

# 17 Rooms at Georgia Tech: Recommended Actions

February 15, 2021

**1** NO  
POVERTY



**2** ZERO  
HUNGER



**3** GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



**4** QUALITY  
EDUCATION



**5** GENDER  
EQUALITY



**6** CLEAN WATER  
AND SANITATION



**7** AFFORDABLE AND  
CLEAN ENERGY



**8** DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH



**9** INDUSTRY, INNOVATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



**10** REDUCED  
INEQUALITIES



**11** SUSTAINABLE CITIES  
AND COMMUNITIES



**12** RESPONSIBLE  
CONSUMPTION  
AND PRODUCTION



**13** CLIMATE  
ACTION



**14** LIFE  
BELOW WATER



**15** LIFE  
ON LAND



**16** PEACE, JUSTICE  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS



**17** PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



# Report Contents

- Introduction and Overview ..... 2
- Strengthen External Partnerships and Regional Collaborations ... 5
- Integrate the SDGs into the Curriculum ..... 8
- Lead by Example ..... 10
- Engage Students in Institute Planning ..... 13
- Enhance Student Well-Being ..... 15
- Advance SDG Research ..... 17

## Georgia Tech 17 Rooms - Recommended Actions

### INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

#### Purpose of 17 Rooms

[17 Rooms](#) is an event concept developed by The Rockefeller Foundation and the Brookings Institution to help organizations identify partnerships and practical steps to accelerate progress on the 17 United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). Focusing on the most pressing global challenges, the SDGs are a “blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.”

17 Rooms is a proven catalyst for engaging, inspiring, and shaping an organization’s mission around the SDGs. Participants with diverse expertise and perspectives are invited to convene in 17 small groups - one group per SDG - and work together to identify actions their organization can take within 18 months to make progress toward their goal.

#### About Georgia Tech’s 17 Rooms

Georgia Tech’s 17 Rooms was launched with a virtual panel discussion on September 10, 2020, to familiarize the campus community with the SDGs and with Georgia Tech’s new commitment to use the SDGs as a framework to catalyze action and positive change that advance the public good. The event was moderated by Anna Stenport, Professor of Global Studies, Chair of the School of Modern Languages, and co-Director of the Atlanta Global Studies Center at Georgia Tech. It featured keynote remarks by President Ángel Cabrera and a roundtable discussion with Sarah Lee Kjellberg from BlackRock, John McArthur from the Brookings Institution, Na’Taki Osborne Jelks from Spelman College and the West Atlanta Watershed Alliance, Wendy Purcell from Plymouth University in the UK, and Isabella Stubbs, an undergraduate student in Environmental Engineering at Georgia Tech.

The 17 Rooms event was held virtually on October 1, 2020 from 9 a.m. -12 p.m. EDT. Participants gathered in one virtual room for an introduction and overview and then split off into their rooms for a discussion of their SDG. Each room’s goal was to identify two to three ideas for advancing their SDG at Georgia Tech, to inform a synthesis process that would result in seven to ten recommendations aligned with the new GT Strategic Plan. After room discussions, participants gathered back in the main virtual room for room report-outs, where each room shared their ideas.

Each discussion was moderated by a three-person team, generally including a faculty member, staff member, and student. Lead moderators participated in a Moderators Training ahead of the event, facilitated by members of the Planning Committee. The training included tips on using the [ORID framework for guided conversations](#) to ensure all room members were encouraged and given the space to actively take part in the conversation.

Following the event, each moderator team put together a brief report summarizing their room’s discussion and highlighting a few key takeaways. These 17 reports were compiled into a [summary document](#) that included the room reports and their total of 56 key takeaways.

#### About This Report

The summary document, together with a list of student-centric recommendations developed by a sub-group of students who had participated in 17 Rooms and the results of a 17 Rooms participant survey, provided the foundations for the synthesis process, which aimed to

synthesize the key takeaways into seven to ten recommendations that link research, teaching, operations, and partnerships and align with priorities in the GT Strategic Plan. The process was led by the 17 Rooms Planning Committee and comprised over 20 additional volunteers – including students, faculty, and staff, representing all of the 17 room discussions. Prior to synthesis, the Planning Committee asked all 17 Rooms participants to take a brief survey about the 17 Rooms process and next steps. The results of this participant survey were synthesized by Lizanne DeStefano, Director of CEISMC, and helped inform the process. From October to January, through regular meetings and a design thinking exercise, participants reviewed the 17 Rooms reports, sorted key takeaways into major themes, and worked in small groups to produce six recommended actions to be implemented over the next 18 months. The planning group sent a draft of these recommended actions to all 17 Rooms participants. Participants provided feedback through a linked survey, and their feedback was incorporated into the final document. These actions include:

