GEORGIA TECH STAFF COUNCIL
EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE
PROPOSAL FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF GEORGIA TECH RECOGNITION
PROGRAMS
DECEMBER 16, 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Employee Engagement Committee seeks to support the mission of the greater Georgia Tech Staff Council by working to address topics specific to the employee experience at Georgia Tech. In response to staff and committee concerns voiced in spring 2015, the Employee Engagement Committee sought to partner with the Office of Human Resources (OHR), Institute Communications, and other respective departments to propose enhancements that will improve the way staff are recognized at Georgia Tech. The committee met with Institute leaders, assessed peer institutions, conducted focus groups, and polled staff regarding their opinions on recognition practices at Georgia Tech. The following document highlights the Committee's observations and recommendations.

OBSERVATIONS

- Well-designed recognition programs have the ability to raise morale, attract and retain quality employees, elevate productivity, increase effectiveness, and reap continued productivity.
- Executive leadership support is paramount for a successful recognition program.
- Individualization of rewards, timing of the recognition, and manager support and adoption are important aspects of a successful recognition program.
- Peer institutions have hybrid models of both formal university recognition and unit-level programs, offering a myriad of other activities ranging from peer-to-peer recognition opportunities to annual staff-wide appreciation events.
- Connection to the Georgia Tech Institute awards event is low for staff surveyed, and most find the nominations process cumbersome.
- Georgia Tech staff are open to recognition programs that provide a variety of tangible, non-tangible, and cash rewards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish a full-time position responsible for the development and administration of a comprehensive staff recognition program for Georgia Tech.
- Amend the Institute Staff Awards Program to increase participation and perceived value of recognition.
- Increase the years of service milestones recognized through the service year recognition program.

- Provide resources to support recognition activities at all levels of the Institute.
- Consider including a peer-to-peer rewards system as a part of the comprehensive recognition program.
- Establish an Institute-wide staff appreciation event.

BACKGROUND

In spring 2015, the first Employee Engagement Committee convened by the Georgia Tech Staff Council was charged with identifying ways to address topics of concern specific to the employee experience at Georgia Tech. These topics included, but were not limited to, staff retention efforts, recognition, diversity, fair treatment, and employee engagement in ways that reinforce the Institute's core values and fit within the Institute's mission. Based on staff feedback received through a series of initial Staff Council Town Hall sessions, committee members chose to assess Georgia Tech's recognition programs. The committee established a goal to provide the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and the Executive Vice President of Administration and Finance a set of recommendations on enhancements to Georgia Tech's established programs by December 31, 2015.

Assessing the current structure of our Institute-wide recognition activities is not a new activity at Georgia Tech. Below is a brief timeline outlining activities to improve the Institute's recognition programs:

- **2009:** A committee on recognition programs was initiated by the Associate Vice President of Human Resources and endorsed by the Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs. Recommendations were presented on future recognition programs (Appendix D). While the committee was commended for its efforts, it is not clear if any action was taken on their recommendations.
- **2012:** Administration of the Administrative Service Award was realigned to the Office of Human Resources. That year, OHR created a new award category – the Outstanding Management in Action Award and realigned the Administrative Service Award to serve as the pinnacle award for staff.
- **2013:** A decision was made to separate the 10- and 25-year milestone service awards from the Faculty & Staff Honors Luncheon and present the awards during a newly created event – the Service Year Recognition Reception. That same year, the Outstanding Staff Awards were redesigned to reflect the five tenets of the strategic plan: entrepreneurship, innovation, process improvement excellence, leadership, and service to the community.

ASSESSMENT OF RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Beginning in June 2015, Employee Engagement Committee members met with key constituents within the Office of Human Resources, the department currently responsible for most of Georgia Tech's formal recognition activities and efforts. Those meetings led to a greater understanding of current Institute recognition programs, University System of Georgia (USG) and State of Georgia policies which impact recognition programs, and the challenges OHR faces when considering new offerings for recognition programs.

In addition to the internal assessment of recognition programs, the committee collected data from organizations outside of Georgia Tech. A benchmarking survey was conducted on recognition programs with 15 peer, aspirational peer, and USG universities, as well as three corporations. The data collected from this survey was used to develop an initial set of ideas around enhancements to Georgia Tech recognition programs, which were tested through two assessment methods. First, two focus groups were held with ten Human Resources (HR) Business Partners, HR Representatives and HR Contacts to gather their opinions on existing and potential Institute-wide and unit-level recognition programs. Second, the committee administered a PollEverywhere survey on potential enhancements to existing recognition programs to staff during and after the fall 2015 Staff Council Town Hall meeting. This survey received more than 150 responses. A summary of the conclusions drawn from each data collection method can be found below.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

BENCHMARKING SURVEY

Interview requests were sent to 30 universities and four corporations regarding their staff/employee recognition programs. The committee received responses from more than 50 percent of those contacted. Amongst the university peers, the committee learned:

- All voiced the importance of having executive leadership support for the program.
- 70 percent of universities with campus-wide recognition programs managed those programs from their human resources unit.
- 100 percent of the institutions had numerous decentralized recognition activities and ceremonies that were managed by individual campus units.
- In almost every case, the institutions begin to recognize an employee's years of service prior to the ten-year mark.
- Those organizations that offered monetary awards provided a similar number of awards as compared to Georgia Tech.
- Almost half dedicated one or more staff members to manage the program.
- Those with mature programs had dedicated funds for recognition activities.
- Amongst those activities noted, most had an annual awards event, coupled with other activities ranging from appreciation days, to online tool kits for managers, to informal peer-to-peer efforts.

Most programs grew organically, either as a product of survey or taskforce recommendations, or a call to action from upper administration. While programs and initiatives varied, most peers noted difficulties in obtaining nominations; staff members stated the process was either too time consuming or too complex. While all were pleased with their results, many noted they wished they could grant more awards and have larger budgets.

Those programs that appeared to be most successful formed a comprehensive program based on their Institution's values and mission. Of unique interest was the program at Cornell University,

which allowed for online discounts at major university retailers and free shipping of products for staff. Some colleges, such a Georgia State University and Auburn University, partnered with their athletic associations to offer autographed memorabilia or, in Auburn's case, fund some of their programming. Many that hosted appreciation days did so multiple times throughout the selected day or week so that all employees regardless of work shift could participate in the activity. Some activities also allowed for the participation of staff family members.

The table below gives a synopsis of the benchmarking data collected from representative organizations.

Activity	Georgia Tech	MIT	CU Boulder	Georgia State University	Turner Broadcasting
Annual awards event	In spring – recognizes up to 9 different members/teams	In spring – recognizes 15-20 people/teams	Partner with Athletics for sporting event tickets	A&F Reward and Recognition recognizes 5 people; 1 AVP leadership award	Not annual – occur as successes and anniversaries occur
Annual appreciation event	No institute level – some department events	None indicated on Institute level	2- luncheon/ BBQ (winter) and luncheon (spring)	Annual – 2 ceremonies at 2 separate times	None organized annually
Entity that initiates activities	OHR for staff awards	OHR	Staff Council within OHR	Organizational Development/ OHR	Workplace Initiatives
Entity that carries out activities	OHR	FTE – Employee Rewards and Recognition Program Director	Staff Council with assistance from FTE – Admin Professional	FTE – Organizational Development	FTE – Director of Workplace Initiatives
Unique aspects of the program(s)	Staff awards combined in faculty program; based on tenets of strategic plan	"On the spot" awards given at any time; all annual awards are peer-to-peer with no manager involvement	Units submit ideas to be approved by OHR	Different activities at each appreciation event to appeal to audience	Anniversaries receive CNN-branded items; successes noted in newsletter

FOCUS GROUPS
Focus groups concentrated on those at the center of recognition activities for their units – human resources business partners, representatives, or contacts. Participants were asked to provide their thoughts on the current set of recognition activities offered by both their own units and the Institute, as well as their opinions on potential enhancements to these programs based on the

ideas that were discovered through the benchmarking survey. The following themes emerged from the ten participants in the two focus group sessions:

- A culture of recognition is not apparent at all levels or within all departments of Georgia Tech.
- Success depended upon the unit manager's support of the recognition practice.
- People do not feel connected to the Institute-level awards – the awards feel too lofty and removed from what they do on a daily basis.
- Satisfaction was expressed for departmental initiatives, if currently in place.
- People have little awareness of recognition activities outside of their unit.
- Staff don't always expect monetary rewards – anything from plaques, time off, free parking, or verbal recognition is appreciated.

It should be noted that two colleges, Scheller College of Business and College of Engineering, award their internal staff award recipients with $5,000 and $1,500 checks, respectively, compared to the $1,000 award amount presented the Institute.

POLLEVERYWHERE SURVEY

A five-question survey was administered at two events: first, online at the October 13 Staff Council Town Hall, in which 74 employees participated; and second, via paper at the November 4 Benefits Fair, in which 85 employees participated. The intent of the survey was to glean opinions regarding current recognition programs, as well as potential enhancements to Georgia Tech programs. An overview of the results are as follows:

- Almost 90 percent of those surveyed said Georgia Tech should simplify the process for nominating staff for an annual performance award.
- 61 percent thought Georgia Tech should hold separate award ceremonies for staff and faculty.
- 81 percent of respondents would like to expand the recognition for years of service to every five years.
- Almost half of all respondents (45 percent) indicated that a monetary award is the most meaningful way for Georgia Tech to recognize outstanding employees. Examples of monetary recognition mentioned by respondents included free parking, time off, and event tickets.
- More than half of the respondents stated that, if the Institute were to establish a staff appreciation event, they would prefer to have it held at an off-campus site (i.e., Atlanta attraction or museum).

