Strategic Plan Implementation Update  
March 2013

At the end of the spring 2012 semester, the Strategic Plan Implementation Steering Committee (SPISC) concluded the successful effort of shepherding the work of 16 task forces that were developing initiatives for elements of the Institute’s Strategic Plan. I take this opportunity to thank all members of the SPISC and task forces for an excellent job. The membership and their reports are available at www.gatech.edu/vision.

The recommendations were evaluated over the summer, and investments have been made in several efforts consistent with the SPISC’s final recommendations. This year, the Institute has designated over $2 million from both State and GTF resources to the academic and academic support activities and initiatives described below. Projects are moving forward, embedded in the operating units that have been charged with piloting or initiating new ideas. The following is a summary of those activities where the Office of the Provost is heavily involved or taking a lead role.

Over the coming weeks and months, our office, in collaboration with the academic units, faculty and the rest of the Institute, will work to advance these projects. Further, the goals and ideas of the Institute’s Strategic Plan will continue to guide our actions and inform our priorities.

Revitalizing Undergraduate Education

The task force had two recommendations that implied significant academic calendar changes. One was a January term, or J-term, a period between existing semesters where less structured and less mainstream educational activities could be carried out. The other was “project day,” a day or a portion of a day where hands-on interdisciplinary project-driven education could occur. The SPISC recommended a less disruptive “J-term lite” and a refinement to the project day proposal to address open questions. The Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (VPUE) is leading these discussions as well as the development of the “x-degree” concept as a potential undergraduate education enhancement. The faculty leadership of the x-degree effort was provided funding over the summer of 2012 to issue a final detailed plan that could be moved forward to appropriate curricular committees. That plan is being refined with the input of the VPUE.

The Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education has also been provided with funding to promote the ideas related to Service Learning and the Legacy Project. Many stakeholders are already actively engaged in service activities. The Westside Alliance of the Ivan Allen
College, Computing for Good of the College of Computing, the Office of Leadership and Civic Engagement in Student Affairs, the Office of Community and Government Affairs, the outreach activities of the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL), the Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics, and Computing (CEISMC), and a myriad of student organizations are examples of the broad interest in service and service learning. The challenge is how to organize and structure these activities to have more impact. Several meetings have been held; at the moment, the formation of a Council for Service Learning and Civic Engagement, to serve as a clearinghouse of information, network provider, and facilitator of ideas to be supported by an Institute-level office, is being considered.

**The Burdell Initiative: Collaborative Interdisciplinary Design**

The SPISC gave this project high priority. The design collaborative will provide a vehicle to encourage and enable students to develop their creativity and passion for design and innovation. The task force suggested a two-phase approach. Phase I focused on resource inventory and web development. Phase II involves an idea incubator (an interactive web-based forum) and a “storefront” to serve as a physical space to provide a hands-on contact point. The concept of a “project day” that was suggested by the Revitalizing Undergraduate Education Task Force has also been folded into this project. The VPUE is charged with coordinating and implementing interdisciplinary design efforts and has received funding to facilitate them. Other activities, ongoing or being evaluated, include:

1. Creating another student-centric design activity space – to complement efforts in the School of Mechanical Engineering.
2. Conversations with the Library to house much of this educational effort in a visible, accessible space.
3. Development of an introductory design class.
4. A proposal that would incubate student design ideas, using the model established by Flashpoint, a Georgia Tech-created business accelerator.
5. Discussions of how to more effectively integrate and leverage current capstone-type activities, such as the InVenture Prize.

**Online Education**

The discussion of online educational technology and related massive open online courses (MOOCs) arose after the task force’s final report. In Summer 2012, Georgia Tech joined the Coursera consortia of universities and has been in discussion with other providers of online platforms. The topic has since dominated our discussions on the future of education. The Council for Educational Technology, the Center for the 21st Century University (C21U), Georgia Tech Professional Education, and the newly created Vice Provost for Learning Excellence have all assumed leadership roles within in the field of MOOCs. Inclusive of
funds allocated this year and largely through private philanthropy, the Institute plans to
invest about $4 million over three or more years in the experimentation with and
development of new online pedagogy and delivery platforms. The Office of the Provost is
also funding an effort to engage faculty in experimentation with and evaluation of these
new ideas. An initial investment has been made to allow the Associate Vice Provost for
Learning Excellence to coordinate an investigation into a variety of MOOC-related research
questions.

