

Dr. Peterson
Tea for Women in Engineering

Thursday, Sept. 6, 2012

We're so glad you're here. You are at Tech at a special time. This year we're celebrating the 60th anniversary of women enrolled full-time at Georgia Tech. Our freshman class includes 35 percent women, the largest number of women ever enrolled, and our undergraduate student body includes 33 percent women.

And, you are 100 percent empowered to succeed. For many of you, this is the culmination of an educational goal you set for yourself in high school or middle school. How many of you participated in an event during your school years to encourage young women to consider careers in math and science?

Once the idea "clicked" to go into a STEM field, you began the journey to prepare yourself for your college experience. I'm confident of that, because the average SAT of the new Freshman class is 1294, and the average GPA is 3.89. I would venture to say many of you have been involved in leadership activities before you came to Tech.

You'll find that you have plenty of opportunities for those leadership activities to continue here, whether it is with some of our 450 student organizations, service in the community, or perhaps a study-abroad opportunity or co-op, which celebrates its 100th anniversary at Tech this year.

A few of the groups include Women in Engineering, Women in Computing, and the Society of Women Engineers. And, you'll find plenty of mentors. When Karen Feigh came to Tech as an undergraduate in 1997, there was only one female professor in the School of Aerospace Engineering from which she earned her bachelor's degree. Now, as an associate professor in the School herself, she is one of three women on the aerospace faculty. That's just one example of many.

You will learn to work in teams, to be an innovator and even an entrepreneur. While you're at Tech, you'll have numerous opportunities to tackle some of society's most pressing challenges. Then, upon graduation you'll be prepared to lead in numerous ways in your careers and in your communities.

Last year it was my privilege to be invited to attend the final launch of the U.S. Space Shuttle program. We at Tech are proud of the astronauts and hundreds if not thousands of Tech graduates who have been NASA employees over the years. But it was a tremendous sense of pride to see Tech graduate Sandra Magnus lift off as one of a four-person crew in the final Shuttle launch.

That is symbolic of the opportunities before you. We are committed to your success, and will partner with you in any way we can to help you attain your goals. I'm looking forward to shaking your hand as you cross that stage in McCamish Pavilion a few years from now. Then, you will become the mentor and inspiration for the next generation of women in engineering.

Welcome to Georgia Tech.