- Strengthen External Partnerships and Regional Collaborations
- Integrate the SDGs into the Curriculum
- Lead by Example
- Engage Students in Institute Planning
- Enhance Student Well-Being
- Advance SDG Research

This report includes a description of each recommended action, including an overview, proposed actions, relationship to the SDGs, connections to the GT Strategic Plan, and an estimate of required resources. Though the recommendations do not specifically mention every one of the 56 key takeaways from the initial report, each one of them did fall under one more recommendation, so it is our hope that 17 Rooms participants will see their ideas in these recommendations in some form. This does not preclude others from taking on an action suggested in the initial 17 Rooms that they feel passionate about, nor does it encompass the extent of SDG work we expect to see on and around campus in the next 18 months. Rather, it is a starting point for further discussion and benchmarks to measure success.

For more information, visit [SDGs at Tech](#) and read about the Institute's [long-term commitment to sustainability](#).

### **A Note on Strategic Plan Implementation and Resources**

The 17 Rooms effort in 2020 directly advances all of Georgia Tech's strategic plan themes: [Amplify Impact, Champion Innovation, Expand Access, Connect Globally, Cultivate Well-being, and Lead by Example](#). We recommend that all 17 Rooms findings be directly integrated into the Executive Leadership Team priorities for Strategic Plan implementation. We also recommend that the recommendations be appropriately resourced. The resources include seed-funding to launch impactful collaborations and a deliberate plan to raise philanthropic support for the efforts. We recommend that all the 17 Rooms findings become cornerstones for the next Georgia Tech campaign.

### **GT 17 Rooms Planning Committee & Synthesis Team**

#### *Planning Committee:*

Jeremy Brown, Institute Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion/Impact LLC

Drew Cutright (co-lead), Sustainability and Building Operations/University Global Coalition

Lynn Durham, Institute Relations

Joy Harris, Electrical and Computer Engineering/Global Leadership LLC

Jennifer Hirsch (co-lead), Serve-Learn-Sustain/RCE Greater Atlanta  
Benjamin Hodges, Institute Communications  
Sebnem Özkan, Atlanta Global Studies Center  
Anne Rogers, Office of Campus Sustainability  
Anna Stenport (co-lead), Modern Languages/Atlanta Global Studies Center  
Beril Toktay, Ray C. Anderson Center for Sustainable Business

*Synthesis Team:*

In addition to the Planning Committee, the following people also participated in synthesis activities:

William Abdallah, Undergraduate Student  
Selen Beduk, UN-USA Atlanta  
Emma Brodzik, Sustainability, Facilities, and Safety  
Chris Burke, Community Relations  
Kim Cobb, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences/Global Change Program  
Lizanne DeStefano, CEISMC  
Merry Hunter Caudle, Institute Relations  
Jessica Eskew, Undergraduate Student  
Thiago Esslinger, Undergraduate Student  
Grace Fletcher, Undergraduate Student  
Maren Herby, Graduate student  
Paul Kohn, Enrollment Management  
Neha Kumar, International Affairs/Interactive Computing  
Evan Mallen, Center for Teaching and Learning  
Allison Maloney, Excel/CEISMC  
Stephen Nash, Undergraduate Student  
Madison Novak, Undergraduate Student  
Jessica Rose, Sustainability, Facilities, and Safety  
Jennifer Singh, Ivan Allen College  
Meredith Stewart, Undergraduate Student  
Jacob Taylor (Observer), The Brookings Institution  
Valerie Thomas, Industrial & Systems Engineering  
Heidi Turcotte, CEISMC  
Joe Volpe, Geosyntec  
Rebecca Watts Hull, Serve-Learn-Sustain

Thank you to all of these volunteers for contributing to this GT 17 Rooms process. A special thanks to Wayne Li (Industrial Design/Mechanical Engineering) for leading the design thinking exercise, to Lizanne DeStefano (CEISMC) for summarizing the 17 Rooms participants survey, to Sophia De Lurgio (Undergraduate Student Assistant in Serve-Learn-Sustain) for designing the cover page, and to Kayleigh Nortjé (Undergraduate Student Assistant in the Office of the President) for report formatting and assembly.

