

Georgia Tech Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council Meeting Notes

November 30, 2020

3 – 5 p.m.

**I. Call to order**

Archie Ervin and Pearl Alexander called to order and provided opening remarks for the orientation meeting of the newly formed Georgia Tech Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council (GTDEIC). Georgia Tech President Ángel Cabrera also provided remarks and issued the charge to council members.

**II. Roll call**

Attendees present during virtual meeting:

1. Ángel Cabrera
2. Archie Ervin (GTDEIC chair)
3. Barrett Carson
4. Rebecca “Beki” Grinter
5. Bonnie Ferri
6. Byron Fitch
7. Carol Colatrella
8. Catherine Ross
9. Charles Isbell
10. Cheryl Cofield
11. Courtney Hill
12. Dana Randall
13. David Ross
14. Elora Raymond
15. Frank Neville
16. Frank Trammer
17. J. Denise Johnson-Marshall
18. James Hudgens
19. Javier Irizarry
20. John Stein
21. Joseph Hughes
22. Joseph Ludlum
23. Joseph Montoya
24. Kaye Husbands Fealing
25. Kelly Fox
26. Keona Lewis
27. Kim Cobb
28. Laurence Jacobs
29. Lea Harris
30. Leslie Sharp
31. Loraine Phillips
32. Lynn Durham
33. Martha Grover
34. Maryam Alavi
35. Melanie DeMaeyer
36. Mitchell Walker
37. Nelson Baker
38. Paul Kohn
39. Pearl Alexander (GTDEIC vice chair)
40. Phyllis Means
41. Renee Kopkowski
42. Richard Utz
43. Sandra Bramblett
44. Sharon Jones
45. Sonia Alvarez-Robinson
46. Stephanie Ray
47. Steven French
48. Steven Girardot
49. Susan Lozier

50. Tegra Myanna  
51. Terry Blum

52. Yuanzhi Tang

### III. Meeting Agenda & Talking Points

- Archie Ervin, vice president for Institute Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (IDEI) and GTDEIC chair, welcomed participants and set the context for the meeting. He noted this was an orientation for the work ahead and how the council will interact, serve the Institute, and further its success. He remarked the GTDEIC was formed to identify issues of racial and gender disparity, bias, and inequity that need to be addressed to deliver upon the Institute’s vision of inclusion. He emphasized the overarching strategic goal of the council is “To create an environment where people of all backgrounds can thrive.” He remarked on the forerunning work of the unit-level diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) councils that have emerged over the past several years. Ervin’s remarks described the diversity of the Institute-level council composed of cross-sections of leaders representing diverse voices and perspectives from Institute faculty, staff, and student bodies. He shared the general background and importance of the work ahead. He also mentioned that the formation of the GTDEIC represented the first time in Georgia Tech’s history that a council of this nature and focus had ever been created.
- Pearl Alexander, executive director for IDEI’s Diversity, Inclusion, and Engagement, welcomed participants and stressed the good work being done at the unit-level councils. She mentioned the importance of DEI work at Georgia Tech and the urgency brought about by recent conditions of greater racial and social unrest and amid the challenges of navigating the coronavirus pandemic.
- GTDEIC Remarks & Charge: Ángel Cabrera, president of Georgia Tech, referenced the human rights and civil rights struggles of the 1960s era, its impact on the world, and implications for Georgia Tech – both then and now. He remarked about changes realized in the world and at Georgia Tech since its founding. His conclusion was, “Although Tech has made notable progress, we must do better.” Cabrera’s call to action is to implement and model the change we want to see -- change that reflects the Atlanta community. He encouraged the GTDEIC to work boldly and thoughtfully to make DEI a core part of “who we are,” as it follows the Institute’s mission to serve.
- Council Goals: Alexander shared that the high-level goals for the GTDEIC are to be actionable in identifying DEI opportunities and challenges and that the GTDEIC will monitor and assess the Institute’s progress toward achieving its DEI objectives in alignment with the Institute’s recently announced [strategic plan](#). The GTDEIC will facilitate and monitor progress of key Institute objectives identified in the strategic plan and implementation strategy.

- Council Objectives: Per Ervin, the GTDEIC is not the “end-all-be-all for all things DEI.” It is, however, a conduit for analysis of issues and facilitating research for resolution of issues. Up to three to five DEI issues may be addressed concurrently via work groups as prioritized by the GTDEIC via a quasi-democratic process. Data-informed recommendations will be used to improve DEI aspects of culture and will allow the Institute to lead by example, advancing inclusive innovation. The Council will serve as a forum for Georgia Tech stakeholders, representing all divisions of the Institute, to identify and consider innovative, forward-looking, proactive approaches, tactics, and methods to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion practices and outcomes at Georgia Tech.
  
