When I have the opportunity each fall to speak to our new freshmen at Convocation, one of the messages I deliver is that Georgia Tech can be a place of amazing opportunities not only for intellectual growth, but also personal enrichment. We have more than 400 organizations that cater to a myriad of interests, so I like to encourage our newcomers to take advantage of all that we offer and find their niches beyond the classroom.

It’s good to know that so many Georgia Tech students are doing just that. Just a quick look at some of the successes of various student groups indicates that a lot of Yellow Jackets are tapping into opportunities to indulge their passions with other like-minded enthusiasts. In a number of these, they are also representing the Institute in competitive events outside our campus. A few that have stood out this spring:

- After winning the Georgia Collegiate Varsity Debate Championship held in March, Georgia Tech’s Debate Team of Andrew Huot and Jason Floyd finished third in the Coastal Division of the Atlantic Coast Conference at the University of Miami in early April. They defeated Duke in a preliminary round before falling to eventual finalist Miami. The topic was “Should the Electoral College Be Abolished?” As true Yellow Jackets, the team uses a technical scientific approach characteristic of Georgia Tech to win points.

- Georgia Tech beat 480 other universities to place first in the National Security Agency (NSA)’s “2016 Codebreaker Challenge,” a three-month hacking contest meant to give students a realistic glimpse of nation-state cybersecurity. More than 3,300 students worldwide worked to solve six progressively difficult scenarios similar to what the NSA faces. Tech Ph.D. student Insu Yun was first in Atlanta to successfully complete the entire contest, and more than a dozen Yellow Jackets advanced to Task 6.

- Led by aerospace engineering major Nick Willard, Georgia Tech won the Collegiate Drone Racing National Championship at Purdue University in mid-April. Mechanical engineering majors Seth Ableidinger and Davis Engelman put Georgia Tech into a solid lead with strong performances in preliminary races. The event brought together teams from 27 universities for the first national championship at the college level for pilots of unmanned aircraft. The three Yellow Jackets also won $15,000 in equipment and prizes.

- Tech’s men's lacrosse team has been ranked No. 1 for much of the spring season in the Men’s Collegiate Lacrosse Association (not NCAA-affiliated) and now stands No. 3 nationally with a 15-1 record. On April 23, the lacrosse Jackets successfully defended their SouthEastern Lacrosse Conference Division I championship with a 13-8 victory over Liberty University that earns them a spot May 8-13 in the 2017 MCLA National Championships in Orange County, California. It might surprise some to learn that Georgia Tech’s lacrosse history dates back to 1924. Our current program, which competes at the club level, has been in place since 1971. It’s currently thriving, and alumni keep in touch through the Georgia Tech Lacrosse Affinity Group.
A sizable number of students are also taking advantage of programs and competitions set up at Georgia Tech as outlets for their creative and entrepreneurial urges. More than 175 undergraduate teams applied this year for 40 new startup company spots in **CREATE-X**, a collective of programs launched two years ago with the help of a major gift from alumnus Chris Klaus. CREATE-X is based on three simple principles: Learn, Make, Launch. As more of our students learn about CREATE-X, the program has tremendous potential to grow. There is a thirst among our students for such outlets. We see it each year with the popularity of the InVenture Prize competition, which this year drew more than 500 registrants.

Those are just a handful of instances in which Georgia Tech students are self-enriching their college experience, while at the same time following their passion, putting their academic knowledge into real-world pursuits, bonding with fellow students over common interests, and just having fun. What we do in college has great power to shape the rest of our lives and direct us toward the paths we will follow after we leave the campus. Our students are enhancing the value of the Georgia Tech degree they will eventually receive.

- **G.P. "Bud" Peterson**

Students Wen Xu and Insu Yun advanced through all six rounds of the NSA 2016 Codebreaker Challenge to beat more than 3,300 competitors worldwide.
Seth Ableidinger, Davis Engleman, and Nick Willard brought home the first-place trophy at the inaugural Collegiate Drone Racing National Championship.

Tech lacrosse team celebrates its recent SELC championship, which earned the Yellow Jackets a berth May 8-13 in the 2017 MCLA National Championships.