

GEORGIA TECH AS AN ANCHOR INSTITUTION: DEFINITION, VISION, & GUIDING TENETS

Definition

Anchor Institutions are place-based (unlikely to move) “powerful collaborators [with local communities] in economic, educational, and civic renewal efforts” (Harkavy et al 2014:99) that have a strong self-interest in ensuring that the places where they are located thrive and view their own future as closely connected to and dependent on the future of their region. Anchor Institutions are grounded in long-term partnerships with their own local communities. They are committed to engaging in relationships that reduce disparities and advance the public interest along with institutional interests (e.g., faculty research and student learning). Anchor Institution work is guided by the values set forth by the national [Anchor Institutions Task Force](#): Collaboration & Partnership, Equity & Social Justice, Democracy & Democratic Practice, and Commitment to Place & Community.

GT Vision

Georgia Tech’s Strategic Plan, “[Progress and Service for All](#),” commits the Institute to amplifying impact, championing innovation, and embracing our power as agents of change for the public good to democratically generate talent, ideas, and solutions that help define and address the most critical problems of our time, locally and globally. By living our values in our own backyard and within our GT community, we will help catalyze sustainable development, inclusive entrepreneurship, social innovation, and economic opportunity. Georgia Tech’s anchor institution relationships and initiatives will help the Institute become a truly engaged university by advancing – and training students to advance – the public interest through education, knowledge production, community engagement, economic development, and strategic management of our operations and physical space. Our Westside geography will be determined collaboratively with community leaders, building on Georgia Tech’s work to date, which has focused especially on NPUs L, K, and T and neighborhoods in the Proctor Creek watershed, and on studies exploring how the Institute can serve as a catalyst connecting Westside communities to campus.

Guiding Tenets for GT’s Anchor Institution Work

1. GT’s Anchor Institution work reduces disparities and advances equity in our own backyard by working with West Side communities of color and lower income communities surrounding campus, to identify and implement strategies that reduce racial and socioeconomic disparities and improve quality of life.
2. GT’s Anchor Institution work lends support to ensuring the well-being of Georgia Tech’s first-generation and lower income students and front-line staff who have financial hardships or other challenges (GT Well Being Plan).
3. As an Anchor Institution, GT convenes and actively participates in community impact initiatives being conducted across the Atlanta region and the state, as well as its global campuses. These initiatives inform each other and are sometimes strategically connected. Local work is also strategically linked to these initiatives, for greater impact.
4. GT’s Anchor Institution activities address systemic challenges, over the long-term (i.e., ten years), through both small- and large-scale projects supported by a steady stream of resources.
5. Challenges and projects engage students, faculty, and staff to mobilize Georgia Tech’s strengths – across research, education, and operations – to support and strengthen existing community work and activate new initiatives.
6. Anchor Institution work is structured to amplify democratic practice and community voice and to be mutually beneficial for both Georgia Tech and its partners. Challenges and projects are identified, developed, and implemented via long-term relationships with communities and other stakeholders, including government, philanthropy, industry, and higher education. Special attention is given to amplifying the voices of grassroots groups led by community residents.
7. Metrics of success are jointly defined by Georgia Tech and our partners, especially from the communities where the activities take place. They will include both GT internal metrics (e.g., student learning outcomes or minority procurement) and community-facing metrics, with a particular focus on long-term sustainability. Additionally, they will allow for alignment and comparison with peer institutions and advance target outcomes of our global impact framework, the SDGs.