

**Dr. Peterson**

**FASET Orientation Leaders Pep Talk**

Wednesday, June 4, 2014, College of Business Room 200

Good morning, and welcome to this meeting of FASET Orientation Leaders. I'm here to cheer you on, pump you up, and hopefully provide a little perspective about what an important job you have. FASET, as you probably know, stands for "Familiarization and Adaptation to the Surroundings and Environs of Tech." It's been going on at Georgia Tech since 1972, and I think that's long enough to declare it a tradition.

It's been said that you never get a second chance to make a first impression. As FASET Orientation Leaders, you will provide the first extended impression of Georgia Tech to many of the freshmen and parents whom you'll guide through the process this summer. You have volunteered for your position, which by itself differentiates you from orientation leaders at most schools around the country. That says to me that you are committed and enthused about the job you will do.

What are you in for as FASET leaders? Let me quote from a past leader who offered this assessment on the FASET website: "Seriously the best summer ever. I believe that FASET made me a thousand times happier even though there were long days and endless duties. I loved every single moment of it." So get ready for some sleep deprivation, but as Georgia Tech students, you're probably already used to that.

For many of those you'll shepherd through Orientation, this will be their first extended exposure to Georgia Tech. As an ambassador for the Institute, you will have the opportunity to set the tone for their time here, whether it's short or long.

Recall if you can your own participation in Orientation. Those who led you served as role models of the successful Georgia Tech student, just as you will do. It will be hard for our new students to retain all the information that you will throw at them, but as an example of how Georgia Tech men and women carry themselves, you will

communicate a lasting impression that involves so much more than just the nuts-and-bolts.

Another thing I hope you'll do through your words, actions, and your enthusiastic Tech spirit is to affirm that our new students made the right choice to come here. As you lead them through the busy two days, remember how hard it is to get into Georgia Tech and that these students, like you, could have gone to college virtually anywhere. And also like you, they chose to come here.

Let me tell you a little about our incoming freshmen. They're an impressive bunch. The demand for a Georgia Tech education grew astronomically in the past year. We think that's a result of our use of the Common App for the first time, our increased national visibility, and the impact of Nick Selby's Freshman Convocation speech that went viral on social media last fall. We had 25,500 applications for 2,400 spaces in the freshman class that will start in Fall 2014 — that's a 46 percent increase in one year.

That continued an upward trend. If you look at the five years I've been at Georgia Tech, we've had a 70 percent increase in applicants. This year alone our applications for early decision were up by 37 percent. The "early admits" that we accepted in January have an average 1485 math and verbal SAT, and hold an "A" average. And, our freshman class is 37 percent women. Admission decisions are based on a combination of academic excellence and leadership activities.

But once a student gets here, he or she becomes part of a community of 21,500 undergraduate and graduate students from 115 countries. For Fall 2014, 23 percent of the applicants were international, and we admitted students from 87 countries. Georgia Tech provides the opportunity to interact socially and academically with people from all over the world.

During the past two decades, Georgia Tech has grown into one of the world's most globalized technological universities, with collaborations in more than 80 countries, and institutional partnerships in more than 30 countries. We have a full campus in France, and global centers in China, Singapore, Costa Rica, and Panama. By graduation, 46 percent of our undergraduate students have had an international experience: Study abroad, work abroad, global internships, or service abroad in 67 countries.

In late May, I was privileged to attend the opening of the Lafayette Institute at our Georgia Tech-Lorraine campus in Metz, France. While I was there, we had the opportunity to visit NATO headquarters, and were hosted by General Breedlove, a Georgia Tech alumnus. A group of students participating in a study abroad program through Ivan Allen College had the privilege of meeting with him in a small setting, and asking questions. Only at Georgia Tech.

To give you another example of the kind of opportunities Georgia Tech provides, on June 6th all 240 Georgia Tech-Lorraine students will participate in the 70th anniversary commemoration of the D-Day landing that allowed Allied troops to gain a foothold and eventually free Europe from the grip of the Nazi Germany occupation. It will be an unforgettable experience, and one the likes of which very few universities are able to provide for their students.

Let me close with just a couple more thoughts. You are leaders, or you would not be here at Georgia Tech. You are public-spirited, or you would not have volunteered to be part of the FASET Orientation program. As you've no doubt learned, at Georgia Tech we're all about challenging you, on many levels. So I give you this challenge: As you represent the Institute to the hundreds of incoming new students, ask yourself, "What do I wish somebody had told me?" in those exciting but uncertain early days of *your* college career. As a FASET Leader, you are uniquely situated to offer the benefit of your experience.

Thank you very much for your enthusiastic leadership and your partnership with Georgia Tech. We're grateful for your service and look forward with you to welcoming another group of Ramblin' Wrecks to Georgia Tech. GO JACKETS!