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# Shifting Landscapes

A state of political and environmental precipices

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## Magazine

SPRING 2025



@3484mag

2 Spring 2025

## What is 3484?

3484 Magazine is a news magazine focusing primarily on politics and social issues in the Atlanta area. We dive deeply into policies in Atlanta and Georgia to investigate how they impact Georgia Tech students.

34° N, 84° W are the geographic coordinates of the City of Atlanta, rounded. We picked this name because of our focus on the Atlanta area.

When we're not working on publishing a magazine we cover events, like presidential debates and protests, on our social media accounts, @3484mag.

In the future, we will continue to cover issues that impact Atlanta and Tech students. You can expect to see a lot more on elections, healthcare, climate policy, and city planning, as we continue to explore ways policy shapes Georgia Tech students' lives.

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Cover Designed by Hannah Marsh

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# Breaking the Cycle



## Atlanta's journey through the opioid epidemic

EMMA HOVEY, author  
HANNAH MARSH, designer

Opioid addiction has plagued the Atlanta Metropolitan area for decades. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, since the beginning of the opioid epidemic in 1999, deaths related to opioids have continued to increase. Substance use disorders have become a major problem nationally, leading to a shift in social and policy-related opinions of these illnesses. In 2017, the White House declared a public health emergency about the rise of opioid misuse; as of June 2024, the public health emergency remains. According to the Georgia Department of Health, overdoses due to opioid misuse have risen since 2010, aligning with the increase in opioid misuse that comes with exposure to new substances. To tackle this, a better understanding of the brain's role in addiction, the role of community safe havens, and public policy may help mitigate the damage that opioid misuse reflects on society.

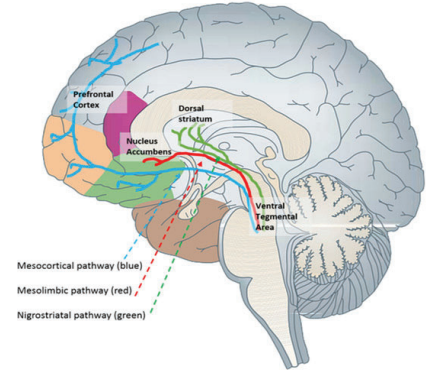
The CDC has recognized a cyclic trend in the rise of opioids since 1999. Described as three distinct "waves," the misuse of opioids has resulted in spikes in overdose deaths. Between 1999-2022, over 700,000 people have lost their lives due to prescribed or illegal opioids. The first wave of deaths related to opioid misuse began in the 90s when physicians prescribed opioids more often. The beginning of the 2010s showed a swift increase in heroin-related overdoses. Finally, the third wave in 2013 resulted in a significant

increase in overdoses, including the rise of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids, leading to the declaration of a national public health emergency.

### THE SCIENCE BEHIND ADDICTION

Providing a deeper understanding of the biological mechanisms of addiction may best combat this public health emergency. Reward, pleasure, and motivation require activation of the mesolimbic dopamine pathway, also known as the reward pathway. Drugs of abuse, like opioids, can cause dependency because they activate this pathway when binding to opioid receptors. Activation increases dopamine in the ventral tegmental area and the rewarding sensation which results in positive reinforcement.

This differs from negative reinforcement, where the person takes the drug to stave off uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms. "There's actually some professional argument in the field about whether addiction truly comes from positive reinforcement or negative reinforcement," according to Dr. Katharine McCann, a neuroscience professor at Georgia Tech who teaches a class on substance abuse. "All drugs of abuse are going to activate the reward centers of the brain," she stated, highlighting the importance of clinical and scientific agreement on how these drugs affect behavior.

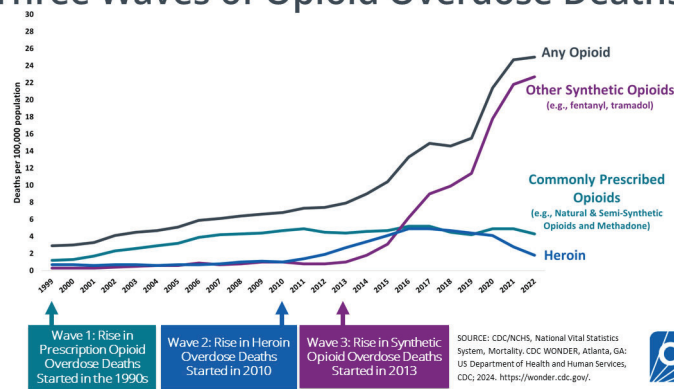


The diagram shows the reward and pleasure pathways activated during opioid misuse. // Diagram by Carmen Ferrer-Pérez, Sandra Montagud-Romero, and María Carmen Blanco Gandía

This contention exists within the scientific field; however, the conflation of terms like "dependence" and "addiction" in non-clinical settings has aided in the misunderstanding of the general public's knowledge of substance use disorders. McCann states that "physical dependence is not the same thing as addiction because you're missing that behavioral component that addiction comes with." Addictive behavior results in some form of drug-seeking behavior: to get the reward from taking the drug or to alleviate withdrawal symptoms. She also states that physical dependence "is not always a bad thing ... there are lots of substances out there and drugs out there that people are dependent on every day that help them function," like blood pressure medications, antidepressants, or other neuropsychiatric medications. However, these medications do not contain an addictive quality and, therefore, do not pose the same risk of abuse as opioids.

Overall, breaking the stigma surrounding drug use and substance use disorders may rely on using more precise language. Physical dependence does not mean addiction, and addiction does not necessarily imply a substance use disorder. "Most people who study addiction think of addiction in this three-stage cycle that repeats itself," says McCann. Stage 1, the binge intoxication stage, occurs when the reward of dopamine happens from the

## Three Waves of Opioid Overdose Deaths



The timeline of opioid related overdoses since the beginning of the opioid epidemic. As of the third wave, the rise of synthetic opioids like fentanyl has resulted in a total increase of deaths. // Graph by CDC



A depiction of “The Heroin Triangle,” reaching from Atlanta to the northern metropolitan area. // Figure by 11Alive

intake of the substance. This results in positive reinforcement. Next, the withdrawal stage occurs when physical withdrawals as well as negative emotions transpire. Finally, the third stage of cravings and preoccupation results in the seeking behavior. Whereas the first two stages represent physical dependence, the inclusion of the third stage differentiates physical dependence from addiction.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders lists multiple criteria that can qualify for a diagnosis of substance use disorder. Eleven criteria determine the severity of the disorder, with more symptoms indicating more severity of substance misuse. Most treatments include a mixture of different approaches, such as support groups and medications, depending on the severity.

## TREATMENTS FOR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges with this epidemic is the difficulty in treating these disorders. McCann suggests that “one of the reasons that it’s so hard to treat, and probably the main reason, is because of the stigma surrounding it.” Using the correct terminology when referring to specific aspects of these diseases may present a simple way to help decrease the current stigma. For example, reducing a person to their struggle by using the term “addict” removes the human aspect of these diseases by removing their agency. Shifting to first-person language shows humanity, as well as giving dignity to those struggling by suggesting that recovery can happen. The National Institute of Drug Abuse recommends replacing words like “clean” with “abstinence from drugs” to avoid negative connotations. Using medical

terminology emphasizes the fact that substance use disorders are an illness, which helps to reduce stigma.

McCann also suggested another barrier to treatment is the “individual variability of how people react to drugs.” Not every treatment will work for everybody, which may discourage those seeking help. Many factors, like genes and the environment, can influence this, so future research in these areas may provide better care options. Dr. Ashley Bradford, an applied public policy researcher at Georgia Tech, agreed that “We need to make sure that treatment options are scientifically based,” such as pharmacotherapy, a treatment that uses medication to help reduce the use of opioids.

While the general public may think the stigma around substance misuse ends when the person seeks treatment, it seems that harsher

**“There’s not only stigma on the outside, but there’s stigma on the inside.”**

criticisms may arise depending on the method of treatment chosen. For example, McCann says that “there’s a stigma around using methadone,” a medication mainly used for opioid-use disorders to help rewire the brain’s response to opioids. Methadone helps to lessen the physical symptoms of opioid withdrawal, as well as blocks the rewarding sensation associated with

dopamine release after taking opioids. Prescribers may also recommend methadone for specific chronic pain conditions since it does not carry the same risk of abuse as opioids.

