Letter from President G.P. “Bud” Peterson
From the President, November 2009
Monday, November 3, 2009

To the Georgia Tech Community:

Several recent speaking engagements have led me to become even more deeply engaged in the national conversation on the future of higher education. When the competitive landscape is flattened, mobile, and diverse, what will be the characteristics that distinguish our nation’s students from those at institutions around the globe? It’s the question at the heart of our stated desire to “define the technological research institution of the 21st century,” and why we are moving aggressively to develop a strategic framework that will help us realize this vision.

None of us has a crystal ball, but what is clear is that our nation’s position as a leader in research and innovation will erode unless we make choices and investments that adequately prepare our students with the educational background, problem-solving and leadership skills necessary for a future we can only begin to grasp. As so succinctly stated in a YouTube video, “we are currently preparing students for jobs that do not yet exist using technologies that have not been invented in order to solve problems we have not yet identified.” This represents an enormous challenge for us, as educators.

Beyond education, of course, the choices we make now and in the next several years will impact how we conduct research, partner with the community, and transact business for many years to come. That is why we have enlisted the best minds within our community and asked them to help chart a course for our future, and why we continue to seek your input in the process. If Georgia Tech is to continue in the leadership role we now enjoy, we cannot be satisfied with the status quo; we must evolve and change.

G. P. “Bud” Peterson
President