There is much to be proud of in the history of liberal arts at Georgia Tech. We have been part of the curriculum since the Institute opened in 1888. From its inception, Tech made a habit of hiring stellar liberal arts faculty and administrators. Testimony to that is the fact that two of Tech’s eleven presidents were humanities educators!

In this timeline, you will see a gradual but steady evolution in liberal arts at Georgia Tech. Whether in roles as executive leaders, faculty, staff, or students, we in the liberal arts have kept innovating, kept pushing Tech better, kept challenging and continually reshaping a liberal arts dialogue here. We have advanced— and continue to advance— for a strong role for liberal arts, both as a foundation for the educational, ethical, and intellectual growth of our engineering, science, and technology students, and for the liberal arts disciplines in their own right as a critical element for compassionate, human-centered innovation, and problem-solving.

Ultimately, Georgia Tech created our own distinctive approach to the liberal arts. With the founding of the Ivan Allen College in 1990, we enacted a vision for research and teaching that anticipated the ubiquitous technology and globalization that is shaping our world. Today, I think we can make a pretty good argument that we are a singular institution, Georgia Tech, continuing to form up our group of the implications of the merging and strengthening of the linkages of liberal arts to the technological disciplines. After nearly 30 years, we are just beginning to explore the full potential of this innovation.

— Jacqueline J. Royster

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Message from the Dean
Rethinking the Role of Liberal Arts

1991 San Kevern is named first dean of the new School of Georgia Tech.

1995 Allen College hosts the first conference for the International Society for General Semantics.

2000 Georgia Tech opens its new $104 million campus in Atlanta, now home to the College of Computing.

2004 Modern Languages Department is established.

2005 English Department Chair Kenneth C. Gamble is promoted to vice president for student life at Georgia Tech.

Beginnings

1888 Tech's law school is abandoned after a "poorly educated institution, so far as any law school in the South can be considered," according to the school's first president, J.H. Schenck.

1920 English Department Chair Kenneth C. Gamble is promoted to vice president for student life at Georgia Tech.

1940s Modern Languages Department is established.

1950s Engineering faculty approves a new academic program in communication engineering.

1960s Eva Harris announces an undesignated honor of the retiring U.S. senator.

1980s Student social concerns prompt the creation of the College of Information Technology.

1990s Three new research centers established in three years bring our total to 16.

2001-2011 Georgia Tech-Lorraine.

2015-2017 Georgia Tech's presence in Europe is strengthened with the establishment of the H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering.

2020 Student Perspective highlights the "war-making capacity" of technology and the need for "strategic intervention, both for the defense of our way of life and the achievement of the goals of international relations."