Bradford also supports the use of methadone to help with the reduction of opioid misuse: “When it comes to patient outcomes, we know that medication-assisted treatment works.” This form of treatment has a greater effect when combined with behavioral therapy, since using methadone mainly helps to lessen physical withdrawal symptoms, like nausea, increased blood pressure, and muscle pain.

Missy Owen, co-founder of the recovery community center The Zone with her husband, Michael Owen, said infighting exists between those in recovery with the use of pharmacotherapy, like methadone, and those in recovery through other avenues. “They fight back and forth among themselves about who’s really [in recovery] and who’s not. There’s not only stigma on the outside, but there’s stigma on the inside,” she said, which can make it harder to find communities of support for long-term recovery.

“People who are on methadone treatment are still physically dependent on an opioid,” McCann stated, alluding to the main reason for the controversy surrounding this treatment. The precision of language used to talk about this subject may help to clear up any misunderstanding about pharmacotherapy. “I think most clinicians would not necessarily say they’re addicted to methadone while they might be still physically dependent because they’re not meeting all those other criteria — disrupting their lives,” McCann stated. Pharmacotherapy aims to eventually wean off the medication, so judgment based on the method of treatment chosen can lead to even greater stigma.

Unfortunately, the analgesic properties of opioids in pain relief add to the challenge of treating opioid misuse; however, current research has made progress in designing new medications that provide the pain-relieving effects that opioids do while eliminating activation of the reward pathway. Along with this, McCann explained that these medications are better at targeting specific areas in the brain without triggering the rewarding sensation while acting over a longer period of time. New pharmaceuticals with less risk of abuse may close this gap; medications that are slower to onset and slower to offset help to lower abuse potential while still providing pain relief.

As of January 2025, the FDA approved suzetrigine (Journavx) for acute pain, which may help eliminate hydrocodone or oxycodone, some of the most commonly prescribed opioids. Suzetrigine does not act by binding to opioid receptors; instead, it helps to reduce pain transmission between nerve cells by preventing the neuron from firing, thus lowering the number of signals sent. In doing this, the reward pathway does not activate, which provides an option for long-term pain relief without the risk of abuse.

Community centers also offer significant potential for those in recovery and seeking help. One such independent non-profit is The Zone in Marietta, GA, a Recovery Community Organization. Led by those in recovery, The Zone “provides a major, major, big reset button,” Michael Owen stated, emphasizing the need for non-profit organizations tailored to those struggling with addiction.

“The Zone helps people stay in recovery because it gives them the opportunity to build a network of like-minded people,” Missy Owen said since it “gives them all the resources and the support that they need to be able to maintain their recovery.” Community centers such as these provide hope to overcome substance use disorder. “It builds them up — they gain their confidence back,” she stated.

The thrift store, one of the most successful programs at The Zone, operates fully through those in recovery. Michael Owen said employees learn transferable skills such as “customer service skills, work orders, phone calls, inventory, pricing, and advertising,” which translate

to many different jobs. “They know that we couldn’t do all this without them, and that gives them a sense of value,” Missy Owen said, highlighting the importance of belonging and acceptance in the recovery journey.

Because The Zone provides many different branches of support, funding poses a challenge to the services they can provide. Some of their revenue comes through the thrift store, but most comes from external funding. Missy Owen explained that “funding is always a problem because there are so many causes out there, and we’re all fighting for the same dollars.” She elaborated that the challenge also lies in providing services for free to a large community. “Last year alone, we had 55,289 visits to The Zone. We served over 41,000 meals,” she said.

### CURRENT DRUG POLICIES

While access to treatment and community support present a major area of improvement for recovery, federal and state drug policies can also cause barriers to gaining support and access to treatments. McCann suggests that future drug policy should come from the success of previous policies, especially in terms of remission, relapse, and interventions. “I certainly think that policy should be based on data, and I think that data can come from multiple places,” she stated. Both experimental and real-world data provide the necessary evidence for useful changes in policy.

Some current policies focus on the prevention of new substance use disorders. For example, reforming access to opioids through physicians for pain management. Bradford mentioned the use of opioid prescription limits, which lessen the amount prescribed at a time: “This is

important because longer term and higher dosage opioid prescriptions are associated strongly with long term opioid use.” Limiting this access requires more routine monitoring from prescribers, as well as more appropriate doses for pain management. In November of 2022, the CDC published guidelines for prescribing opioids, recommending only

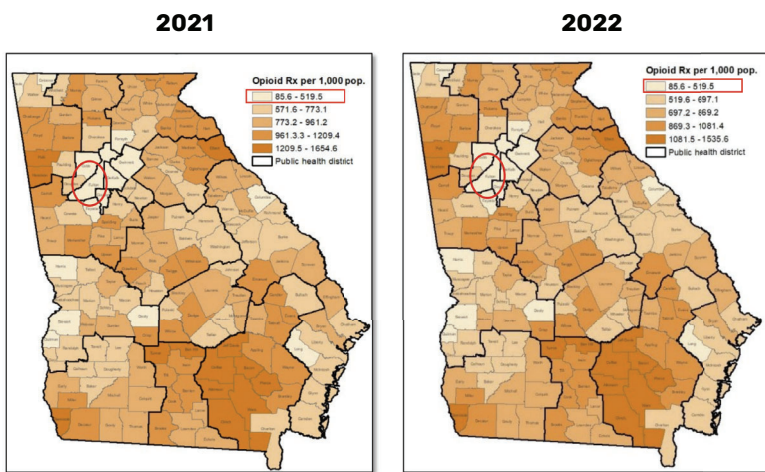
“We try to rebuild people and help them get back to their pre-addiction lives.”

necessary dosages to manage acute pain; managing chronic pain should involve other analgesics, like ibuprofen, to lower the risk of abuse. This was last updated in May of 2024.

Along with this, physicians also now have better access to patient history. “There are state-level databases that physicians can access... to look at the history of medical care for these patients and see what other prescriptions these patients are being prescribed,” Bradford stated. Programs such as this can reduce overprescribing, which can lead to illicit distribution and misuse.

Finally, continued physician education programs help to keep prescribers updated on healthcare data and best practices. Specific seminars for pain management and opioid prescriptions aim to certify that prescribers read and implement the latest research and suggested prescribing practices for these medications.

More controversial policies, like “harm-reduction policies,” may also help reduce substance use disorders. Bradford said, “these tend to be needle or syringe exchange programs and Narcan programs.” These centers differ from recovery centers: harm reduction aims to help lessen the likelihood of overdose, whereas recovery centers encourage abstinence from substance use. In Atlanta, places like the Atlanta Harm Reduction Coalition provide syringe exchange locations throughout the city. According to the Rules and Regulations of the State of Georgia, these centers must meet specific criteria to provide these services, such as registration with the Georgia Department of Public Health. Other criteria include free disposal and replacement of needles to consumers, provision of referrals for substance use disorder treatment, as well as screening and care services for HIV. Harm



Age-Adjusted Opioid Prescription Rate by County // Figures by Georgia Department Of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities

Reduction Centers must also provide naloxone, also known as Narcan, which helps to reverse an opioid overdose.

“With needle exchange programs, the idea is we want to stop the spread of communicable disease. With Narcan, we want to keep people alive.” Bradford stated. As Georgia continues to incorporate these harm reduction policies, the number of substance use disorders and their associated deaths should decrease.

### THE FUTURE OF OPIOIDS

Overall, more research, better access to treatments, and drug policy reform may provide the most effective change to overcome the current opioid epidemic, both in Atlanta and nationally. “I think the only way we can make effective policy is by taking a more holistic look at how the policies we have are affecting people... and how they’re based in science,” McCann stated. Bradford agreed, stating, “We need to be, as a field, very flexible with the types of interventions that we study ... and the research needs to follow what’s happening in the real world.”

