

Fall 2009 iMPACT SPEAKER SERIES

Dr. G. P. "Bud" Peterson, President, Georgia Tech

In April 2009, following a unanimous vote by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents, Dr. G. P. "Bud" Peterson became the eleventh president of the Georgia Institute of Technology. Throughout his career, Peterson has played an active role in helping to establish the national education and research agendas, serving on numerous industry, government, and academic task forces and committees. He has previously served as chancellor of the University of Colorado at Boulder and provost at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York.

A distinguished scientist, Peterson was selected in 2008 by President George W. Bush to serve on the National Science Board through 2014. The Board oversees the National Science Foundation (NSF) and advises the President and Congress on national policy related to science and engineering research and education.

Peterson earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering in 1975, a bachelor's degree in mathematics in 1977, and a master's degree in mechanical engineering in 1980, all from Kansas State University. He also earned a doctorate in mechanical engineering from Texas A&M University in 1985.

In 1981 and 1982, Peterson served as a visiting research scientist at the NASA Johnson Space Center. In 1985, he joined the faculty of the Mechanical Engineering Department at Texas A&M, where he conducted research and taught courses in thermodynamics and heat transfer.

In 1990 he was named the Halliburton Professor of Mechanical Engineering and in 1991 was named the College of Engineering's Tenneco Professor. In 1993, Peterson was invited to serve as program director for the NSF's Thermal Transport and Thermal Processing Division, where he received the NSF Award for Outstanding Management.

From June 1993 through July 1996, he served as head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M University and in 1996 was appointed executive associate dean of the College of Engineering, where he also served as associate vice chancellor for Engineering for the Texas A&M University System. He also has served as a member of a number of congressional task forces, research councils, and advisory boards, including the Office of Naval Research, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Department of Energy, the National Research Council, and the National Academy of Engineering.

Most recently, Peterson served as a member of the Board of Directors and vice president for Education for the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA). He is currently serving on a number of national accreditation agencies including the American Association of Colleges & Universities, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, with a focus on improving and assessing outcomes for higher education.

As chancellor of the University of Colorado at Boulder, Peterson led the development of a new university-wide strategic plan, Flagship 2030, that defines the vision for the university for the next twenty years. In his two years as chancellor, public support for the university has increased dramatically. Under his leadership the number of freshman applications increased by 35 percent, the number of underrepresented minorities in the freshman class increased by 38 percent, sponsored research increased by more than 18 percent, and private support and philanthropy increased by more than 80 percent.

A fellow of both the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) and the AIAA, Peterson is the author or co-author of 14 books or book chapters, 165 refereed journal articles, and more than 140 conference publications. He also holds eight patents. Having served as editor or associate editor for eight different journals, he is currently serving on the editorial advisory board of two others. He is a member of Pi Tau Sigma, Tau Beta Pi, Sigma Xi, and Phi Kappa Phi.

Professional society awards include the Ralph James and the O. L. "Andy" Lewis awards from ASME, the Dow Outstanding Young Faculty Award from the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE), the Pi Tau Sigma Gustus L. Larson Memorial Award from ASME, the AIAA Thermophysics Award, the ASME Memorial Award, the AIAA Sustained Service Award, and the Frank J. Malina Award from the International Astronautical Society.

G. P. Peterson was born September 1, 1952, in San Francisco, California, and raised in Prairie Village, a suburb of Kansas City, Kansas. He and his wife, Val, have four adult children.