- Membership and Member Expectations: Alexander asked GTDEIC members to advocate for effective diversity, equity, and inclusion priorities and actions. Members are to lead and participate in various work groups (which will be established annually) and to engage in continuous learning to raise conscious awareness of DEI as a component of campus culture. Council members are expected to model inclusive leadership. Alexander indicated the GTDEIC will provide ongoing leadership and professional development opportunities to this end. With regard to membership, Alexander shared that in addition to the GTDEIC composition and diversity previously mentioned, the following additional appointments will be considered going forward:
  - i) At-large appointments (to be announced) to work groups as needed
  - ii) Alumni will eventually be appointed to serve on the GTDEIC
  - iii) Work groups will be established annually by GTDEIC chair/co-chair
  
- Council Structure/Operational Tactics
  - (1) Keeping in mind that visual representation conveys high-level operational tactics, workgroups will be established based on annual prioritized goals and DEI issue areas. There will be an ongoing agenda space for new business or emergent issues.
  - (2) Work groups will provide status updates to the full GTDEIC on Institute-level agendas. The work of the council will be submitted for the Institute’s Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to review. The ELT, which will authorize action and funding as necessary to achieve results, will also provide periodic discussion and updates.
  
- Georgia Tech Strategic Plan and DEI Alignment: Sonia Alvarez-Robinson, executive director for Georgia Tech Strategic Consulting, provided a strategic plan update and was

asked to share her thoughts about the new strategic plan and DEI alignment. Alvarez-Robinson's overview underscored that DEI is woven throughout the plan, and, if implemented cross-collaboratively, will be realized campus-wide. Other leaders involved in the strategic plan were invited to comment as well. Maryam Alavi, dean of Georgia Tech's Scheller College of Business, underscored that DEI is important to each of the plan's themes and advised that processes and practices should be implemented to ensure that there is a collaborative effort with regard to implementation.

- Data Visualization of Climate Assessment: Keona Lewis, associate director for Institute Diversity Research, and Joe Ludlum, assistant director for Academic Effectiveness, provided an overview of findings from the 2013, 2017-2018 campus Climate Assessment Surveys. The data revealed disparities in perceptions of the experiences of women and underrepresented minorities in areas assessed. The data showed positive changes in some perceptions assessed between the 2013 and 2017-2018 surveys. The data confirms the need for ongoing improvement. However, among all staff employees, hourly-paid employees are disproportionately Black while salaried employees are disproportionately white. Climate and culture experiences with marginalization vary significantly (negatively) by race, age, gender, political views, etc.
- The Climate Assessment data is now three-years old; the next assessment is not projected until fall 2021. Questions that arose from the data visualization presentation included: Is Georgia Tech still systematically marginalizing people within the campus community? Have improvements been made with the initiation of initiatives designed as interventions? How was faculty data collected? How might non-tenure track faculty data be shared? Will the 2020 coronavirus pandemic and virtual experiences skew future data collected? Is it possible that we might be even more precise in the next round of data collection rather than rely solely on self-reporting? Even if they exist, experiences could be hidden, missed, or glossed over.

#### **IV. Next Steps**

- Initial 2021 Priorities:
  - i) Conduct a new climate assessment, inclusive of culture and engagement indicators. Determine if the lived experiences of the workforce align with Georgia Tech values and DEI objectives. Verify that Georgia Tech is adhering to the desired culture.
  - ii) Constitute a work group to develop an Institute Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan in alignment with Georgia Tech's strategic plan DEI objectives and implementation plan.

- iii) In the interim, continue to address racial injustice issues, create a work group to identify and close gaps in disparities, at the intersections of race. Account for collective skill-building and accountability through regular reporting and updates.
- iv) Council members will be queried to identify/recommend issues of campus racial bias and inequities for full discussion and prioritization and for future GTDEIC actions.
- Council Meeting Schedule: The Council will meet mid-to-late February 2021 to begin its quarterly meeting schedule (Note: The GTDEIC will meet quarterly while workgroups meet, as needed, in between.)
- GTDEIC Work Groups

Two work groups will be convened in spring 2021:

- 2021 Climate Assessment Work Group
- Georgia Tech Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan Work Group

## **V. Adjournment**

Ervin and Alexander thanked participants for their leadership and engagement. They iterated their enthusiasm for the Council and collective wisdom represented by this inaugural work.

The meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.