Moreover, clearer expert communication about substance use disorders and the surrounding

public policy will aid in breaking the stigma surrounding these disorders. “We’re having a real crisis when it comes to translating our academic research to lay people in all aspects of academia. This is a major challenge ... the people who

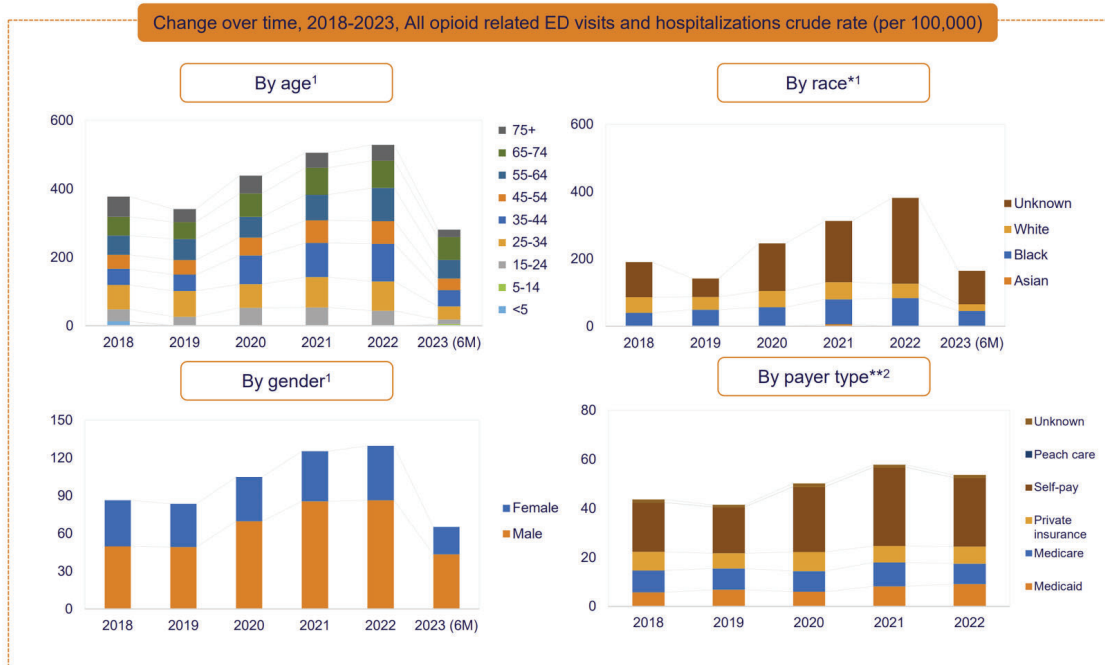
**“Everyone has been touched by the opioid epidemic in some way.”**

are producing this research need to be better at translating our research,” Bradford stated. “That is one of the most important aspects of our jobs.”

As far as community centers go, better funding for access to care may lessen societal costs, Michael Owen said. “There is a cost to your community that maybe you’ve never thought of — it’s the overdose responses through EMTs, fire department, police department; it’s the hospital stays from an overdose emergency room. It’s the autopsy reports that somebody has to pay for,” cementing the value of community centers in providing relief for those struggling with a substance use disorder. “We try to rebuild

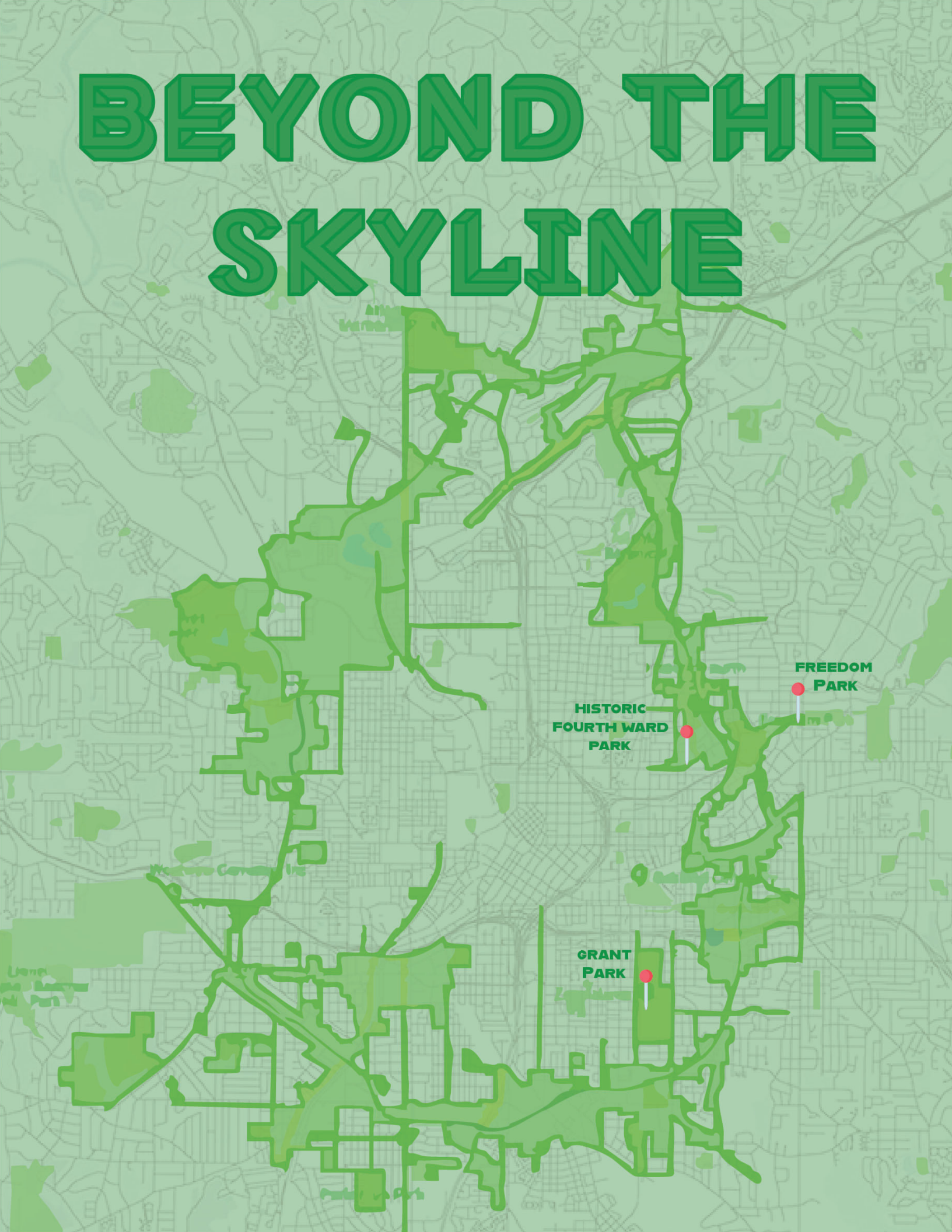
people and help them get back to their pre-addiction lives,” Missy Owen said, highlighting that providing hope for recovery helps to prevent relapse and support the community.

Ultimately, “everyone has been touched by the opioid epidemic in some way,” Bradford stated. A multi-faceted approach, focusing on policy that supports the research, scientifically based treatments, and better community support, may help to lower the rate of substance use disorders in the Atlanta area.



Opioid Related Emergency Department Visits and Hospitalizations in Fulton County // Data by Georgia Department Of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities

# BEYOND THE SKYLINE



**HISTORIC  
FOURTH WARD  
PARK**

**FREEDOM  
PARK**

**GRANT  
PARK**

# Beyond the Skyline



## The revitalization of Atlanta's green spaces

RAELYN BAILEY, author

MADELINE WELLER + HANNAH MARSH, designers

In Atlanta, public spaces are being reimagined, transforming once-industrial areas into vibrant parks filled with art and community.

### FREEDOM PARK

Freedom Park, located east of Downtown Atlanta, Georgia, is known as the city of Atlanta's Art Park. Artists from diverse backgrounds and disciplines transform the space into a vibrant home for their creative projects.



Among sculptures like *Homage to King* and *The Bridge*, *Self Portrait III* by Jaume Plensa was added to the park as part of the Renew Atlanta Infrastructure Bond's Landmark Public Art Initiative. Standing 10 feet tall, the sphere surrounds a seated person. Both the sphere and human figure are made from the letters of 9 different languages.