**For More Information**

Visit [SDGs at Tech](#) and read about the Institute's [long-term commitment to sustainability](#).  
Contact: Drew Cutright, [drew.cutright@gatech.edu](mailto:drew.cutright@gatech.edu)

## GT 17 Rooms Recommended Action 1:

### STRENGTHEN EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS AND REGIONAL COLLABORATIONS

#### Overview:

Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in higher education and beyond cannot be accomplished within the borders of Georgia Tech alone, which is commonly seen as an iron fortress by those who are not a stakeholder in it. We need to collaborate with off-campus partners, including other higher education institutions, community organizations, industry, and K-12 educators and students. Georgia Tech is poised to play a leadership role in SDG-aligned teaching, research, and community engagement and change the conversation around sustainability and the SDGs in Atlanta and the Southeast. Various Georgia Tech units, specifically Serve-Learn-Sustain (SLS), Atlanta Global Studies Center (AGSC), the External Relations Council, and the Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics, and Computing (CEISM), are already pioneering a variety of highly successful and impactful SDG-aligned/amenable external partnerships and regional collaborations with strong experiential learning components for students. Georgia Tech should promote and expand on these efforts and further align them with SDGs. This will provide meaningful experiences for students, open up our campus to the Atlanta community, and begin the process of implementing SDGs within the city, reflecting the local context of global environmental challenges.

#### Proposed actions for next 18 months:

Support the following in-progress activities to align Georgia Tech's partnerships, both existing and potential, with SDGs with a focus on enhanced student experiential learning opportunities and deepened community/industry partnerships:

#### 1. Expand Existing Strong External Partnerships by further aligning them with SDGs

*Form, Enhance, and Support Meaningful, SDG-Aligned Industry Partnerships (SDG 8, 9, 16, 17)*

As an enhancement to current extensive industry-focused efforts, the Georgia Tech External Relations Council identifies and expands the number and scope of industry partnerships to include SDG- and sustainability-focused companies and organizations, including non-profits, with the goals of:

- Highlighting and expanding student employment opportunities, campus-vendor relationships, and other partnerships with industry focused on SDG goals.
- Expanding Georgia Tech's role in developing Georgia-based business, including those in Tech Square, Midtown Atlanta, and rural Georgia to spur regional growth and opportunity for students in creative manners.

*Expand and Deepen Higher Education and Community Partnerships, including with the City of Atlanta, Atlanta Public Schools, and GA Department of Education (SDG 4, 10, 11, 16, 17)*

- Building on the ongoing multi-institutional, community-engaged, interdisciplinary Atlanta Peace Education Initiative, AGSC coordinates multiple working groups to create experiential learning projects, professional education/workforce training programs, K-12 workshops, and a webinar series.
- Building on the multi-institutional Atlanta Global Research and Education Collaborative (AGREC), AGSC hosts a collaboratorium series to create SDG-focused research & education groups/intellectual communities and provides seed-funding support to them

through a grant program. This will encourage the dissemination and implementation of Georgia Tech thought leadership in teaching and research within the Atlanta region and deepen partnerships with other higher education institutions and community partners, including the City of Atlanta.

- Building on existing partnerships with the GA Dep't of Education and CEISMC, AGSC offers workshops and teacher training programs to help K-12 educators integrate SDGs into their teaching.
- Build upon Enrollment Management's partnership with Atlanta Public Schools for undergraduate study at Georgia Tech to integrate specific targets for SDGs 17 (Partnerships), 5 (Gender Equality), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

## 2. **Support, Enhance and Expand SDG-Aligned Experiential Learning Opportunities for Students**

*Enhance and Expand Community-Engaged Curricular Opportunities* (SDG 8, 10, 16, 17)

- SLS facilitates community-engaged teaching in more than 150 courses across all six colleges.
- SLS, AGSC, and Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) convene a working group to develop recommendations for implementing an experiential learning requirement.
- SLS develops a new technology-focused sustainable development career pipeline for students through the Public Interest Technology–University Network (PIT-UN).

*Enhance and Expand Internships and other Co-Curricular Opportunities* (SDG 8, 10, 16, 17)

- SLS manages an intensive internship program with student seminars aligned with the SDGs.
- The Office of Civic Engagement, SLS, and other units create a web platform that makes it easier for community-based organizations to identify resources and opportunities through Georgia Tech courses, student organizations, and interns.
- Fund and support student internships in Administration and Finance related to the SDGs, allowing students to work on applied research projects directly impacting GT's campus.

