CELEBRATING TEN YEARS EST 2006
Welcome! Please enjoy this Viewbook created by students and staff in celebration of ten years of the Honors Program at Georgia Tech.

Philosophers from Plato and Confucius to the present have pursued understanding of truth, beauty, and goodness and how these concepts might be connected. In the Honors Program, we continue this pursuit within and beyond the classroom. We are highly motivated and curious learners who seek deep and broad understanding by both focused and interdisciplinary study.

We are also creative learners who practice what we study. We discover and invent, design and build, create works of art and literature, start enterprises, serve as mentors to younger learners, and contribute to sustainable communities. And when we innovate in these ways, we learn more. We find truth, beauty, and goodness in the world around us, sometimes in unexpected places and connected in surprising ways. And we learn how, as life-long learners and innovators, we can both find and advance truth, beauty, and goodness to improve and enrich our own lives and the world.

Robert A. M. Berry, J.D., Ph.D.
Director, Georgia Tech Honors Program
The Honors Program will be an accelerator for innovation in higher education and beyond. The Honors Program will achieve excellence in cultivating the capacity of our students to innovate for “Progress and Service.” Our students will be empowered to learn and innovate across boundaries to improve and enrich their own lives and the world.

Accelerate Innovation: We will model and advance innovation in higher education by continuous, collaborative co-invention of our learning opportunities by all members of the Honors Program community. We will deliver learning opportunities that prepare students to discover, create, and invent in any domain of human endeavor.

Cultivate Capacity: We will foster our students’ abilities by engaging with them as co-inventors of our own learning opportunities. We will extend and grow their innovative capacity by a rich array of active-learning classes, co-curriculars, and extra-curriculars embedded in our living learning community (LLC). We will encourage innovation for “Progress and Service” by our concentrations in Research, Service, and Global Engagement.

Empower to Cross Boundaries: We will deliver learning opportunities that enable discovery, creation, and invention across boundaries of discipline, theory and practice, culture and perspective, and at the local and global scale. In this way, we will equip our students for leadership in improving and enriching their own lives and the world, advancing the Georgia Tech Mission.
Honors Program
Mission Statement

A diverse community of highly motivated, curious, and creative individuals is integral to an innovation accelerator. The Honors Program community realizes our vision by partnering to design and deliver learning opportunities. Our learning opportunities enable our students to innovate in “Progress and Service” and to be leaders in transcending boundaries to improve and enrich their own lives and the world.

Who We Are: We are students, staff, and faculty who are diverse in interests, talents, backgrounds, identities, and perspectives. While we are diverse in these ways, we are alike in our motivation, curiosity, and creativity. Our diversity expands and invigorates our innovative capacity, and our sameness inspires and fuels it. Who we are, as individuals and as a community, is essential to what we are.

How We Pursue Our Vision: We partner—across students, staff, faculty, and partners beyond—to spark novel ideas, design, plan, and deliver our learning opportunities. We engage in the innovative process in student committees and student-staff meetings, and in spontaneous conversations in classrooms, faculty and staff offices, and in the hallways and community spaces of our living learning community (LLC).

What We Achieve: We realize our vision to be an innovation accelerator for higher education and beyond. We achieve excellence in cultivating innovative capacity in “Progress and Service,” and we empower our students to learn and innovate across boundaries to improve and enrich their own lives and the world.
“What you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.”
-Goethe, Faust, Part One.

The founding committee sought to create a community characterized by Dr. Gregory Nobles, a committee member, as an “Institute-wide incubator for intellectual inquiry and engagement.”

Beginning in 2006, under the leadership of Dr. Nobles, its founding director, the Honors Program aimed to deliver:

- Small, inquiry-based, active-learning classes, including innovative, interdisciplinary classes such as The Origins of Life, The Political Economy of Soccer, Technology and Disasters.
- Co-curricular activities, including student-faculty luncheons and special opportunities to meet with high-profile visiting speakers.
- A student “challenge fund” to support student-initiated project proposals.
Our Story: Evolve

The Honors Program evolved over the next several years in response to the needs and desires of the community. In 2010, as the first cohort of Honors Program students approached graduation, a highly engaged group of Honors Program students gathered at Sweetwater Nature Preserve, where the fresh air and beautiful greenery offered an ideal backdrop for conversation.