Sculptures by Artist Yvonne Domenge // Photos by Madeline Weller



*Self Portrait III* by Artist Jaume Plensa // Photo by Raelyn Bailey



## GRANT PARK

Grant Park was created in 1883, but in the 1960s, crime and unstable infrastructure became an issue. In response, the community collectively decided that the park needed to be preserved and restored. The Grant Park Neighborhood Association led efforts to make it a safe, welcoming space where people could gather and connect with each other.

Grant Park Playground // Photo by Madeline Weller

Grant Park offers spaces for both activity and leisure. Gatherings often take place in the picnic areas and open fields. Families enjoy the playgrounds, where kids and parents can mingle, while tee-ball and other sports are commonly played in the park. The park also hosts events like the Grant Park Farmers Market.



Little League Baseball at Grant Park Field // Photo by Madeline Weller



Park Bench Aside Baseball Field // Photo by Raelyn Bailey



The Grant Park pool is currently undergoing major renovations, including new plaster and paint for the pool area. Additionally, new safety features and security cameras are being installed to enhance the experience for visitors.



Grant Park Pool // Photo by Madeline Weller

## HISTORIC FOURTH WARD PARK

Historic Fourth Ward Park is a testament to urban transformation. It was once an industrial hub but underwent significant redevelopment. Now, Historic Fourth Ward Park is considered a green space for the surrounding community. It contains trails, skate parks, playgrounds, a splash pad, and an amphitheater.

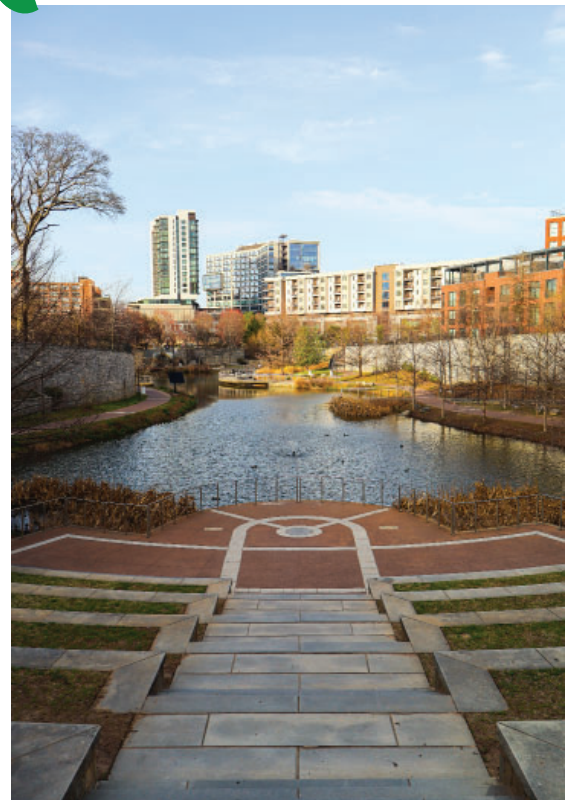
The park features a lake that prevents flooding in the area. It manages heavy rainfall by collecting and controlling excess water, reducing the risk of floods in the surrounding neighborhood. There are also ground drains that help direct water into the lake.



Decorative Drainage // Photo by Madeline Weller



Skate Park at Historic Fourth Ward // Photo by Lucia Lammers



Historic Fourth Ward Retention Pond // Photo by Madeline Weller

# We Be

## XIX. Student Code

*Section 1* All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in Representatives.

*Section 2* 1: The House of Representatives shall be composed of Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requi

2: No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have United States, and who shall not, when elected, be in Inhab

3: Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned amo their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by addi for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fif Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United S shall by Law direct. The Number of Representatives shall not Representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, th eight, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations one, Connect Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Caroli

4: When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State Vacancies.

5: The H

The most current Student Code of Conduct can be found on t as listed in the References. In the event of any conflict, the C

- A. General
- B. Prohibited Academic Conduct
- C. Prohibited Non-Academic Conduct
- D. Student Code of Conduct Procedures
- E. Sanctions
- F. Interim Suspension
- G. Appeal Procedures
- H. Record Keeping and Release of Information
- I. References

### A. GENERAL

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1. Purpose  
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# BETWEEN LAWS & RULES

## Understanding GTPD's Dual Role on Campus

*Section 4* 1: The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Sen Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law ma

2: The Congress shall assemble at least once in every Year, and sucl by Law appoint a different Day.

When used in this Code  
This Group or Organization who is a meeting between f Administrator first occurs during an investigation. An Admin during this out-  
"Administrative Resolution" refers to a decision by a Student is determined either being found responsible or not for the a  
"Advisors" refers to individuals who assist a participant w  
Attorneys at law are not allowed to serve as Advisors to Com  
Student or Students are subject to criminal prosecution or th

*Section 5* 1: Each House shall be the Judge of the Elections, Returns and a Quorum to do Business, but a smaller Number may adjourn f Members, in such Manner, and under such Penalties as each

2: Each H Proceedings, p two third

3: Each House all Journal of its Proceedings, and f Judgment require Secrecy the Yeas and Nays of the Memb Present, be entered the

4: Neither House, during the Session of Congress, shall, without t other Place than that in which the two Houses shall be sitting.

"Appellate Officer" means the person authorized by the Instu disciplinary decision rendered by a Student Conduct Admini Dean of Students.

"Business day" means any day in which the Institute is open accordance with the Institute's official calendars. All campus When an authorized Institute Official closes the Institute, it business day.

"Chairperson" means a member of a Student Conduct Panel oversee the proceedings during a hearing.

"Complainant" means any person who submits a compla Organization violated the Student Code of Conduct, or any misconduct.

*Section 6* 1: The Senators and Representatives shall receive a Compensation for their of the United States.6 They shall in all Cases, except Treason, Felony and b Attendance at the Session of their respective Houses, and in going to and return House, they shall not be questioned in any other Place.

2: No Senator or Representative shall, during the Time for which he was elected, the United States, which shall have been created, or the Emoluments whereof shall holding any Office under the United States, shall be a Member of either House

# Between Laws & Rules



## Understanding GTPD's dual role on campus

MARTA WESTERSTAHL, author  
HANNAH MARSH, designer

The Georgia Tech Police Department (GTPD) is tasked with keeping the Institute's campus safe. GTPD police are sworn officers with the power to make arrests on University System of Georgia property and 500 yards beyond it. At the same time, they serve as agents of the Institute by enforcing the Student Code of Conduct. So what does that mean for students?

### GTPD'S DUAL AUTHORITY: LEGAL VS. INSTITUTE ENFORCEMENT

According to Cortney Lollar, a law professor at Georgia State University (GSU), if "Someone is arrested for something that violates both the student conduct rules and the federal or state laws, they can have parallel track proceedings." Therefore, students can face both academic and criminal consequences for violations occurring from the time they are admitted to the time they receive their diploma. Both campus and traditional police forces are seldom involved in civil cases.

Although the criminal and Institute proceedings may occur concurrently, a student's constitutional rights may only apply in the criminal proceeding. Lollar explained, "The worst case scenario for solely a student conduct violation is you're expelled from school," as opposed to a criminal proceeding where one might be imprisoned or face other punishments.

Lollar explained the difference in legal standing between criminal and academic proceedings: "Do you have a right to your education? Not at the federal level and not at the post-secondary level in the state of Georgia." Given that accessing higher education is not a right under The Constitution, "your rights within the context of a school disciplinary hearing are more limited," she said.

For instance, Georgia Tech establishes the burden of proof in a Student Code of Conduct hearing as "a preponderance of evidence," meaning it has to be more likely true than not, which Lollar noted is "a much lower standard than in a criminal court," where proof beyond a reasonable doubt is required.

Lollar said that during criminal cases, "If an officer violates the Fourth Amendment's rules prohibiting an unlawful seizure of a person or search of their property, the consequence is that the evidence can be thrown out and not considered in the court proceeding. It's unclear that those same protections would apply in a student conduct proceeding."

Additionally, the Institute does not provide legal counsel to students accused of violating the Code of Conduct. This lack of legal advising disadvantages students without connections or the ability to pay for an attorney.

Russell Covey, another law professor at GSU, affirmed the ambiguity surrounding college police departments' dual role: "Campus police officers do frequently embody two separate functions, and the legal rules that attach to those two different job functions can be different." He noted, "Law enforcement officers, just in general, have a lot of discretion about how they want to handle different situations." For instance, he said, "If you're a regular street cop, you don't have to arrest a teenager with a beer.