### **Connection to research, teaching, operations, and/or partnerships:**

This theme connects to research, teaching, and operations by leveraging partnerships through SDG alignment. Offering SDG-focused, community-engaged, collaborative experiential learning programs and research groups will transform teaching and research agendas and diversify stakeholders, including undergraduate participation in research. Furthermore, successful integration of SDGs into external industry and community partnerships and regional higher education collaborations will result in projects that enhance curriculum and instruction, sponsor research and innovation, and provide funding that supports more sustainable operations.

### **SDGs activated:**

These goals activate **SDG 4:** Quality Education by providing Georgia Tech students with a more holistic and relevant curriculum. Community engagement and industry partnerships also will produce more nurture commitment to improving the human condition, which connects to **SDG 8:** Decent Work and Economic Growth. **SDG 9:** Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure will be advanced by placing an emphasis on innovative thinking in the Georgia Tech community and giving students the opportunity to apply their ideas in the real world. These goals advance **SDG 11:** Sustainable Cities and Communities by creating meaningful connections between Georgia Tech students and the surrounding Atlanta community to inspire joint efforts to create a better future for the city. Georgia Tech can advance **SDG 16:** Peace, Justice, and Strong institutions

by mainstreaming peace education in higher education, businesses and K-12 as well as promoting transparency and sustainable decision-making in collaboration with Atlanta leaders. **SDG 17: Partnerships** is at the heart of these recommended actions because collaborative and inclusive decision-making always produces better results, and Georgia Tech can lead the way for our community.

**Connection to GT Strategic Plan:**

These recommendations would **amplify impact** by providing Georgia Tech students with greater opportunities to make a positive difference in their communities. They would **champion innovation** by creating incentives for students to think innovatively and inclusively and leverage the available resources to produce a better community for all. They would **cultivate well-being** by giving students a more holistic and engaging college experience, and they would help Georgia Tech **lead by example** by setting a high standard for inclusive decision-making and community-engaged teaching and learning.

**Resources needed:**

- Staff time from External Relations Council units for complete resource identification
- Faculty stipends for experiential learning projects and participation in multi-institutional, multi-stakeholder research groups
- Community-partner stipends for participation in experiential learning projects and multi-institutional, multi-stakeholder research initiatives
- Funding for AGSC-led AGREC grant program for seed funding for collaborative research groups
- GRA support (stipend/tuition waiver) and internship funding in Administration and Finance (different finance model than GRA)
- Adequate operating budget for SLS to lead experiential learning aligned with the SDGs, convene groups to advance an experiential learning requirement, and advance student internship opportunities that reflect best practice in experiential learning
- Adequate operating budget and administrative staff support for AGSC to lead and coordinate Peace Education, AGREC collaborative research/education, and K-12 training efforts

**Contact:** Şebnem Özkan, [sebnem.ozkan@gatech.edu](mailto:sebnem.ozkan@gatech.edu)



## **GT 17 Rooms Recommended Action 2:**

### **INTEGRATE THE SDGS INTO THE CURRICULUM**

#### **Overview:**

Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the curriculum means that every student and lifelong learner will learn about and help advance the SDGs as part of their academic coursework and beyond as change-makers throughout their careers. SDG integration will also facilitate attention to cross-disciplinary course design and collaboration, in alignment with the new Strategic Plan. Holistic, experiential, learning, and curricular redesign that engages arts, humanities, social sciences, STEM, and business are being requested by students, which SDG integration allows.

Adapting current courses and creating new courses could be challenging; integrating the SDGs into our curriculum presents the opportunity to make our courses more current and relevant. GT faculty are already pioneering SDG-based coursework from the class to the program scale, and the Institute should promote and expand on this effort. Long term success means that students have introductory experiences with the SDGs during their first year, meaningful engagements with the SDGs during their intermediate years, and culminating experiences with the SDGs during their final year in a senior project, thesis, or capstone. This threading throughout their years at Georgia Tech (GT) will position them to advance the SDGs – and the environmental and societal issues they address – throughout their lives, in whatever career path they choose.

#### **Proposed action/s for next 18 months:**

Support these in progress activities:

1. Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL), Serve-Learn-Sustain (SLS), and Atlanta Global Studies Center (AGSC) co-host a series of course design workshops with RCE Greater Atlanta to help faculty at GT and partner higher education institutions (HEIs) integrate the SDGs into their current courses or develop new courses.
2. SDG Virtual Mobility Project – launching in Spring 2021 with GT special topics course: “Think Global, Act Local – Advancing Education and Action for the SDGs” (pilot – preparing for a series of online SDG courses to be taught and owned by a set of universities around the world).
3. New SDG-related Vertically Integrated Project (VIP) team launching in Spring 2021 to complete projects that advance SDG9 (Kevin Caravati and Kati Hadi, GTRI).

