

# Letter from President G.P. "Bud" Peterson

## A Proposed Engineering Expansion at the University of Georgia

Monday, September 20, 2010

Faculty, staff and students:

You may have recently heard discussions that the University of Georgia (UGA) has petitioned the University System's Board of Regents — the governing body for the state's public higher education system — to expand its engineering degree programs. I wanted to take the opportunity to provide some background as well as offer some thoughts regarding this proposal.

Since 2005, UGA has offered degrees in five engineering disciplines, none of which overlap our own degree programs in any meaningful way. UGA is now proposing an expansion of its program by adding mechanical engineering, civil engineering and electrical engineering. Last week, after considerable debate, the Regents voted to allow the UGA proposal to move forward for consideration at its October Board meeting.

We are, by any measure, one of the world's premier institutions for engineering education and research. The state legislature and the Board of Regents have been instrumental in that success, with investments in alignment with institutional strengths. To try and duplicate academic programs as expensive as engineering at a time when the University System has taken more than \$600 million in cuts to its state budget appropriation over the past two years is not the best use of scarce resources.

I have heard the concerns that Georgia is not educating enough engineers to meet industry demand. Over the past 10 years, more than 26,000 students have earned a Georgia Tech engineering degree. To ensure that we provide access to our programs, the Regents established the Regents' Engineering Transfer Program, in partnership with 17 state colleges and universities, and this fall we admitted 560 transfer students. The fact is that Georgia Tech is not only equipped, but also prepared to educate every qualified in-state student who wants to be an engineer.

This is an emotional issue for many, particularly those who have invested their resources, time, energy and intellect into making Georgia Tech one of the best technological universities in the world. I want to assure the entire Tech community that this issue is a foremost priority for me and my leadership team. In response to UGA's request, we have engaged the Regents, legislative leaders and key alumni to articulate our perspective on the future of engineering education in Georgia. I will continue to keep you informed of our progress in the weeks ahead.

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