**"It's unclear that those same protections would apply in a student conduct proceeding."**

You could just take the beer away if you want." GTPD officers are allowed to practice another layer of discretion unique to campus settings and may choose to initiate a Code of Conduct violation.

Lieutenant Jessica Howard has led the Community OutReach and Engagement (CORE) team for the past five years. CORE



Image Displaying An Officer From Each Of GTPD's Departments // Photo via GTPD Website

aims to reduce crime by proactively engaging with the campus community.

Howard said that GTPD officers consider whether the student has “been a threat to themselves or someone else” in determining whether to pursue criminal charges or Code of Conduct violations. This reasoning leads to “Most of our Student Code of Conduct reports [being] surrounded by alcohol or drug-related infractions,” she said.

Officer Gary Cook has been employed with GTPD for 28 years and also serves on the CORE Team. Cook shared his rationale for issuing Code of Conduct violations for alcohol-related concerns: “Could we put them in jail? Yes, but I think what hurts them more is if their parents get involved and we do the administrative process. Since they are adults, if they end up in jail, it is not certain that their parents might find out.” Howard asserted that issuing Student Code of Conduct violations for underage drinking “lets [the student] get the help that they need.” These perspectives provide rationales for when and how GTPD exercises its police discretion.

Although students have fewer rights during a Code of Conduct violation process, when GTPD is involved, it is often unclear whether the officers are criminally or institutionally focused in their investigation. For instance,



GTPD Cruiser // Photo via GTPD Website

Professor Lollar said, “If campus officers are conducting a search that is authorized by the Student Code of Conduct rules and they see something criminal during the search, under the Fourth Amendment, the officer can seize that evidence ... so long as it is in plain view.” Although a search started as a Code of Conduct function, it can turn into a criminal function without announcement or clarity from the officer conducting the search.

In general, Professor Covey advised, “People always have the right to decline to talk to the

**“Although a search started as a Code of Conduct function, it can turn into a criminal function without announcement or clarity from the officer conducting the search.”**

police,” and say no to a search. He said, “It doesn’t mean you... can always end interaction with a law enforcement officer and leave... but that doesn’t mean that you need to cooperate.”

However, part of the Student Code of Conduct lists the “Failure to cooperate with the investigation, resolution, and procedures of the Code” as a prohibited conduct offense. Thus, it remains unclear to what extent students must answer GTPD questions, assuming the officers are not pursuing criminal charges. This creates a challenging situation where students may not

know which ‘hat’ the officer is wearing during an interaction or what their rights are at any given moment.

### THE SCHULTZ CASE

The complexity of GTPD’s role in protecting the campus community came into the limelight when Scout Schultz, a 21-year-old Georgia Tech student, was killed by an officer. In 2017, Schultz called 911 and alerted them that

someone was outside with a knife and potentially a gun, but Schultz was describing himself, even though they were only carrying an unopened multi-tool. Despite Schultz’s mental distress, GTPD Officer Tyler Beck shot and killed them outside their on-campus dorm after they refused to drop the multi-tool.

In 2020, the Fulton County District Attorney stated that Officer Beck would not face charges, determining that the use of force fell within legal guidelines. Beck was employed as a GTPD officer until 2021, according to online pay records.

To effectively serve the campus community, GTPD new hires are state-certified and must complete field training on Georgia Tech’s



campus. Furthermore, the whole department engages in several forms of annual training. Lieutenant Howard emphasized the role of training to intervene during mental health crises and said, “We get 120 plus hours of training a year.” In the State of Georgia, police are only required to complete 20 hours per year.

Officer Cook believes that the focus on mental health training started after the killing of Scout Schultz and said, “Before that, we may have had a little bit [of mental health training], now it seems like we’re doing it all the time.” He also said that officers now carry tasers and pepper ball guns, which are non-lethal weapons, in addition to guns and pepper spray, which were the only weapons carried prior to the Schultz killing.

### POLICE REFORM

Dr. Thad Johnson is a former Memphis law enforcement officer and current GSU criminal justice professor who has focused much of his work on the effects of police training and reform.

He noted that though there are some differences between a city police force and a campus police force in their scope and the kinds of crime that occur most frequently, he finds that the role of

city and campus forces has merged since the “early 2000s with the mass school shootings.”

As campus police become more similar to traditional police forces, he emphasized, “We have to remember that policing is an industry. We’re not doing this work for free.”

And since policing is an industry, the compensation of officers plays a significant role in the way policing occurs. Johnson referenced that in many police departments, the reward

to be able to recruit or retain a diversified force if we don’t diversify our reward structure,” which is important given the multitude of cultures represented on campus.

Regarding the hiring process, Howard noted, “We’re really selective about who we hire because we want to maintain the relationship that we do have on campus.”

Johnson noted another challenge that both city and campus police forces face:

Lieutenant Howard shared that GTPD spends significant time engaging with the unsheltered community. Occasionally, these interactions

**“If you want to get rewarded, you want to get promoted... You have to make those arrests, which is just for the sake of making an arrest, not necessarily for the sake of public safety.”**

result in recorded misdemeanor charges for “Loitering/Prowling,” which is one of the most common campus incidents that GTPD reports.

When GTPD finds unsheltered people on campus, officers aim to help them find shelter; Howard said, “We’re calling local resources, and unfortunately, there’s a process before we can get them some type of help.” She shared that officers often call shelters outside of the metro area since these shelters might have more availability to take in new people. Another alternative is to provide referrals to Policing Alternatives & Diversion, which aims to help individuals who have been accused of a crime and are living in poverty, dealing with substance abuse, or mental health concerns. GTPD therefore has complex interactions between creating a safe learning environment and preserving state and federal laws.

In the end, students remain of central importance to GTPD. Cook explained that one reason he has enjoyed working for GTPD for 28 years is that city police forces often “Don’t have the luxury to talk to people.” He noted that having the time to engage with the community is one of the main benefits of working for GTPD. Cook said, “You have time to be a little bit more proactive” and increase safety by engaging with the campus community.



Buzz with a GTPD Officer // Photo via Instagram

structures tend to incentivize arrest, citation, and traffic stop numbers. Additionally, he said, “If you want to get rewarded, you want to get promoted... You have to make those arrests, which is just for the sake of making an arrest, not necessarily for the sake of public safety.”

Johnson asserted, “Unless how we reward people aligns with the job that we want [officers] to be doing,” we are unlikely to see reform. He noted that it’s not about getting rid of arrests as a performance metric but incorporating additional metrics to measure individual and department-wide police performance. Lieutenant Howard affirmed that compensation for GTPD officers is not based on arrest or citation numbers.

Emphasizing the importance of this type of incentive reform, he stated, “We are not going

helping the unsheltered. He asserted, “Being unsheltered is bigger than policing. So what are police supposed to do?” This highlights the interconnection between GTPD protecting students, faculty, and staff and helping those who are temporarily on campus grounds.

He shared, “I remember being an officer, and somebody’s cold and homeless, and I have to make a decision. I can’t take them to the hospital to get their meds. I can’t take them to the shelter. So do I lock them up so they can get the possibility of getting their meds and not being cold? Or is that a violation of their civil liberties?” He noted the importance of training and clarity of procedures for officers so they can consistently and safely respond to societal needs.

# Freezing Academia



# Freezing Academia



## The Trump administration's push against higher education

COSETTE BEELER, author

QI TING YU, designer

In a campaign video, current United States President Donald Trump stated the following: “Colleges have gotten hundreds of billions of dollars from hard-working taxpayers. And now we are going to get this anti-American insanity out of our institutions once and for all. We are going to have real education in America.” In the first few months of Trump’s second term, assessing higher education has become an administration priority—aided by the newly created Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

Over the past few months, the administration has sent out executive orders to cut various universities’ federal funding, including \$400 million from Columbia, \$175 million from the

**The administration has sent out executive orders to cut various universities’ federal funding, including \$400 million from Columbia, \$175 million from the University of Pennsylvania, and \$200 million from Johns Hopkins.**

University of Pennsylvania, and \$200 million from Johns Hopkins. The administration is also continuously targeting grants for smaller universities, including programs related to scientific research, teacher and professor education, diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and local elementary and middle school enrichment.