#### **Connections to research, teaching, operations, and/or partnerships:**

Theme 1 connects to teaching, research, and partnerships. Integrating the SDGs into the curriculum will impact and change how courses are currently taught. Courses with SDG integration will stretch beyond textbook curriculum, providing a new manner for learning which encompasses material application. Further, influence on undergraduate research will result from SDG integration due to the significant role in the undergraduate curriculum and its potential for new VIPs. Furthermore, successful integration requires multiple partnerships between course professors, faculty, and campus units that serve as SDG subject matter experts. Collaboration and integration will promote not only unity within the Institute departments but amplify communication and coordination with external partners.

#### **SDGs activated:**

Curriculum integration activates all SDGs and especially SDG 4: Quality Education, and SDG17: Partnerships, by ensuring that all GT students receive an education that prepares them

for global citizenship and upward, socioeconomic mobility. Additionally, GT has the unique opportunity to serve as a living laboratory, particularly through SDGs 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, and 15: Life on Land. By leveraging research initiatives and partnerships across the Institute, we can activate several other SDGs among the students by bringing this knowledge into the curriculum.

**17 Zooms Connection to GT Strategic Plan:**

Integrating SDGs into the curriculum advances the Strategic Plan goals, Lead by Example, Amplify Impact, Champion Innovation, and Connect Globally, because GT will become an Institution that provides an example of how to teach sustainability and sustainable development to every student and lifelong learner.

**Resources to support proposed actions:**

- Adequate operating budget for Atlanta Global Studies Center and SLS after June 2021
- Faculty stipends for course development
- Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) support (stipend/tuition waiver)
- Administrative staff support for AGSC to lead global connectivity curricular efforts
- Travel expenses and stipends for international collaborations (when permissible)
- Data management practices and policies developed through Sustainability, Facilities, and Safety (SFS) and additional staff to support data organization and management in SFS.

**Resources needed after July 1, 2021 (starting FY22):**

- Adequately compile resources and structure SLS, Global Change Program, and AGSC to support faculty and students in integrating SDGs into the academic and GTPE curricula.
- Identify and fund local opportunities related to strengthening GT's role as an anchor institution, locally and globally, within units such as those listed above plus International Education (OIE), Georgia Tech Professional Education (GTPE), and Alumni Association, all of which engage the SDGs.
- The scope of the Strategic Plan (2020-2030) necessitates starting immediately to build on existing SDG successes.
- The Institute needs to invest and coordinate in AGSC, Global Change, SLS, and other units that are effectively doing the work of the Strategic Plan's emphasis on SDGs as a local anchor institution that is globally connected as of FY22.

**Contact:** Joy Harris, [joyelle.harris@ece.gatech.edu](mailto:joyelle.harris@ece.gatech.edu)

## GT 17 Rooms Recommended Action 3:

### LEAD BY EXAMPLE

#### Overview:

Leading by example is the main way GT grows credibility and influence to build partnerships and action. A better Georgia Tech will lead to a better Georgia. The ultimate manifestation of leading by example is with culture change focused on the value of sustainability: the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of the Institute should be consistent, visible, and inspiring at all scales.

