

October 30, 2007

**TO** [REDACTED], Senior Vice Provost

**FROM** **GA Tech's Communication Task Force**  
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**SUBJECT** **Recommendation to Create a Campus Communication Center in the Innovative Learning Resource Center**

### **Recommendation**

The Communication Task Force constituted by Senior Vice Provost Anderson Smith recommends that Georgia Institute of Technology create a leading-edge Campus Communication Center in the Innovative Learning Resource Center.

Let us be clear: We are not proposing a writing center but rather a series of highly engaging and innovative learning spaces for studying, discussing, and practicing written, oral, visual, and nonverbal communication, both individually and collaboratively. We encourage these learning spaces to be flexible and appropriate for multipurpose communication activities—for example, tutor individuals or demonstrate collaborative planning; enable small group discussion or provide space for team presentation practice; provide resources to design a PowerPoint presentation or edit a Flash feature that goes in the presentation; offer team instruction or peer critique.

We expect activities such as these (and many more) that support communication to occur in three primary areas: (1) substantial new space designated as the Campus Communication Center in the ILRC, (2) re-purposed space designated as the Skiles Walkway Communication Café in the remodeled space surrounding the IRLC, and (3) shared multipurpose space in the ILRC.

The ongoing work of this Communication Task Force includes detailing the personnel required for the Campus Communication Center and the recommending ways in which it can coordinate with other units on campus in order to provide superior services for the Georgia Tech community.

The remainder of this memo explains the overall philosophy and mission, including guiding principles, the goal, and the approach. The audiences for the Center as well as its character are described. More specific details are given for three particularly important aspects of the Campus Communication Center: an online writing/communication lab (OWL), ESL support, and an assessment plan. The memo includes three appendixes that characterize the student and instructor audiences of GA Tech Campus Communication Center, identify online writing/communication labs (OWLs) at peer institutions, and identifies ESL services in writing/communication centers in peer institutions

### **Philosophy and Mission**

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<sup>◇</sup> Please direct correspondence to Dr. Burnett.

Communication is the process that enables people to learn deeply, to think clearly, and to join the human conversation with confidence and authority. Thus, the mission of Georgia Tech's Campus Communication Center is to promote excellence in written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal communication in ways that enable members of the Georgia Tech community to have greater success in their academic and workplace careers as well as their civic and community lives.

**Guiding Principles.** Following several general principles, the professional and peer consultants/tutors at Georgia Tech's Campus Communication Center will focus on helping people develop their communication competencies such as these:

**Critical thinking.** Active learning and higher-order thinking are fostered through communication. Sophisticated and strategic communication increases the likelihood of sophisticated and strategic thinking.

**Contexts.** Communication occurs in cross-cultural contexts that necessitate making ethical decisions while performing in US and international settings and working individually and in groups/teams.

**Meaning.** Meaning is constructed and interpreted; it's not absolute.

**Learning.** People can learn expert-like behaviors and strategies that are strengthened with regular practice.

**Goal.** The goal of the Campus Communication Center is simple: Help all members of the Georgia Tech community improve their communication competencies in a supportive, non-threatening, non-graded environment in which anyone may discuss any aspect of communication and engage in both short-term and long-term efforts to improve.

**Approach.** The consulting and tutoring in the Campus Communication Center will rest on these basic and widely accepted approaches:

**Strategies.** Demystify the process of communication by helping people strengthen their strategies for developing ideas, organizing information, and for smoothly integrating evidence and data.

**Processes.** Encourage people to think about the context and processes of communication, about the audiences' expectations and needs, and about the content and style of the artifacts.

**Competencies.** Focus on developing communication competencies rather than on correcting the artifacts—in other words, help people become better communicators in all respects rather than doing planning, drafting, editing, and/or proofreading for them.

**Original Artifacts.** Use people's own papers, presentations, visuals, proposals, reports, abstracts, letters, and theses as a starting point for strengthening their communication.

**Appropriate Pedagogy.** Adapt pedagogy to work both with individuals and with teams, thus responding efficiently and economically to particular problems.

## **Audiences**

Georgia Tech's Campus Communication Center will be both a physical and a virtual place where everyone on campus—students, faculty, staff—as well as alumni can work with trained professional and peer consultants/tutors to discuss the nature and presentation of ideas, drawing on research in rhetoric, communication, composition, and workplace communication. The Campus Communication Center will serve as a site of literacy instruction within Georgia Tech, providing support to people in all disciplines.