RESEARCH ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND RECOGNITION

Employee engagement is one of the main benefactors of recognition. According to a 2014 study by *Entrepreneur* magazine, 65 percent of employees would be happier if they got more

recognition at work, whereas only 35 percent say they would be happier if they got a raise. Having a consistent and continuous feedback process and the strong recognition platform in place that integrates both learning and succession planning systems, are critical to improving workforce communications and engagement. "When executed properly, strategic recognition holds the power to increase motivation, enhance engagement levels and drive bottom-line results through improved productivity levels," said Derek Irvine, head of Global Strategy for Globoforce (Hastings, Rebecca R., A Strategic Approach to Recognition, 2009).

Research suggests the most successful recognition programs:

- Use formal and informal activities to build a "culture of recognition."
- Provide a wide variety of recognition rewards to appeal to individual preferences.
- Emphasize recognition of increased quality in performance, instead of simply quantity of effort.
- Recognize workers regularly; sporadic recognition may be worse than no recognition.
- Link reward activities to specific business objectives and/or cultural values.
- Measure the cost of the recognition reward system and the benefits gained.

(Hastings, Rebecca R., A Strategic Approach to Recognition, Society for Human Resource Management, 2009).

Furthermore, research indicates organization-wide recognition programs have the ability to:

- Raise employee morale
- Attract and retain key employees
- Elevate productivity
- Increase competitiveness
- Improve quality and customer service
- Reduce employee stress, absenteeism, and turnover
- Keep employees motivated and help reinforce expectations and goals during times when other benefits are scarce
- Reap continued productivity through repetitious recognition of desired behaviors rewarded
- Give a sense of inclusion to all

(Hastings, Rebecca R., A Strategic Approach to Recognition, Society for Human Resource Management, 2009) and (Bersin, Josh, Becoming Irresistible: A New Model for Employee Engagement, Deloitte University Press, 2015).

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the Institute's strategic vision and plan, Georgia Tech aspires to be leaders in serving the human condition, where others will look to us to ask "What does Georgia Tech think?" We seek to relentlessly pursue institutional effectiveness and honor a performance-based management system. We believe in our people and know that great things come from those within our campus community.

Aside from the formal Faculty and Staff Honors Luncheon, where Institute awards for faculty and staff are recognized annually each spring, and the Faculty and Staff Service Year Recognition Reception, where 10- and 25-year service recipients are honored, Georgia Tech does not have a structured recognition program. Many colleges and units are supplementing recognition activities with their own programs, such as annual award events, employee of the month programs, and other informal gatherings to show appreciation to employees. Key stakeholders throughout the Institute have recognized that more can be done in terms of staff recognition. This is evidenced by the convening of committees and task forces from 2009 through the present to assess and identify opportunities for improving recognition programs.

Steeped in Georgia Tech's values, and recognizing the need to do more to acknowledge staff contributions to the Institute, the Employee Engagement Committee believes Georgia Tech would greatly benefit from a comprehensive employee recognition program. To be successful, this program should be supported and promoted from the highest levels of leadership though the individual managers in our units. An ideal program would provide an array of recognition options to allow managers to tailor recognition to fit the culture of the unit and individual(s) who will receive the acknowledgement. In addition to these imperatives for a comprehensive recognition program, the Employee Engagement Committee submits the recommendations that follow.

1. ***Establish a Full-time Position Responsible for the Development and Administration of a Comprehensive Staff Recognition Program for Georgia Tech.***

To truly ensure that a robust recognition program is adopted, maintained, and enhanced at Georgia Tech, resources should be dedicated to create a full-time position, with the incumbent's main responsibility to coordinate the program. This recommendation supports the 2009 Recognition Programs Committee's primary suggestion, as well as mirrors the resources provided for more than half of our peer and aspirational peer recognition programs.

Funded and housed within OHR, recommended responsibilities for this position should include:

- Building and managing a recognition program (formal, informal, Institute-wide, departmental, appreciation activities, years of service, etc.).
- Distributing funds to departments for internal recognition activities.

- Providing guidance/creativity/training for managers and staff.
- Clarifying USG and state policies regarding recognition and awards.
- Serving as a resource for questions.
- Identifying current practices occurring at Georgia Tech.
- Coordinating with faculty awards representatives on Institute best practices.
- Partnering with the campus community, both internally in OHR (total rewards, work/like, benefits, workplace learning and professional development, etc.) and throughout all campus units.
- Joining a professional organization, such as Recognition Professionals International (RPI).