#### Proposed action/s for the next 18 months:

1. **Develop Sustainable Procurement Policy:** Create environmentally, socially responsible, and ethical consumption policies to enact throughout the campus by creation of a comprehensive Sustainable Procurement Policy.
  - Include language and best practices to reduce total consumption of goods.
  - Include language to support local food systems.
  - Include language and guidance to procure reused materials and support sustainable end-of-life systems (reuse, donate, compost, recycle, etc.).
  - Include language and guidance to promote equitable local economic development.
2. **Refresh Climate Action Plan:** Develop a comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CAP) that taps into every opportunity available to us as an innovative higher education institution. Develop a data-driven, evidence-based target for carbon neutrality as well as a roadmap for reviewing our curriculum, research portfolio, investment strategies, and social justice/community resilience impacts.
  - Define Executive Sponsor and Advisory Committee.
  - For campus neutrality component, hire consultant to calculate model of predictive carbon impact over 30 years based on utility grid mix and costs.
  - Develop recommendations for curriculum, research portfolio, investments, and community resilience/justice actions.
3. **Create Campus Reuse/Exchange Program:** To foster a culture of sustainability, materials should be reduced, shared, reused, and recycled for the stewardship of campus and global resources. Develop guidance, process, infrastructure, and student/staff culture on campus to engage and track reuse of goods on campus. This process should tie into existing organizations and infrastructure built for the reuse market and utilize expertise of faculty members on campus specializing in circular economy.
  - Develop guidance for building managers to share/reuse equipment, durable goods, etc. by increasing access to GT Surplus/Logistics inventories.
  - Expand a reuse space/warehouse for student items, such as clothing, housewares, and small appliances to be used for all students.
  - Engage local refurbishing/reuse businesses in training interested GT students and relevant staff to refurbish/repair used items and create a self-sustaining campus thrift shop or partner with existing reuse facilities.
  - When reuse is not an option, expand the collection of Styrofoam recycling and host plastic film drop-off sites.
  - Ensure each Institute building has proper recycling procurement bins.
  - Develop off-campus partnerships to leverage and support small businesses active in reuse and refurbishment programs.

- 4. Create Economic Inclusion Policy:** As a large employer, GT is an important anchor institution and a driver of local economic prosperity. Research has documented the low-income mobility of underserved communities in our region and provided policy recommendations. To make a stronger contribution to the economic mobility of underserved populations, we should review our hiring and employment practices and develop guidance and policies to intentionally promote economic inclusion. This work can serve as a model for other USG institutions and catalyze changes in employment practices in the state.
- Conduct internal [JUST assessment](#) on GT HR and equity practices.

**Connection to research, teaching, operations, and/or partnerships:** The theme relates to research, teaching, operations, and partnerships. All are essential for this theme to be successful.

**SDGs activated:**

- Goal 12 Responsible Consumption: As users of goods and services, GT can show that, in its large procurement power, it can responsibly promote sustainable procurement practices and responsibly decrease over-consumption.
- Goal 13 Climate Action: The most credible way GT can address this goal is through its own behavior and actions outlined in a comprehensive CAP, while all SDG goals across the social, environmental, and economic spectrum are dependent on the state of climate change on our planet.
- Goal 17 Partnerships: Leading by Example initiatives will highlight that students and campus departments can work together and with external partners through action, policy, and culture change.

**Connection to GT Strategic Plan:** Lead by Example is the direct tie-in category of the strategic plan, but all Strategic Plan themes relate to the outcomes where GT expands its positive impact.

**Resources needed:**

*Sustainable Procurement Policy:*

- Policy development: Some. This work needs to be done in partnership with groups working on these issues regionally, and it would be appropriate to compensate them for their time and expertise. Recommendation of a working group to identify cost effective ways to meet policy requirements.
- Sustainable Procurement Membership: Some. GT should become a member of the Sustainable Procurement Leadership Council (SPLC), about \$2,500/year.
- *Climate Action Plan:* Some. Develop a quantitative model for campus carbon neutrality that utilizes a "buy-it (not build-it)" approach to optimize time and leverage existing marketplace assets. This commitment would be approximately \$50K (based on prior quotes OCS received).

*Campus Reuse/Exchange Program:*

- Creating guidance for Program: Some: Similar to Sustainable Procurement Policy resources.
- Creating a warehouse for reused goods: Some/Significant; cost of warehouse space
- Increasing recycling infrastructure - Some.
- Adequate operating budget and staff support - Some.

*Economic Inclusion Policy:* Some. Same as in #1 above (e.g. with Partnership for Southern Equity).

**Additional notes:** A CAP is listed as an action under the “Lead by Example” theme of the GT Strategic Plan.

**Contact:** Anne Rogers, [anne.rogers@sustain.gatech.edu](mailto:anne.rogers@sustain.gatech.edu)

## GT 17 Rooms Recommended Action 4:

### ENGAGE STUDENTS IN INSTITUTE PLANNING

**Overview:** Expansion of collaborative and dynamic interactions between students and the faculty and staff in Institute-level sustainable development projects is crucial to amplifying Georgia Tech's strategic plan goals "Celebrate Collaboration" and "Cultivate Well-Being." While the diversity of specializations and services at Georgia Tech provide students with numerous opportunities, it can be difficult for students to locate and pursue interests and resources outside of their main discipline, which can in turn hinder the creation of an inclusive, welcoming environment for current and future students. By establishing a student group to advise the Institute Sustainable Development (SDG) program committee, engaging students in institute plans such as the Climate Action Plan referenced in the GT Strategic Plan, and developing SDG-focused class and research experience to engage students, we can support more robust interdisciplinary engagements for students.

