Young Harris, Blue Ridge, Dahlonega

The day began with a tour of Young Harris College. Many thanks to C.J. Cypress, senior admissions counselor at Young Harris, for volunteering to be our tour guide, as well as to Dr. Linda Jones, associate professor of Biology and dean of the Division of Mathematics and Science. Their new Rollins Campus Center is impressive, and its openness and sustainable design remind me of our Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons.

While touring Young Harris College we were pleased to find the Georgia Tech canine team on site leading a canine-focused training exercise for law enforcement officials from throughout the state. It was nice to take a few minutes to visit with the officers. We commend Georgia Tech Officer Rob Turner for his leadership role in the training program.

While in Young Harris we visited with former Georgia Governor Zell Miller and First Lady Shirley Miller to express appreciation for Governor Miller’s vision in creating the HOPE Scholarship and to share details of the G. Wayne Clough Tech Promise Program. We’re proud to note that virtually all, or 98 percent, of Georgia Tech’s entering in-state freshmen are recipients of either the HOPE or the Zell Miller Scholarship. His commitment to education will have an impact for generations.

Later in the morning we enjoyed visiting with Margaret Guthman. In 1998, Margaret and her late husband, Richard (IE 1956), started what has become Georgia Tech’s annual Margaret Guthman Musical Instrument Competition, which has received national and international attention. Gil Weinberg, director of Georgia Tech’s Center for Music Technology, organizes the competition. In May, he along with Ph.D. student Mason Bretan and two Guthman competitors performed live on the TODAY Show with their instruments and robots as part of a segment about the future of music.

At noon we met with area alumni and other friends at Brasstown Valley Resort in the town of Young Harris.

It is always a treat to tour Mercier Orchards in Blue Ridge, Georgia. It is a fourth-generation, family-owned and operated apple orchard that our EI2 team has partnered with for a number of years. It was good to see the ways they practice continuous improvement, and the view of the apple orchard was spectacular.

We ended the tour with an alumni reception at the Montaluce Winery in Dahlonega, co-hosted by the Georgia Tech Gainesville Alumni Network. At both alumni events during the day, we were joined by several elected officials and representatives from our congressional offices.

Our weeklong trip has taken us south to Meriwether County and north to the state line in Walker County. If we add this year’s 650 miles through 30 counties to the previous six tours, our state tours have covered more than 5,000 miles. We are grateful for the hospitality we have received at every stop along the way, and I continue to be impressed with the many ways that the people and programs of Georgia Tech are making a positive impact in the state.

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