



Undergraduate & Graduate Student Government Associations  
Georgia Institute of Technology

**July 8, 2020**

President Cabrera,

In light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the recent spike in cases in Georgia, we ask that you and the rest of the Georgia Tech administration set the health and safety of the Georgia Tech community as the top priority. Since we have been notified within the last day that the University System of Georgia (USG) has given Georgia Tech additional latitude to meet the unique needs of our campus, we would like to direct several concerns toward you and members of your administration. We recognize and greatly appreciate the USG's recent move to mandate face coverings on campuses across the state and hope that this is a starting point to further protect students, faculty, and staff. We thank you for including students in the governance process thus far and wish to continue to elevate the concerns and desires of our student body.

We, as student leaders at Georgia Tech and on behalf of our entire undergraduate and graduate student body, stand with the 800+ academic professors<sup>1</sup>, 300+ international students<sup>2</sup>, and 2000+ students, alumni, and parents<sup>3</sup> at Georgia Tech who released statements to demand action and outline their serious concerns for the Fall 2020 semester.

Since the pandemic began, students across our campus have demanded that Georgia Tech and the USG meaningfully address their concerns. Students continue to express that the current Fall 2020 plans are causing fear and emotional distress due to their inability to make safe choices for remote coursework or to return to campus safely. While the ability to require face coverings more widely indoors will address some concerns, we still want to express the need to support students and faculty in their personal accommodations to increase the safety of on-campus experiences and hybrid courses. Young people remain the fastest growing demographic to be infected with Covid-19, and it also must be recognized that campuses are at high risk for the spread of infection. Georgia Tech and USG leaders must protect both the physical and mental health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff.

Similarly, a sentiment heard widely is the need to accommodate students who have faced barriers and inequities in accessing the tools and technology required to continue their education during the Covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, Georgia Tech must provide safe and viable course opportunities for our immunocompromised, out-of-state, on-campus resident, and international student populations. Students who are themselves at higher risk and/or live with and regularly interact with individuals who are at higher risk of the coronavirus have repeatedly voiced their deep concern for the lack of remote course delivery options and safety precautions being put in place on campus this Fall. These students seek assurance of remote accommodations being made available during hybrid course delivery to reduce transmission for those who fall under USG outlined underlying medical conditions.

International students, who make up approximately 23% of our total student population, have asked for viable options to complete academic coursework given the travel concerns and immigration restrictions around the world and now within our own borders. With the new changes to the active Student and Exchange Visitor Program, our international students have been disadvantaged and left in the dark on how



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to proceed with their plans for the Fall in order to maintain their visa status and accommodate safety. Additionally, due to the expected change in experience on campus, many international and out-of-state students, who normally pay full out-of-state tuition, are going through new financial and economic challenges. We ask that in your advocacy efforts with USG you champion lowering tuition prices, expanding aid and scholarship opportunities, and waiving cancellation fees to support students.

On behalf of the diverse student body that we represent, we strongly urge the following:

1. The Board of Regents and Georgia Tech administration should partner together to safeguard the health and safety needs of the Georgia Tech community, informed by scientific evidence.
2. Make remote course delivery available for all students during the Fall 2020 semester in order to reduce disease transmission risk and to reduce disruption of educational delivery in the event of worsening pandemic conditions. We emphasize that no student, faculty, or staff should be coerced into risking their health and the health of their families by working and/or learning on campus when there is a remote/online equivalent.
3. Make on-campus experiences and courses available for students who need access to campus residences and on-campus laboratories or other specialized facilities, while ensuring accommodations can be sought to access such resources for students with USG outlined underlying medical conditions.
4. Provide large-scale Covid-19 testing and ensure timely contact tracing of new infections.
5. Adjust tuition prices, waive cancellation fees, and expand scholarship opportunities and aid to support students whose finances have been impacted by the pandemic.

With so much uncertainty facing our student body, now is not the time for business as usual. This moment demands that the USG and Georgia Tech demonstrate steady and compassionate leadership that acts in the best interest of students, faculty, and staff. As the Fall is quickly approaching and the landscape of the semester continues to evolve we highlight the importance of transparent, timely communication to students about all decisions being discussed and made. We are counting on you to do what is right.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

In Progress and Service,

Brielle Lonsberry  
Undergraduate Student Body President

Lea Harris  
Graduate Student Body President

Kyle Smith  
Undergraduate Executive Vice President

Jay McKinney  
Graduate Executive Vice President

#### References:

1. [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdjyLGfLincWtm8fntduj3mMhZhhGtF2khGYHNjdZIXu1xBhg/viewform?fbclid=IwAR1g9SmUIpHVwoNjILY3\\_2SCwcsJWic-GS4DBEs3Dc6WSx-rg8d3n5C5dOU](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdjyLGfLincWtm8fntduj3mMhZhhGtF2khGYHNjdZIXu1xBhg/viewform?fbclid=IwAR1g9SmUIpHVwoNjILY3_2SCwcsJWic-GS4DBEs3Dc6WSx-rg8d3n5C5dOU)
2. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Dvylyu2REOBh0QFT5FK1rEEwjPes8r9hZGCBDFWUsMI/edit>
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