On January 31st, Rhode Island judge John McConnell Jr. ruled to temporarily block the administration’s efforts to freeze congressionally



Community members rally in front of the Department of Education to protest budget cuts on March 13, 2025 in Washington, DC. // Photo by Kayla Bartkowski VIA Getty Images

approved federal loans and grants through a temporary restraining order. McConnell released a statement that alleged that the administration was overstepping its legal boundaries by continuing to freeze grants two weeks following the ruling.

On February 28th, the U.S. Department for Health and Human Services (HHS) released a policy statement that announced the rescinding of the Richardson Waiver—a policy that required public opinion hearings for proposed changes to rules about grants, loans, and contracts, among other administrative operations. The Michigan Health & Hospital Association speculated that the rescinding of the act makes it “easier to change policies without consulting the public or affected stakeholders.” Other influential associations, such as the American Bar Association, commented that “Advocacy groups warn that the shift may lead to regulatory changes without sufficient stakeholder engagement.”

On March 6th, Judge McConnell approved a preliminary injunction, a court order that temporarily preserves the status quo, in another attempt to block the Trump administration’s freezing of federal grants—at least until the case is settled.

Dr. Mark Zachary Taylor, a Georgia Tech public policy professor with a focus on science and technology policy and the American presidency,

**The administration began imposing policies that would cap reimbursement rates for indirect costs for National Institute of Health (NIH) research grants at 15%.**

stated, “There has been nothing like this in 170 years, at least not as far as the attacks on science and technology.”

Beyond attempting to rescind federal grants, on February 9, the administration began imposing policies that would cap reimbursement rates for indirect costs for National Institute of Health (NIH) research grants at 15%. These indirect costs - commonly referred to as Facilities and

Administrative (F&A) costs - go towards overhead funding, which is operational funding for research programs. For some universities and research institutions, entire research programs have been cut due to preemptive university decisions that the research programs are no longer feasible given the potential loss of F&A funds. On March 5th, federal judge Angel Kelly blocked the imposition of the 15% cap on F&A, but the administration has continued to focus on the NIH by attempting to freeze NIH-related grants.

Georgia Tech distributes the F&A funds reimbursed by the federal government towards paying for operation and maintenance, equipment, and utilities, among other indirect categories. Out of every one dollar that Georgia Tech receives from the federal government, twenty-three cents are distributed to indirect costs. This means that if the policies stood, Georgia Tech would not be reimbursed for the 8-cent-per-dollar difference between the federal cap and the institutional budget. Although changes to overhead funding may not seem significant, Dr. Taylor explained that “There is research that needs to be maintained and tended to on a weekly, daily, even hourly basis. If there’s no funding to pay for chemicals, or labs, or technicians, or RAs, then that research gets shelved,” which could potentially scrap money that has already been spent. According to Georgia Tech, the Institute has been receiving all money as previously agreed upon, and that will likely continue due to the judicial blockage of the F&A cap. Vice President of Research for Georgia Tech, Dr. Tim Lieuwen, stated that as he understands it, “There will not be attempts to reduce F&A, although it may come back up as a part of a new budget process.” He is not anticipating a large change in the next few

**“There will not be attempts to reduce F&A, although it may come back up as a part of a new budget process.”**

months akin to the administration’s NIH policy movements in February, although Dr. Lieuwen stated that it is “in play for [Georgia Tech] to be thinking about a new model for F&A.”

As well as attempting to freeze university grants, various notices regarding previously

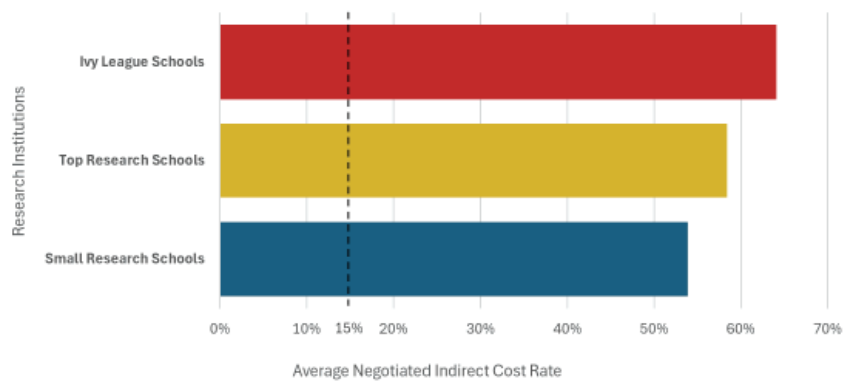
contracted work have been sent out from both federal government contractors as well as private and state contractors. These orders focus primarily on DEI, green-energy projects, and foreign aid. Georgia Tech has over 3,550 active contracts, and as of February 27, 2025, there have only been nineteen notices sent out to various research programs in the university. The two types of notices that have been sent out to Georgia Tech are Cease Non-Compliant Activities notices and Stop Work Orders.

The twelve Cease Non-Compliant Activities notices focused on specific work strains within overarching programs that were non-compliant with the executive orders. The notices sent to Georgia Tech came from governmental agencies, including the DOE, NSF, NIH, and NASA. These notices are tangential, meaning they did not attempt to affect entire programs. As of

Typical government grants with Georgia Tech rarely last longer than three years and most industry-funded work grants are renewed annually. Due to that, faculty and departments are well-versed in managing transitions in funding. Likewise, according to Dr. Lieuwen, Georgia Tech has continued to accept proposals, and more grants are coming in. The Institute is also focused on improving risk and scenario planning. Georgia Tech has a reserve fund for lapses in funding, but is seeking to further develop its precautionary measures.

Although Dr. Lieuwen said that it is possible that the number of new projects coming in the long-term may be reduced, to him, the past few months have meant “Game on.” Dr. Lieuwen stated, “One piece where we can really emerge stronger is - there is a fraction of our population that [doesn’t] see universities and

**Average Indirect Cost Rate for Research Universities**



NIH’s 15-Percent Cap: Chart Displays Average Indirect Costs Across University Types // Graph by American Action Forum

February 27, 2025, Georgia Tech has advised students and faculty that unless a specific Stop-Work Order has been issued to the program, all work can continue.

The seven Stop-Work Orders focus directly on the termination of entire research projects. Four of them come directly from the federal government - specifically, three from the Department of State and USAID, and one from FEMA. The other three were preemptive measures from various subcontractors of the federal government.

As of March 19, 2024, three orders have been reinstated and research has been resumed. Although Dr. Lieuwen acknowledges the pain that comes with the cancellation of projects, he stressed that “at this point, we’re in a pretty strong position.”

research universities as being beneficial to them, and so to me, that’s a challenge.” Dr Taylor argued for the importance of focusing on the Trump Administration’s effects on science and technology in a broader sense, and gave these words of advice to concerned students: “Be patient, be vocal, be peaceful, and let your legislators know.”



# Locked In

Need Help?

## Cheating and Modern Schooling

Written by Ingrid Nohara  
Designed by Alex Pina

### Face Detection

Center your face into frame and click the button below

Take Photo





## Cheating and modern schooling

INGRID NOHARA, author

ALEX PINA, designer

To many current students, technology use in education is expected. Gen-Z has grown up in a world full of Google, iPhones, and most recently, artificial intelligence (AI). Although students have been quick to adapt to quickly changing technologies, many schools and colleges have had a harder time trying to change their academic standards to properly account for what students now have access to. As rapid changes in technology have increased access to information and opportunities to learn, they have also allowed some students to avoid learning information in the way that educators might like.

Cheating is often defined broadly by academic institutions, which seek to limit the information and technology a student has access to during tests or assignments. Different professors have different individual expectations of how limited those resources are, some allowing full access to textbooks and the internet, while others seek to grade solely based on a student's individual knowledge. At Georgia Tech, the Office of Student Integrity (OSI) manages cases of academic misconduct, which are brought forward by any concerned party when they believe a student has cheated. Academic misconduct is a serious allegation that can lead to students taking additional courses, failing the course, having a mark on their academic record, or more serious actions, like expulsion.