Recommendations emerged from the meeting and were incorporated into the evolving Honors Program. Student recommendations included eliminating the required Retreat for entering students (due to the many competing demands on students as they began their college careers) and requiring, instead, participation in community-building events throughout the year.

“The Honors Program seeks and encourages students who are intellectually and culturally energetic and challenges them to take full advantage of the remarkable opportunities available in the classroom, the campus, and the larger community.” Dr. Nobles (2009)

“Self-organization is a phenomenon under which a dynamical system exhibits the tendency to create organization ‘out of itself,’ without being driven by an external system, in particular, not in a ‘top-down’ way.” - Daniel Polani, “Foundations and Formalizations of Self-Organization”

At about the same time, the Honors Program moved into its new suite in the A. French Building next to Tech Tower. The suite included staff offices, a lounge for students, faculty, and staff, and an Honors Program Classroom—with the best view (at the loudest volume) of the Whistle on campus!

The Honors Program also received new funding from the Institute that enabled initiation of community-focused, experiential classes, “Connecting Academic and Societal Engagement” (CASE) Studies. New CASE Studies classes launched, thanks to Institute and other funding, included Semester in the City: Engaging English Avenue, Near Peer Mentoring: Experience in Urban Education, and The Urban Forest.
Our Story: Transition

“Why not go out on a limb? Isn’t that where the fruit is?” -Frank Scully, Variety

In Fall 2014, the Honors Program faced transition. Its founding director, Dr. Nobles had returned to the Georgia Tech faculty in anticipation of retirement two years later. A new director, Dr. Roberta Berry, assumed the helm.

The Honors Program suite in the A. French Building was needed for executive offices. The Honors Program had to find a new home as of Fall 2015.

The Board of Regents had revised criteria for “core” courses required for the Georgia Tech degree. The Honors Program needed to adjust its approach to offering innovative, interdisciplinary classes (previously offered primarily as “special topic” courses).

The Honors Program student body had grown in tandem with the growth of the Georgia Tech undergraduate population, and most of its upper-level students lived in housing remote from its first-year residence hall. The Honors Program had to find new ways to build and sustain community among an expanding student population.

There were continuing—and new—resources to address these needs. Two staff members from the founding era continued, and a third full-time staff member was hired. The Honors Program now fell under the leadership of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and could draw on the support of the Vice Provost and his office. And highly engaged Honors Program students were eager to help.

By Fall 2015, the Honors Program:

» Transitioned to a living learning community (LLC) on West Campus, with housing for all 202 members of its largest-ever Fall 2015 entering class on floors 1-3, an Honors Program Classroom, Cafe, and staff offices on the ground floor, and an apartment block for upper-level students across the street.

» Revised its curricular requirements and shifted its offerings to include more interdisciplinary “core” classes.

» Initiated a new Program Fee for entering students to support an expanded array of community-building events, including a revived Retreat—planned and delivered by upper-level students and staff and conducted two days prior to the early move-in date to avoid conflicts with other activities.
Our Story:
Celebrating 10 Years

“Celebrate what you want to see more of.”
-Tom Peters

As we celebrate 10 years from the founding, we continue to dream what can be done, and to begin it. Continuous co-invention by our partnerships has yielded new initiatives and opportunities and the promise of more to come. The genius, power, and magic of boldness continues:

- Staff have developed expertise and initiatives in mindfulness and in pursuing purpose in life. In collaboration with campus partners, they now deliver transformative curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities to our students.

- Honors Program Pathways now allow students to concentrate their studies in Research (supported by campus research partners), Service (in collaboration with partners including the Center for Serve.Learn.Sustain), or Global Engagement (including an Oxford Study Abroad Program class).

- Students have become full partners in co-invention, building a committee structure and leadership team that mentors the next generation, plans and delivers activities and events with the assistance of staff, and collaborates on all aspects of co-creating our future.
“The best way to predict the future is to invent it.”
-Alan Kay (Georgia Tech Honorary Doctorate, 2005)

Future of the Honors Program

Dreaming & Advancing

As we imagine the next 10 years and how best we might pursue our mission, these 3 goals top our list:

- All students who should belong to our community will belong, regardless of their financial circumstances.
- The faculty who best enable our students to innovate will join our community, devoting a semester to teaching the students they serve best.
- Our Honors Program facilities will reflect and advance our mission, including spaces, equipment, and furnishings that support innovation.

Please contact Honors Program Director Roberta Berry if you would like to discuss supporting our efforts to achieve these goals.
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