2. *Amend the Institute Staff Awards Program to Increase Participation and Perceived Value of Recognition.*

As the focus group and survey data explains, a majority of the staff respondents cited the need to simplify the nominations process. Numerous suggestions were given for ways to improve the experience with the process and the perceived value of the awards given. Based on this feedback, the Committee recommends the following actions:

- Assess the current language used for the staff awards to determine the connotation/meaning at all staff levels. If language is deemed germane to all, consider providing definitions of words that might seem unattainable to some staff members (e.g. innovative, entrepreneur, etc.)
- Consider creating a new award category to honor staff at any level for displaying values the Institute holds dear (e.g., student engagement, customer service, etc.) A few examples for a name might be "Spirit of Georgia Tech," "Serving the Client," "Burdell's Best," or "Bridging the Gap" award.
- Create an online nomination form that allows nominators to identify key behaviors and attributes in short dialogue boxes, rather than scripting recommendation letters.
- Assess current award prize amounts and offerings to differentiate different levels of awards given (i.e., unit, division, Institute) and increase the award recipient's perceived value of the award. This assessment might include:
  - o The possibility of raising the amount provided by Institute monetary awards to a level that is higher than the monetary awards given by the colleges.
  - o Consider adding coverage for a Georgia Tech benefit (e.g., paid parking) as a supplement to the monetary award.
  - o The feasibility of allowing staff to customize their recognition reward by offering a menu of reward options within a specific dollar limit.

- The possibility of developing paper (printable, customizable templates), and online forms of recognition (e-certificates and e-badges) that allow staff to send to their colleagues at any point in time.
- Identify existing or appoint representatives in each campus unit to coordinate recognition nominations for division, Institute, and USG awards.
- Establish separate events for staff and faculty to recognize Institute awards.
- Work with Institute leadership to determine appropriate ways for involving the Executive Leadership Team in the recognition of staff.
- Ensure Institute-level award selection committees have plans in place for maintaining continuity through leadership and membership transitions.

3. *Increase the Years of Service Milestones Recognized through the Service Year Recognition Program.*

Benchmark data collected both in 2009 and 2015 suggests that Georgia Tech lags behind when recognizing its employees for their years of service. Results from the 2015 PollEverywhere survey showed that 81 percent of respondents would appreciate being recognized at the five-year level and beyond.

Based on that information, the Committee recommends the expansion of the Service Year Recognition Program to begin at the six month probationary period, one-year mark, five-year mark, and then regularly every five years. Ideas for carrying out this expanded recognition program include:

- Develop tiered recognition options that increase with the year of service milestone.
  - Early milestone recognition could consist of a congratulation communication sent to employees by email or interoffice mail.
  - Multiple (possibly two to three) options for recognition materials should increase in substance with the increase in years of service to allow for recipient customization.
- Coordinate the acquisition of recognition materials with campus units (e.g., Athletics, Bookstore, Office of the Arts, etc.) for Georgia Tech-themed items.
  - Benchmarking revealed that many peer institutions primarily offer merchandise, certificates, or trinkets engraved with the Institution's logo.
  - Third party vendors should be considered when researching these options for service awards; however, alternative ideas should also be explored (i.e., working with alumni corporations to develop signature gifts for employees, enlisting gifts from partners on-campus (i.e., one of the campus's machine shops, the Invention Studio, etc.)

o Considerations for recognition materials should be made following a thorough examination of the USG/State of Georgia policies on gift giving to ensure Georgia Tech remains in compliance.

It is important to recognize, as with any form of praise, that the employee will feel most appreciated when recognition is given in a timely fashion and in a way that is meaningful to the employee. Service year awards should also grow incrementally, with their value commensurate to the years of service honored.

4. *Provide Resources to Support Recognition Activities at all Levels of the Institute.*

As noted through our focus group studies, many departments across campus are already providing recognition activities, either on a monthly or annual basis. We believe this should still take place; however, the Institute should have more awareness of the activities occurring in each department and provide resources or guidance where they are lacking.

To assist the departments, the Committee believes the Institute should:

- Create a recognition training program that will build awareness of the opportunities available for all staff, and ensure that managers are knowledgeable and capable of participating in recognition activities for their team members.
- Develop a toolbox and provide examples of recognition best practices in place across both at Georgia Tech and other universities. Two examples of a best practice can be found at the University of Washington (http://www.washington.edu/admin/hr/roles/mgr/ee-recognition/award-ideas) and the University of Colorado – Boulder (http://www.colorado.edu/hr/training/recognition-programs).
- Information or a set of FAQs should be developed to detail for staff the ways in which they can be recognized for their work and service to Georgia Tech, and what it means to go "above and beyond" primary job responsibilities, for unit, division, Institute, and USG-level awards.

5. *Consider Including a Peer-to-Peer Rewards System as a Part of the Comprehensive Recognition Program.*

Peer-to-peer recognition efforts are ingrained in many peer recognition programs and, quite possibly, are already happening in unit and division programs at Georgia Tech. While caution should be taken when considering the use of a peer-to-peer reward system as a formal means of recognition, we recognize that organizations tend to see tremendous impact when providing tools that allow individuals to recognize their colleagues for doing their best work.

