Black Student Experience Task Force FAQ

Why was the Black Student Experience Task Force formed at Georgia Tech?

President G.P. "Bud" Peterson directed the formation of the Black Student Experience Task Force at the start of fall semester 2015 following allegations that several black female students were racially harassed on two separate occasions on campus. While these incidents led to the creation of the task force, the group was assembled to examine the broader issues of climate and culture at Georgia Tech. For example, one of the findings from the Institute's Climate Assessment Survey in 2012 was expressed feelings of marginalization by race/ethnicity among undergraduate and graduate students.

The purpose of the Black Student Experience Task Force was to learn about the lived experiences of black students at the Institute and present recommendations to ensure the campus is welcoming, inclusive, and supportive.

Who were the members of the Black Student Experience Task Force?

Co-chaired by Institute Diversity Vice President Archie Ervin and Student Life Vice President and Dean of Students John Stein, the Black Student Experience Task Force comprised 13 student, faculty, and staff members:

- **Co-chair Archie Ervin**, vice president of Institute Diversity
- **Co-chair John Stein**, vice president of Student Life and Dean of Students
- **Felicia Benton-Johnson,** director of the Center for Engineering Education and Diversity
- **Alexis Coates,** undergraduate student of Mechanical Engineering
- **Morgan Foreman**, undergraduate student of Psychology
- **Tiffiny Hughes-Troutman**, assistant director of outreach and wellness at the Counseling Center
- **Henderson Johnson,** graduate student of Aerospace Engineering
- **Seth Marder**, regents' professor of Chemistry and Materials Science and Engineering
- **S. Gordon Moore Jr.**, executive director, student diversity and inclusion at Institute Diversity
- **Nagela Nukuna**, undergraduate student of Industrial Engineering
- **Nelson Raphael**, undergraduate student of Electrical Engineering
- **Ashley Shannon**, officer at the Georgia Tech Police Department
- **Zion Thomas**, undergraduate student of Computer Science

How did the task force examine issues relating to the black student experience at Georgia Tech?

After joining the Black Student Experience Task Force, student members gathered feedback directly from the student body to form a list of issues for the Institute to consider.

During spring semester 2016, the task force also partnered with an independent consultant to conduct more than 130 interviews—both focus groups and one-on-one discussions—with undergraduate and graduate students as well as select faculty and staff.

Following these interviews, the consultant developed a final report, which included themes and recommendations, and presented his findings to the Black Student Experience Task Force.

What are the task force's recommendations to ensure a safe and inclusive campus climate?

Based on the collective research findings, the Black Student Experience Task Force presented its 11 recommendations to President Peterson to ensure the campus is welcoming, inclusive, and supportive, and all recommendations were approved and will be implemented over the next three academic years.

These recommendations are grouped into four broad categories: **programs; trainings; physical spaces; and planning and assessment**. The 11 recommendations can be summarized as follows (not ranked by priority):

Programs
1. **Challenge** – Expand OMED's Challenge enrollment from 75 to 175 underrepresented minority and women students per program over the next three years. Challenge helps prepare incoming freshmen for a successful college career, both academically and socially, during a five-week intensive summer program.
2. **FASET** – Orient all new students and their parents, families, and guests to issues of diversity and inclusion and share campus resources that support Georgia Tech's commitment to diversity. At least one new session at FASET will highlight the successes of underrepresented students, faculty, and staff at the Institute.
3. **Intercultural Student Programs** – Create and support collaborative intercultural student programs that foster interactions and learning among diverse student communities at Georgia Tech.
4. **Reporting System** – Create a data infrastructure or submission tool that allows students to submit information detailing any experienced discrimination on campus. Submissions would remain anonymous.

Trainings
5. **Community Orientation and Training** – Launch online and in-service training for faculty and staff that addresses issues of gender and ethnic diversity, equity, and inclusion within the student experience. Following this training, faculty and staff will serve as ambassadors for an equitable and inclusive Georgia Tech.
6. **Cultural Inclusivity Leadership Training** – Expand and modify leadership training for leaders of student organizations to include modules on cultural inclusivity and managing student diversity. Incorporate these modules into GT 1000 classes and other opportunities.
7. **Greek Education** – Create a subcommittee of fraternity and sorority members who will plan programming on issues of race, gender, sexual orientation, and sexual assault for members of Greek Life. This subcommittee will also be tasked with evaluating the current state of Greek Life at Georgia Tech.

Physical Spaces
8. **Multicultural Center** – Create spaces where all students feel welcome on campus, in support of students' overall adjustment and well-being.

Planning and Assessment
9. **Strategic Plan** – Examine how student diversity is operationalized through Georgia Tech's Strategic Plan. Prioritize and fund proposals that enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion experiences for students.
10. **Campus Climate Assessment** – Conduct a broad-based campus climate assessment by an independent entity to obtain a deeper understanding of the concerns and experiences of all students at Georgia Tech.
11. **Institutional Climate Change and Growth** – Establish a joint student advisory group to advise and recommend actions that enhance diversity and inclusion experiences among Tech students.

When will these recommendations be implemented?
These recommendations will be implemented over the next three academic years.

Which units are tasked with implementing these recommendations?
Moving forward, an implementation team from Institute Diversity, Student Life, and Undergraduate Education will meet regularly to monitor progress on these recommendations. Additionally, the Student Intercultural Advisory Committee was established to offer guidance on diversity and inclusion and to participate in these implementation meetings in the future.

Who should I contact with any questions and/or concerns about the Black Student Experience Task Force and these recommendations?
For any questions about the Black Student Experience Task Force and/or its recommendations, email institutediversity@gatech.edu. For more information, visit diversity.gatech.edu/blackstudentexperiencetaskforce.