#### Proposed action/s for the next 18 months:

**1. Establish a student group to advise the Institute SDG Program Committee and to communicate to students about SDG-related opportunities and concepts.**

Creation of a campaign to inform & engage students on SDGs to allow all majors to get involved in ideation/goals related to GT's Strategic Plan

- Inform students about how to engage with the administration on campus (e.g., participate in the Enrollment Management Advisory Group to provide student perspective on recruitment, enrollment, and future student support.)
- Understand the broad opportunities available through work on SDGs
  - Initial work here should include cataloguing current opportunities for SDG-related work and communicating about these. Communicate opportunities to the student body in terms of students' passions.
- Make resources for student success more accessible (visually) and centralized (e.g., Students' Temporary Assistance and Resources (STAR), Center for Assessment, Referral, and Education (CARE), wellness coaching, legal advice, peer to peer mentoring for specific majors/curriculum planning)
  - Resources can be included on syllabi to reach more students, and resources that are more flexible in purpose can be tailored to helping engage students in their passions within SDGs and Georgia Tech's Strategic Plan as a whole.

**2. Involve students in building a Climate Action Plan**

The process of building a Climate Action Plan allows students to learn outside of classrooms and apply their knowledge directly to real-world solutions, touching on multiple SDGs.

**3. Engage students in SDG-centered innovation through classroom and research experience, with a focus on community partnerships.**

Develop an industry/innovation VIP (SDG 9), which could focus on expansion of broadband infrastructure to students in GA, the Kendeda Building, and/or engagement with K-12 students in sustainability innovation.

#### Connection to research, teaching, operations, and/or partnerships:

Engaging students in institute planning and SDG work connects to research, teaching, and partnerships. Increased engagement with the student body represents a partnership between the institute and the students. This bond can be created through more focused efforts to engage

students with planning through research opportunities, provided through methods such as the VIP program and tailoring in class projects and teaching to encompass areas within the SDGs that help students connect their studies with their passions. By offering those opportunities, there will be an easier transition for students to extend their involvement beyond the classroom or lab to the campus and greater Atlanta community, which will continue to strengthen the partnership between students and Georgia Tech and allow for more progress towards the Institute Strategic Plan.

**SDGs activated:** The ideas above relate closely to SDGs 17: Partnerships; 3: Good Health and Well-Being, and 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure; however, through climate action planning and centralizing student resources, these actions touch on almost every SDG.

**Connection to GT Strategic Plan:** This relates to “Connect Globally” by demonstrating UN SDG capabilities at home. It also relates to amplifying impact and cultivating well-being.

**Resources needed:** The resources needed for all three actions would primarily be student, faculty, and staff time. Specifically, there should be a central point of contact for students to engage in SDG work, and student engagement around SDGs should be one of their primary job functions. The VIP may surface funding needs that could potentially be met by outside funders.

**Contact:** Drew Cutright, [drew.cutright@gatech.edu](mailto:drew.cutright@gatech.edu)

## **GT 17 Rooms Recommended Action 5:**

### **ENHANCE STUDENT WELL-BEING**

#### **Overview:**

Looking at ways that our institution can enhance the experiences for all of our students, this theme addresses campus-wide challenges such as financial support, housing accessibility, the student-faculty relationship, and health (specifically mental health). To build a robust infrastructure (in teaching, practices, engagement, access, policies, programs, etc.), we have to first recognize and address student wellness, connectedness, and mental health. We also need to remove barriers and create more connections among students at our institution, including our underrepresented minority students. A primary goal is to develop more opportunities to foster interaction and collaboration efforts among faculty, students, and staff.

#### **Proposed action/s for the next 18 months:**

##### **1. Create a student advisory group to advocate for more support for students dealing with challenges due to COVID-19**

This student-led advisory group will engage relevant administration and faculty to identify the major challenges and establish new structures and processes to address them and increase student support. Issues to be addressed range broadly from financial aid to academic services and campus services (e.g., housing, health, dining, disability services, etc.).