Ideas for peer-to-peer recognition at Georgia Tech could include:

- E-cards or stationery that could be used by any employee at any time to recognize his/her peer(s). This idea was first presented by the 2009 Georgia Tech Recognition Programs Committee.
- Online badges or icons that can be awarded and displayed on Office 365 and possibly social media platforms (such as LinkedIn).
- "Kudos" or "high-five" programs, which allow for on-the-spot recognition of staff. Programs such as these are in place at the University of Michigan, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Cornell University.

Simple and effective, with little management needed once adopted, a peer-to-peer recognition component would not only benefit those receiving the praise, but also those who extend the recognition.

6. *Establish an Institute-wide Staff Appreciation Event*

Of the peer institutions who coordinated a campus-wide appreciation event specifically for staff, all were cognizant of the idiosyncratic natures and needs of their staff. Here at Georgia Tech, we too would have to consider varied, and possibly creative ways to ensure that all members of the staff community feel that they have the opportunity to participate in a campus-wide staff appreciation event.

- Consider holding multiple instances of a single event so that all employees could participate in the event, regardless of their shift. This practice is done at institutions such as Cornell University and Georgia State University.
- Incorporate a staff appreciation day into an existing "Day of Service" (for instance, TEAM Buzz Day), such as occurs at Tulane University.
- Offer a varied set of events for staff throughout the year, such as breakfasts and barbecues, but also includes their families.

Several major campus units (College of Engineering, Administration and Finance, Office of Information Technology, Facilities Management, etc.) currently host their own staff appreciation events. Each of these events should be assessed to identify best practices that can serve as a template for a campus-wide Institute event. When surveyed, more than 50 percent of the Georgia Tech respondents indicated that they would prefer to attend an appreciation event held off-campus. This idea should be explored, as many local attractions provide discounted tickets for groups.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION
While not intimately familiar with the strategic initiatives within various units across campus, we believe the following recommendations could be implemented in various ways. Below, please find implementation models based on perceived expenses and time constraints.

Estimated Expense / Resource Level	Activity
Low	• Assess the current language used for staff awards • Create online form for staff award nominations • Identify/appoint unit award representatives • Determine appropriate ways to involve Institute executives in recognition • Ensure Institute-level award selection committees have continuity plans • Develop resource bank/toolkit of recognition best practices • Develop a set of FAQs detailing how staff can be recognized
Medium	• Consider creating a new staff award category • Assess current prize amounts and offerings to differentiate award levels • Establish separate events for staff and faculty award recognition • Create a full-time position responsible for the Georgia Tech recognition program • Increase service year recognition to one-year, five-years and every five thereafter • Acquire recognition materials from campus units and third party vendors • Create a recognition training program • Develop a peer-to-peer reward system
High	• Create a staff-only appreciation event

Estimated Time Frame	Activity
1-3 Months	• Assess the current language used for staff awards • Create online form for staff award nominations • Identify/appoint unit award representatives • Determine appropriate ways to involve Institute executives in recognition • Ensure Institute-level award selection committees have continuity plans
4-6 Months	• Create a full-time position responsible for the Georgia Tech recognition program • Consider creating a new staff award category • Assess current prize amounts and offerings to differentiate award levels
More than 6 Months	• Develop resource bank/toolkit of recognition best practices • Develop a set of FAQs detailing how staff can be recognized • Establish separate events for staff and faculty award recognition • Increase service year recognition to one-year, five-years and every five thereafter • Acquire recognition materials from campus units and third party vendors • Create a recognition training program • Develop a peer-to-peer reward system • Create a staff-only appreciation event

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Georgia Tech's current Institute and departmental programs are the initial pieces of the foundation of a robust recognition program, but more can be done to enhance this area of

employee engagement. As information was learned about other recognition programs, it appears that they were founded on ideas that ran deeper than distributing awards and thank-yous; they complimented and reinforced the organization's mission, culture, goals, and ideals. To ensure a culture of recognition permeates the Georgia Tech, the program cannot live solely in the Office of Human Resources, but must thrive within all threads of Georgia Tech.

While the individual tasked with employee recognition must be an active partner in the development of an employee engagement strategy, multiple employees from diverse units and leadership levels must be involved in the development of this task. While our strategy will be unique to the idiosyncratic nature of our Institution, an idea that the Deloitte University Press presented, founded on creating an "irresistible" workplace, seems a logical prototype. They state employers must incorporate five distinct elements for successful implementation: meaningful work; hands-on management; positive work environment; growth opportunity; and trust in leadership. These are ideals that Georgia Tech should consider when developing its comprehensive recognition program.