Many software companies have tried to help teachers limit the use of technology during assessments, creating software systems that surveil students during exams. These systems became particularly popular during the COVID-19 pandemic when schools moved fully online. The software companies utilize programs that flag students based on noise level, eye contact, and abnormal movements, taking those actions to be signs of cheating. However, the use of this software was unpopular and deemed partially unconstitutional in 2022, with room scans, a required step in the process that involved a 360-degree scan of the room the student was in, being ruled a violation of the Fourth Amendment's unlawful search and seizure clause.

Test monitoring software is most useful in cases when an instructor wants to limit technology

use. Still, some argue that in that case, the cheating occurring is in and of itself a useful skill. Resources like Google or AI are aspects of modern life that are not going anywhere, and being able to successfully navigate them can

**Working with technology has become so commonplace in society that exam settings completely devoid of technology can be seen as unrealistic.**

often be a useful skill. However, not everyone views college simply as a place to learn certain skills. As Dr Jeffery Davis, an electrical and computer engineering professor at Georgia Tech, warned, valuing skill over understanding can be unhelpful, stating, "There is always this tension between teaching skills and teaching knowledge... I've found, if you're constantly trying to develop [a] skill, sometimes it takes away from the fundamental knowledge. If you have fundamental knowledge, I think wherever you go, you can start to adapt and learn whatever skill set."

However, this can create the attitude among students and staff that many real-world scenarios don't require the level of individual self-reliance that college exams do. Where a professor may view their test-taking environments as a way to fairly test an individual's knowledge, a student could view the controlled environment as unfair. Working with technology has become so commonplace in society that exam settings completely devoid of technology can be seen as unrealistic. Some professors recognize the increased dependence and try to accommodate for that in the classroom and testing scenarios. Dr. Caitlin Anderson, an English professor at Georgia Tech, pointed out, "If [students] want to collaborate or Google, you can Google in the real

world." However, this use of technology is only possible due to the structure of her assignments. Anderson stated, "It doesn't matter to me if my student is talking to another student, Googling something, or looking up quotations. That is a part of understanding because of the way I put my class together."

Anderson believes in using class structure to make classes more manageable, hoping to center learning over grades. "Ultimately, I want my students to leave this classroom with a set of skills and with an understanding. Students are so much more likely to cheat if they feel the pressure of that passing grade outweighs any desire to learn," she said. Another way some professors try to make their classes more manageable is to consider outside coursework when assigning material, trying to match the amount of time required to get a good grade in their class with the time they believe the student has. "Most of my students are doing a lot of intense classes. With a five-page paper, it may not be that much writing, but they have to do that with 18 other assignments," Anderson explained. Cheating can undercut a student's

**Another problem with the shifting definitions of cheating is that test monitoring software, such as Honorlock, have set definitions of cheating, which may or may not align with a student's or professor's definition of cheating.**

ability to build knowledge, but students may see the loss of learning as less impactful than a failing grade on an assignment.

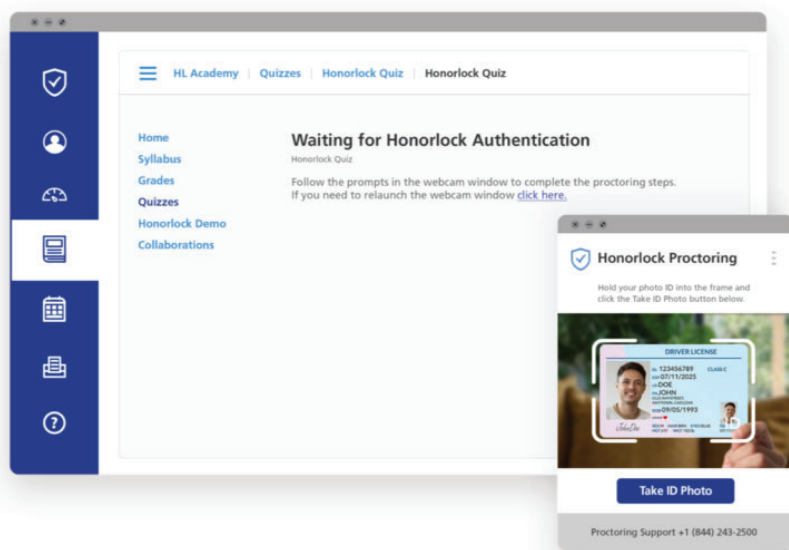
Still, there is a need for all students in a class to abide by the same course expectations, or else the professors can't quantifiably attest to a student's learning. Davis extended this, and said, "If I write a recommendation for you, I ask, does this person understand the concept? Then I can look at [a test] and say yes, this person got this certain grade... If some people cheat to get that, and some people don't, and [the non-cheaters] get a lower grade, then I think there's a huge fairness issue." Anderson agreed with this sentiment and added that "your transcripts say I said you learned this subject. Cheating makes it feel like I can't say that anymore." Knowing whether or not cheating is occurring is a vital piece of information for educators to confidently vouch for a student's learning.

of time as opposed to: I'm going to drink out of this fire hose tonight, and I'm going to get all of this information. It takes time to absorb [knowledge]." The use or potential abuse stems from which method is going to be able to get you a higher grade. Even if this is a short-term view that can have negative outcomes in the future, college students and young adults are not known for their foresight.

Another problem with the shifting definitions of cheating is that test monitoring software, such as Honorlock, have set definitions of cheating, which may or may not align with a student's or professor's definition of cheating. For instance, Honorlock, when polling students on cheating, found that collaboration was rarely thought of as cheating. However, Honorlock specifically

for the peers." Davis views peer collaboration as important to learning, but ultimately believes that college is to build an individual's knowledge. He points out that collaboration may be

**For students, there may be a disconnect between how a software or professor wants you to do an assignment and what you think is fair and quickest, given the technologies at your disposal.**



"Students Verify ID & Begin the Proctored Exam" // Photo by Honorlock

When looking at how the navigation of online resources should be structured into classes, though their use during some assessments may be viewed as cheating, Davis said, "I think that's more critical now. As we start to use these tools, how do you interact with the tools? There traditionally has been a class, or at least as a part of class, to learn how to use those resources." The line between using your resources to supplement your thought process and using resources to replace your thought process is a thin one, and often a tricky one to navigate, especially for students with a deadline looming over them.

There is an almost limitless amount of information available to anyone with a phone, but even when one can access that information, Davis explained that "Even though this is hard for students, you'd like [accessing resources] to be more like a farmer watering over a period

flags students who have been recorded talking or collaborating with others for cheating, while many students utilize collaboration at every available opportunity without thinking of it as cheating.

Collaboration is a less modern concept, but in some cases is equally discouraged. As Davis added, in a "university setting, what's happening is an individual effort. Once you get into industry, or wherever you're going, then you're plunged into the collaborative." However, he does view collaboration as an integral aspect of any career, believing that there should be some aspect of collaboration in classes. He argued that many forms of collaboration come "organically", through study groups and other peer interactions, instead of trying to work it into the class or tests. He said, "It's a great way to learn. Part of the reason you come to Georgia Tech is

important to success and innovation, but there is a level of individual knowledge that has to be taught at some point. "If you're not known for having a knowledge base, then your success in industry is going to be limited," he pointed out. Still, many students view collaboration as a basic part of education, rather than cheating, regardless of how it could affect their individual knowledge base.

Collaboration is one of the most important skills students can learn, whether with other people or with technology, given the advancements in AI that have facilitated the use of technology as a collaborator. While some professors and test surveillance software discourage both forms of collaboration, being able to collaborate is a skill that will not be going away. The 'right' definition of cheating is not an easy question to answer, forcing professors to balance collaboration versus individual effort. For students, there may be a disconnect between how a software or professor wants you to do an assignment and what you think is fair and quickest, given the technologies at your disposal.

However, there remain very real repercussions for supplanting your knowledge with someone else's. As Anderson defined, cheating is when "rather than learning a skill, a student bypasses that to just give the right answer." To potential cheaters, the question remains: will a professor care more about the learning process or the right answer?