- Focus would be on removing or delaying penalty charges (and fees) for students moving-in and out of GT Housing and providing additional financial aid/scholarships, job opportunities, and on-campus work opportunities for all students.
- Residence Hall Association (RHA), Student Government Association (SGA), and Living Learning Communities Council (LLCC) would support advisory group and provide additional campus resources.
- Examine specific resources and levels of support for underrepresented minority students (URMs), including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPoC) students, and LGBTQIA students.
- Conduct a survey in various residence halls to identify current levels of support and potential barriers. Focus groups can help solidify examples of the barriers surfaced in survey results.
- Action plan of recommended changes would be created by group and presented to relevant leadership teams.

##### **2. Create additional mental health and healthcare resources for students**

Develop a new student-led collective consisting of students, faculty, and staff around support and access to medical and mental health services provided on-campus. Action plan and timeline would be developed by collective.

- Work with CARE, Counseling Center, Health Initiatives and Division of Student Life to develop new student resources that are more accessible inside and outside of the offices on-campus (ex: virtual resources, peer mentors, etc.).
- Analyze first-year, transfer, international, upperclassmen, and graduate student use of mental health-related services and develop a new outreach plan to better reach and serve students connected to mental health and wellbeing.



### **3. Pilot a cross-disciplinary experience that strengthens relationships between students and faculty**

To better support students, faculty have to build closer, less hierarchical relationships with them. Pilot one opportunity that does this, outside of the Living Learning Communities (LLCs) (which only reach a limited number of students).

- Form a team of students and faculty from different majors to co-create and pilot a cross-major class that brings together undergraduate and graduate students plus faculty to identify a research or partnership project that they can work on together. The class should re-evaluate student teaching and leadership roles (such as teaching assistant, team leader, peer coach, etc.) roles to incorporate more teacher-student collaboration and compensation for time. This could be in the form of a capstone class or VIP (Vertically-Integrated Project).
- Write up recommendations for creating more of these types of experiences, based on the results of the pilot.

#### **Connection to research, teaching, operations, and/or partnerships:**

Through campus cross-collaborations, student advisory teams, and collectives, there needs to be a prioritization of student wellbeing and their sense of belonging in the campus community at large and within our academic spaces. This theme connects specifically to research, teaching, and operations since most students are connected to these areas and the priorities of the institution on student wellbeing and overall mental and personal health. Student representation and voice are also critical to this process and will strengthen the long-term impact of this work.

#### **SDGs activated:**

Our suggestions most closely connect with SDG 3: Good Health and Well Being, SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, and SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.

#### **Connection to GT Strategic Plan:**

These ideas would advance the following connections to the strategic plan: Amplify Impact, Expand Access, and Cultivate Well-Being. These areas of the plan align by addressing and highlighting ways this theme can enhance the well-being among our students overall.

#### **Resources needed:**

Financial and human resources will be needed to support efforts and connections through our academic departments, various areas and offices on-campus, student groups, student leadership teams, and any resources associated with research and innovation.

**Contact:** Jeremy Brown, [jeremy.brown@vpid.gatech.edu](mailto:jeremy.brown@vpid.gatech.edu)

## **GT 17 Rooms Recommended Action 6:**

### **ADVANCE SDG RESEARCH**

Recommendations for cross- and trans-disciplinary Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) research and sponsored projects are implicit in the preceding recommendations. With the Research Next Strategic Planning project well underway in Spring 2021 and the Sustainability Next Task Force developing recommendations for advancing the sustainability-related components of the Strategic Plan, we simply highlight some of the cross-cutting recommendations here that have emerged from the 17 Rooms discussions.

#### **Recommendations include:**

1. Initiate a specific program to accelerate SDG-related transdisciplinary research that engages diverse teams of faculty, staff, researchers, students, and partners, integrating methodologies and expertise from all colleges and Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI). Seed funding and/or targeted development efforts could dramatically accelerate this portfolio of research.
2. Support applied research and learning through organization and management of existing campus data sets (e.g., utility data and performance landscape data) that could be utilized in research partnerships between Academics and Administration and Finance.
3. Promote and advance SDG-related action research that engages Georgia Tech as an anchor institution, where research impact is geared specifically toward improving peoples' lives and communities in the greater Atlanta region and the state of Georgia, as well as addressing our stated priorities in assuming a global leadership role to tackle the most challenging sustainability-related problems of our time.
3. Advance our campus sustainability portfolio and external ratings through the pursuit of SDG-related research that integrates academic programming and/or campus operational assets.
4. Design and execute effective cross-platform communication programming that highlights new and existing transdisciplinary SDG-related research at Georgia Tech.

**Contact:** Anna Stenport, [aws@gatech.edu](mailto:aws@gatech.edu)