In order for a recognition program to be truly successful, it must emphasize and reinforce behaviors and ideals that are synonymous with the Institution. All employees must believe they are supported and have an opportunity to grow and succeed. With a strategy based on the five tenets above, employees might have opportunities to:

- Exercise the tools to succeed autonomously.
- Understand how they fit within the Institution as early as the application process.
- Have respite opportunities that boost creativity.
- Receive continuous and ongoing recognition.
- Grow within their positions, or job shadow in others to gain transferable skills.

Similarly, managers should be encouraged with:

- Setting goals, supporting his/her people, coaching for high performance, and providing feedback for continuous improvement.
- Developing a positive work environment that is flexible and supportive.
- Recognizing when their direct reports succeed.
- Being available and transparent.
- Instilling a visionary spirit with his/her team and championing the mission.

CONCLUSION

Buttressed by the findings of the 2009 Recognition Programs Committee, as well as data collected for the development of this whitepaper, the Employee Engagement Committee believes that it is an opportune time to engage in the development of a comprehensive staff recognition program at Georgia Tech. In the changing workforce climate, where more Millennials continue to enter the workplace and demands for people's time increases, employees will need to feel valued to remain connected to the Institute. By receiving support from our administration, assessing what's currently being done at both the unit and institutional levels, dedicating time and resources to the process, and creating meaningful approaches to recognize great work, Georgia Tech can be proud of its efforts to engagement employees.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LIST OF STAFF COUNCIL EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Maryann Carroll, Associate Director, Human Resources Information Systems
- Tina Clonts, Institute Finance Partner, Institute Budget Planning and Administration
- Juana Cunningham, Consultant Senior, Office of Strategic Consulting
- LaJauna Ellis, Executive Assistant to the Dean, College of Engineering
- Jonathan Goitz, Education Abroad Advisor, Industrial & Systems Engineering
- Judy Minniefeld, Administrative Professional Senior, Facilities
- Gerri Naramore, Director – Financial Administration II, Provost and Executive VP for Academic Affairs
- Laura Pusateri, Special Events Manager, Institute Communications
- Gautam Saha, Instructional Designer, Georgia Tech Professional Education
- David Selman, Sponsorship Res Consultant/Financial Manager II, Ivan Allen College
- Justin Shepherd, Institutional Research Analyst III, Institutional Research & Planning
- Craig Womack, Director of Undergraduate Programs, Scheller College of Business

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

What do you know of formal recognition here at GT?
- GTRI has recognition program ≈ $500 monetary award
- Spot awards (Enrollment Services) – Flowers, Service Awards, Department provides holiday gifts; Appreciation Day; Separate luncheon for those nominated for Institute staff awards
- CoE nominates for staff awards
  - Nothing additional at CoE level
  - Nominator may do more for the employee that they nominated
- Institute level programs you are aware of:
  - 10 & 25 years of service
  - Faculty & staff annual awards
  - Admin & Finance Appreciation day – oh no, that is divisional
- Divisional programs:
  - Admin & Finance Appreciation Day
    - Group you may not know you get to meet
    - Encouraged to attend by management
    - Karaoke, pool, ice cream
  - Campus Services Holiday Party

What is the motivation to nominate?
- To show you are not viewed as a workhorse, you are appreciated
- Institute wide awards – Feel far removed – no connection to campus, not intimate
- CoE – Big deal when a CoE employee wins
  - Implemented their own
  - Not sure what the criteria is to win (X2)
- New employee @<6 months, was not aware of the faculty and staff awards

If Institute continues these awards, how can this be improved?
- No one meets the criteria as noted in the categories
- Not everyone impacts the entire campus
- Most have excellent staff in their own division
- It takes great effort to nominate employees
- Campus Services has Employee of the month
  - Gift card
  - Free parking space
  - Catered food
  - Take pictures with VPCS, Paul Strouts
  - Post on Campus Services website

- - - People appreciate this attention
- Service awards are expected
- Have an Institute award for those who can't achieve the Institute staff award, a shining star award
- Monthly campus wide recognition too hard
- Institute could support departmental awards
  - Many departments cannot afford – small foundation money
  - Doesn't have to be monetary
  - Does facilities feel they receive appreciation?