**Globalization of Our Education**

The task force recommended enhancing language and cultural components of students’
education; developing the concept of a “Global Village” in Tech Square; and achieving global
leadership and a global footprint in pedagogy. These efforts have been assigned to the Vice
Provost for International Initiatives (VPII). Initial investments have been allocated to
support these efforts. Earlier this year, the VPII published the Global Position Strategy
(GPS), which outlines the Institute’s global strategy. Recognizing the importance of
reaching out to our international alumni and engaging in global development, a new senior
position for international development has been created, and an Asia director is in the
process of being hired. The Vice Provost for Enrollment Services (VPES) has been provided
with additional staffing to develop a more geographically diverse international student
body. Undergraduate Admissions is working with international alumni to pilot a global
interviewing network, and its international plan has been modified to encourage
enrollment and completion. The VPII also established a Denning Global Engagement seed
fund to support feasibility studies of new initiatives in global engagement, with significant
emphasis on the impact on students.

**Technology and Law**

The original task force led to the recommendation to create a seamless path for interested
Georgia Tech students to avail themselves of a new Juris Master’s degree, possibly leading
to a Juris Doctor at Emory. This past fall, a team was named to work out implementation
details and has since reported on those details. The Emory and Georgia Tech leadership
teams have accepted the concept and plan to initiate activities in the fall of 2013.

**Leadership Development, Education, and Research at Georgia Tech**

The Dean of Students, the Vice President of Student Affairs, and the colleges are responsible
for implementing leadership development ideas. The SPISC called for strengthening
existing efforts and developing new initiatives. At the educational level, funds have been
provided to support the new leadership/grand challenges learning community. At the
faculty level, new teaching awards have been introduced to recognize curriculum innovation, laboratory instruction, and co-curricular education.

**Tech Arts and the Arts at GT**

As a result of the task force’s final report, a Council for the Arts and an Office of the Arts have been established; both are operating. A related website has been developed at arts.gatech.edu. The second Clough Art Crawl was held this semester, with more than 300 student submissions, and an art festival will be held this spring. Negotiations are under way to bring a sculpture exhibit to campus, and an external arts advisory board is being convened. On a related subject, the Ivan Allen College has received funding for an Africa-Atlanta activity to be held in 2014 in collaboration with the City of Atlanta, the Carter Museum, and Emory University.

**Ivan Allen Institute**

The Ivan Allen Institute Task Force worked under the auspices of the Executive Vice President for Research (EVPR). The task force recommended that the Ivan Allen Institute be assigned to the Provost and the Dean of the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts. The recommendation to place the Ivan Allen Institute within the Ivan Allen College has been carried out, and the effort remains under the overall guidance of the EVPR, with close collaboration with the Office of the Provost. The SPISC recommended that the Ivan Allen Institute take ownership of the Ivan Allen Prize for Social Courage; create a “Year of Engagement” where an annual theme is developed and explored through activities that inspire the entire community; and, formulate a direction. Professor Ken Knospel has been named its director.

**Relentless Pursuit of Institutional Effectiveness**

The Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance, together with the Provost, convened a Family Friendly Task Force. The effort was led by Vice President Archie Ervin and Associate Vice President Scott Morris. Their report is available at www.provost.gatech.edu/projects-reports and provides recommendations to enhance the family friendly culture at Georgia Tech. The report has been accepted, and they have been tasked with producing a roadmap of priorities and resource needs to begin a phased implementation of ideas outlined in the report.

Vice President Archie Ervin is also spearheading a climate assessment (for which a survey has already been distributed) to identify any areas where the Institute’s practices must improve in order to promote a healthy and productive work environment.