

Dr. Peterson

Reception for George Ray

Thursday, June 14, 2012, President's Suite, Student Success Center

George Ray is a gentleman and a scholar, and frankly the line blurs from his time as a student to becoming a staff member at Tech. He first became a Yellow Jacket in Fall 2005 when he enrolled as a Presidents Scholar. He worked as a student assistant in enrollment services for the presidents scholarship program his first two years at Tech supervising 8-10 students where he redeveloped scholarship competition standards and created an evaluation system for teacher recommendations.

He graduated with highest honors in 2009, the same year I came to Tech, earning bachelor's degrees in Public Policy and Management and a certificate in pre-law, which we now see will come in handy.

He was a member of ODK, which Dene calls "the super secret smarty britches society."

George also worked as a student in the Government and Community Relations Office. He served as legislative intern to the Speaker of the House and worked every day of session on the floor of the House. Immediately following his internship, he was hired by the Government and Community Relations Office to support Georgia Tech's efforts at the Capitol. While still a student he supported Tech's efforts in securing \$38M in state funding for the Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons. Three years later he played a significant role in securing \$59M for the Engineered BioSystems Building during the most recent legislative session. Thanks George. We needed both.

He has been the chief logistics coordinator and navigator for my summer tour for the past three years. All of this he has accomplished while training and completing his first marathon, taking the LSAT and being accepted to law school, serving in an advisory role to the president's scholarship program and serving as a Child Life Volunteer at Children's Healthcare.

All of this activity comes with a price.

- He has probably been responsible for the death of a small forest due to the number of Impact Statements and summer tour briefing books he has printed and distributed.
- He has travelled approximately 4,000 miles around the state advocating for Georgia Tech.
- He has consumed barbecue at least once per week during session for the past 5 years or the equivalent of 100+ lbs.
- He has an extensive collection of gold ties and I have recently learned that he always had an extra on hand in case I arrived in the same tie. Thank you George for giving me first choice!
- I'm certain he has worn out the soles of several pairs of shoes pounding the halls in the Capitol.
- He has personally delivered enough thank you letters to legislators at the Capitol that all of the post office employees know him by name.
- He has shaken enough hands to utilize approximately 2 gallons of hand sanitizer.
- And, as a good legislative liaison, he has learned to drink coffee.

George, what are we going to do without you? I guess we're going to see how good Dene really is.

Now, even though you're going to spend three years in Athens, we're counting on you to remember your roots. I'm sure we'll see you back on campus soon, either coming to Legislative Day, or perhaps shaking hands as you run for governor or the U.S. Senate. We'll take a Yellow Jacket in either one of those positions.