How could the Institute's awards stand out compared to the departmental awards?
- Not impacting the entire campus shouldn't exclude you from being considered from the Institute award
- Departmental level awards are more equal – one mission
- Both have a purpose but at the departmental level they are more meaningful

Is it more important to be recognized by the Institute or Department?
- Combination
- Institute to feel part of the larger community
- Department level recognizes the administrators

Departmental Recognition:
GTRI:
- $150 Spot Awards & $500 Star Awards – anytime, no limit; internal & external to GTRI
- Bonus's twice a year for moral & retention

CoE:
- Annual staff appreciation day
  - Picnic, caricatures, gifts – with budget cuts now an ice cream social
  - 3 - $1,500 staff awards
  - CoE Cares Committee
    - Promotes Health & Wellness
      - Volunteers at Food Bank/Gardening
      - Feature projects in their newsletter
  - Annual Staff Appreciation luncheon (off site)
  - Fall welcome back faculty & staff
    - Picnic at Piedmont Park
    - Hesitate to do off campus fear of who will attend, but have had good participation
  - Holiday lunch

GTRI ElSYS Lab:
- Braves game (500 employees) Freddy Gonzales visits the group
- Ice cream social
- Stone mountain/Aquarium/Picnic – all family events

Business Office:
- Hot Dog Day – directors fund
- Thanksgiving dinner
- Christmas offsite lunch and gifts
- Family at faculty & staff awards

ISYE:

New chair attempting to make staff "more collegiate"

Do departmental celebrations help with motivation?
- Makes the employee feel good
- Boosts morale
  - Everyone working and not able to have conversations
    - Get to know each other and may find out that someone needs you
- One thing that has kept me here is the flexibility and family feeling
- Makes coming to work easier
- And helps with how we feel about each other
- Police Chief takes new officers out to lunch; they don't feel alone

Non-Monetary rewards:
- VPCS meets with new hires each month for one hour and listens to them
- People leave because they do not feel recognized
- NEE develops confidence
- GTRI buddy/sponsor for their first year
- Mentor for help you find your way around
- HR Rep ensures you are ok

How do you like to be recognized?
- Courtesy (speak to me) break the ice
- Gift cards to favorite stores
- Flowers, nice notes – something spontaneous
- Not just cash
- Verbal recognition – "I appreciate what you do."

What is a meaningful Institute monetary award?
- Free parking anywhere on campus for a year

- o This would be more meaningful than cash
- Something to share with the department – dining out together
- B&N Gift Card
- GT Swag items
- Game tickets
- GT Shirts
- "Appreciation is smaller than you think it is."
- Family participation
- $1,000 post tax will pay a bill and goes away quickly
- Award something that represents the Institute
- Lunch with Dr. Peterson
- Celebration with the department
  - o Inspires others
  - o Reflected glory
- Tangible items makes more excitement
- Institute VS Departmental awards – both have their place

If you won an award, what would you want to walk away with?
- Money
- Plaque
- Crystal trophy
- GTRI – May award ceremony – certificate & $1,000+
- Time off
- Leave early
- State mandated no raises, lost income never recuperated
- Time off on birthday
- Free Parking or $800? 100% agree, free parking
- Plaque or GT Swag? Plaque/certificate unless the swag is personalized
- Tickets would be cool
- ISYE – Dean bought everyone tickets to the staff discounted football game

What about the Institute ceremony?
- Last few years you can see the attempt to help the flow at the ceremony
- Don't relate to the faculty awards
- Staff only ceremony will be better (X3)
- Faculty and staff have different focus
- Staff have different interest and more fun

Institute Staff Appreciation Day
- Doesn't have to be a ceremony
- GSU has spring picnic: Dunk the President booth, DJ, Tee Shirts, volleyball

- o During workday
- o No family, though people did bring their children, not turned away
  - ▪ Would appreciate bringing family so others can meet them
  - ▪ Institute wide may be a lot, may need to be departmental

Are the Years of Service awards or Work recognition more important?
- We crave appreciation – work recognition more important
- Force departments to choose someone!

Should a unit have a coordinator?
- Would help do all of the work
- A creative person can push more
- Someone familiar with the rules and standards of the nomination process
- Has been helpful
  - o Brings to light those not always in the forefront
  - o Takes work to pull information together
  - o Hear what other departments are doing

How did you decide what to give as departmental awards?
- VP takes the employees department to lunch
- Budget prevents monetary awards
- Hard to select one customer service award
- Gravitates toward group awards
- CoE – Outstanding Staff; Technical; Team Players & New high potential staff awards
- What is meaningful here may not be meaningful elsewhere
- Recognition gives people a voice – their dean has office hours for faculty & staff
  - o Shows recognition
  - o Equalizes service awards

What would you like to see as staff appreciation events (Institute Wide)?
- What Campus Services is doing today
- Games to get employees engaged
- Do something to get them talking
- Fun, festive environment
- Mangers serve staff
- Treat to see Dr. Peterson/Dr. Bras
- Guest speakers – GT execs or outside motivational speaker
  - o Shows effort

Within division or Institute level?
- Institute is so huge – division level is better
- Easier to package – decide within the department
  - o Shows appreciation at "home"

Activities at Division or Institute level?
- Annual ceremony is considered the same old thing
  - o Not meaningful
  - o Not taken seriously
  - o Recognize group – not individuals
  - o Random fall lunch not successful because here it is again.

