Dr. Peterson
Gold Tower Awards Reception
3-5 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 17, 2011 Wardlaw

This afternoon’s event provides us one of those rare opportunities in life to stop what we’re doing and celebrate excellence. Whether or not you receive a Gold Tower award today, I would like to thank each of you for many ways you’re working together to get the word out about Georgia Tech. What you do every day has a tremendous influence on the way people think about Georgia Tech and its programs. That includes everything from our online presence to print and written communications, marketing campaigns, special events and leadership communications.

We are fortunate to have a team of talented and creative professionals who know the Institute, know its strengths and develop effective communications that will enhance Georgia Tech’s reputation. That reputation helps us motivate donors, recruit and retain faculty and outstanding students, and gain support from government, business and industry, and the community support. It helps us keep the Georgia Tech community informed, and they in turn become some of our most powerful ambassadors. It helps us get the visibility we need for our work not only in specific programs, but for the Institute-- in the state, our region, nationally, and even internationally. In essence, you are charged with telling the Georgia Tech story to the world.

As you prepare to tell our story, you’re doing the behind-the-scenes planning and research, working with faculty, staff, students, alumni, other supporters, government organizations, NGO’s, and the community to develop strategies to communicate the right messages in the best ways for maximum impact. It requires that you stay on top of the latest communication methods. For example, in August when I gave the annual Institute Address, there were people in the audience tweeting. I also received a number of responses from people who had watched it online. This week’s
FutureMedia Fest is another example of new methods and technologies that come into play when working to reach various audiences.

The week of last year’s Gold Tower Awards we announced that Michael Warden would be joining us December 1st as our new vice president for Communications and Marketing. In the year that he has been here he has made solid progress in integrating our communications efforts for efficiency and impact, and working to ensure that our communications are not only responsive, but proactive and strategic. Our most effective messages are those that are integrated and fit into an overall strategy. We have many different programs, but we are one Georgia Tech. OK Michael, two weeks from today the “new” will have worn off and we’ll expect even greater things!

When we launched our new Strategic Plan a little over a year ago, we defined what success would look like when we have accomplished our vision. Our vision is that “Georgia Tech will define the technological research university of the 21st century.”

As a result, we will be leaders in influencing major technological, social and policy decisions that address critical global challenges. ‘What does Georgia Tech think?’ will be a common question in research, business, the media and government.”

At first I was uncomfortable with adding the concept of “What does Georgia Tech think?” It seemed inconsistent with the Georgia Tech culture of just being the best and letting the world take notice. But I realized that it’s a good thing when people and organizations come to us to find out “What does Georgia Tech think?” And while we could have the best programs and people in the world, just a limited number of people would find out about all of the transformative things we are doing if we did not have professionals like you to get the word out. The work that you do in promoting our Institute will help give us the visibility we need for a global reputation as the “go to” place. Let me once take this opportunity to thank each of you for what you do every day for Georgia Tech. I’m looking forward to continued great work from all of you.