengthening Georgia Tech's reputation as a desirable employer in the minority community, so that we can attract a broader range of strong minority candidates.

Those are the topics on the table for discussion today. We look forward to your input, and I'm going to start that process by asking if there are any questions.