Does GT have a culture of Employee Staff recognition?
- Not really – criteria not clearly made known for employees
- Depends on who is at the top
- Some departments – Do more with Less, your recognition is that you have a job – be glad to be employed
- Unanimous: No, we do not have a culture of staff recognition.
- Faculty staff luncheon – if you win, you go for free, if not, you pay
- Incremental "something"
  - o Quarterly video as a thank you

Have you nominated or been nominated for the Institute Staff Award?
  - o Criteria seemed a lot – must be phenomenal to win
  - o Wording makes it feel it must advance campus – must be profound
  - o Not for the "go-to" person
- If you have 10 years, receive a certificate & luncheon
  - o CS had a second ceremony for years of service – get a plaque award
  - o Institute lunch only
  - o It is really, really long
  - o Invited family to attend
  - o Meaningful, otherwise you would not be recognized
  - o Nice to be seen
  - o At GSU, every five years gets a certificate and a pin – get progressively nicer each 5 years – felt meaningful more often
- Criteria for Faculty Staff Awards:
  - o Not impossible but not everyone has the opportunity to save the Institute thousands of dollars or to accomplish the strategic plan
  - o Typically not in a decision making "lasting change" to the institute role.

Goal 5: Appreciation/Recognition – What keeps you interested/retain employment/attract new employees

- Campus wide shows you what others do
- King of Pops
- Whistle articles
- Civility Initiative
- Telecommuting
    - At the discretion of the department
    - No transparency
    - New employees telecommute and the older employees are not offered or don't know about it
    - Reinforce communication of these options
    - Stress management/Working mothers/Attract smart workers – Industry is not afraid to "try"
    - Respect by management toward employees
        - Open door policy

Civility

- Understand what those outside of your own department do
- People Proud: We may not understand what the other areas do
- Education articles
    - Mission of the department
    - Makes campus "smaller"
    - Whistle articles/videos
   - Departmental spotlight

Goal 5 – Recognition to attract/develop/retain - how can recognition accomplish this?

- Institute does a good job to appreciate and recognize
- We have all been a part of this
- Promote total rewards programs (perks)
    - Child Care
    - Dependent Care
    - Wellness
    - Flexible schedule
- Enhance work/life programs
- GT provides work life balance
- Need to work when you feel good about it

## APPENDIX C: STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

1. What is the most meaningful way for Georgia Tech to recognize an outstanding employee? N=159

A. Non-Monetary Award (Certificate, Trophy, Plaque, GT Gear)

B. Monetary Award / Gift Certificate

C. Other Benefit (Free Parking, Extra Time Off, Event Tickets)

D. Public Appreciation (Newsletter, Meeting, Photo, Appearance at a GT Event)

E. Departmental Appreciation (Catered Lunch)

F. Verbal / Written Appreciation
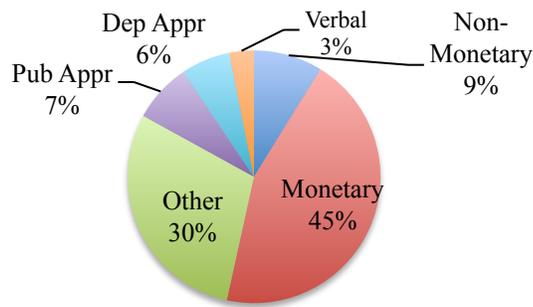
**2. What would you most like to see as an institute wide staff appreciation event? N=149**

A.   Food Trucks / Vendors

B.   Picnic in the Park

C.   Motivational Speaker / Pep-Rally

D.   Tailgate at a Sporting Event

E.   GT Staff Appreciation Day at an Atlanta Attraction / Museum
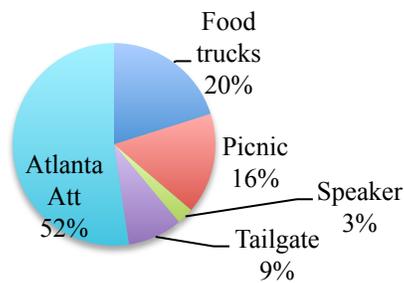
3. Should Georgia Tech increase the distribution of Years of Service awards from 10 & 25 years only to every five years? N=149
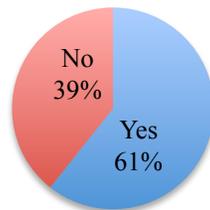
    A. Yes

    B. No
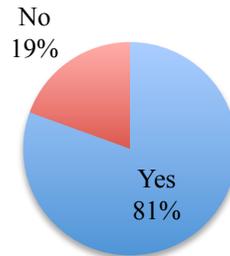
4. Should Georgia Tech hold separate award ceremonies for staff and faculty? N=150

    A. Yes

    B. No

5. Should Georgia Tech simplify the process for nominating staff for an annual performance award? N=153

    A. Yes

    B. No