Concrete Intentions



BRUTALISM

MODERNISM

Around Georgia Tech

# Concrete Intentions



## Brutalism and Modernism around Georgia Tech

KESIAH MUNYARUGANDA, author  
SHAIBA SIDDIQUI, designer

This photo journal documents the distinctive architectural features of Georgia Tech's brutalist and modernist buildings. This journal explores how the College of Design and nearby structures reveal modernist ideals, material experimentation, and a tension between function and expression. Accompanied by commentary from Professor Joyce Medina, an art historian with deep insight into the history of design, these images aim to make visible the often overlooked: how materials, textures, and intentions shape not only space, but also the way people interact with it. Medina's reflections offer both critique and appreciation, grounding these forms within a broader narrative of architecture's evolving role in society and education.

At first glance, the Georgia Tech College of Design may seem austere. Its blocky exterior and exposed materials stand apart from the campus's more conventional buildings. Yet within this structure lies a complex architectural language



College of Design // Photo by Kesiiah Munyaruganda

rooted in brutalism; a movement that emerged in the postwar period and championed the use of raw materials and structural clarity.

The College of Design rises with a clarity that defines brutalist architecture. The bare concrete



Concrete Wall // Photo by Kesiiah Munyaruganda

surfaces, once left completely exposed, were meant to highlight the material itself. "They weren't polished. They weren't hidden," Medina explained. "The point was to show the truth of the material."

Architect Jerry Cooper, who designed Georgia Tech's College of Design, incorporated distinct surface treatments into the building's concrete exterior. Concrete striations and embedded

Medina explained  
"It's consistent,  
but it also adds  
rhythm. The vertical  
striations contrast  
with the horizontal  
mass of the floors."

pebbles reveal intentional detailing, a subtle shift away from early brutalism's total minimalism. "Jerry Cooper used these patterns to add a kind of decorative language," said Medina. "It's consistent, but it also adds rhythm. The vertical



Exposed Utility Pipes // Photo by Shaiba Siddiqui

"In brutalism, nothing is hidden. You show the water lines, air ducts, all the systems. It's a statement about function as form."

striations contrast with the horizontal mass of the floors."

Visible infrastructure is not an oversight but a choice rooted in the brutalist ethos. "You're seeing the metabolism of the building," Medina said. "In brutalism, nothing is hidden. You show the water lines, air ducts, all the systems. It's a statement about function as form."

The interior once extended the same raw palette as the exterior. Though tiles have since been added over concrete floors, the walls still retain the building's original texture. Medina noted that "covering the concrete floors breaks the continuity. But originally, this entire building



“You can learn from it. These buildings are part of a broader timeline, one where materials become messages.”

a surface of possibility. Medina sees the building as both dated and instructive. “You couldn’t live in a pure brutalist structure,” she admitted, “but you can learn from it. These buildings are part of a broader timeline, one where materials become messages.”

Window at College of Design // Photo by Kesiah Munyaruganda

flowed in a single material language.”

Brutalist design is often criticized as cold or heavy, yet small gestures in texture and light make the space surprisingly expressive. Medina pointed out that even within such rigid forms, “there was an effort to create balance between openness and enclosure, between solid and void.”

Some parts of the building seem deliberately uninviting, challenging our expectations of an educational space. “It’s too naked,” Medina reflected. “It can be hard to hang art, hard to soften the space. But that’s part of the point. It’s meant to strip away decoration, to reduce a space to its essentials.”

Despite its stark appearance, the College of Design remains a thoughtful experiment in

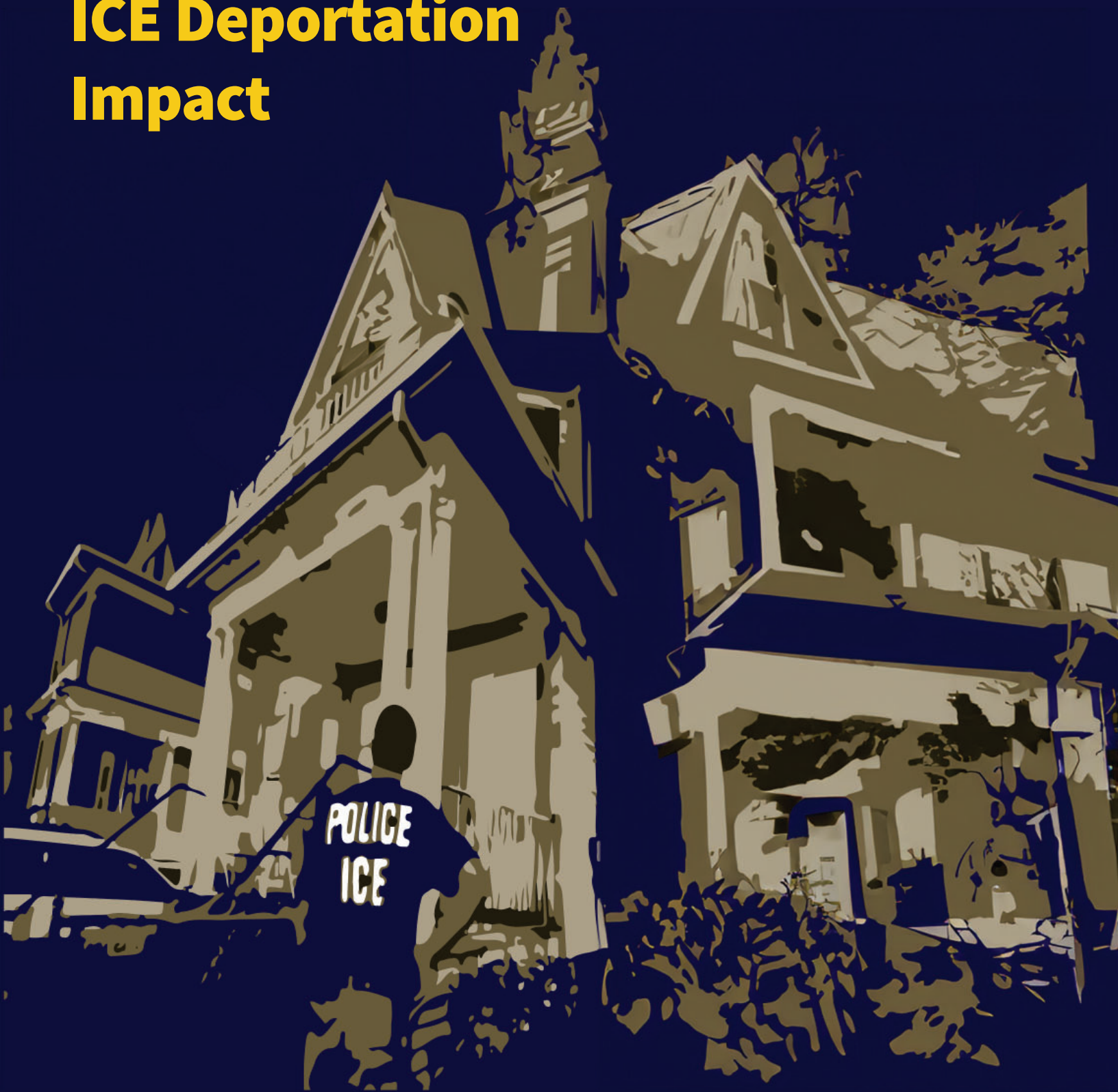
“It can be hard to hang art, hard to soften the space. But that’s part of the point. It’s meant to strip away decoration, to reduce a space to its essentials.”

architectural clarity. It represents a time when concrete was more than a structural tool; it was



Brick And Concrete Shaded Entry At The College Of Computing // Photo by Shaiba Siddiqui

# ICE Deportation Impact



**Shifts in Deportation Policy  
and Rhetoric**

# ICE Deportation Impact

## Shifts in deportation policy and rhetoric

NINA OTEBELE, author  
AG CHURCH, designer

President Donald Trump's return to office triggered a rapid change in immigration enforcement operations. Major metropolitan areas such as New York City, Chicago, and Atlanta have seen an uptick in raids conducted by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). ICE is a federal law enforcement agency under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that enforces federal laws on border control, customs, trade, and immigration.

### PAST ADMINISTRATION APPROACHES

ICE deportations and raids are not a new phenomenon. During Barack Obama's presidency, his administration prioritized deporting criminals. As the former President stated in a 2014 Address to the Nation on Immigration, "Even as we are a nation of immigrants, we're also a nation of laws. Undocumented workers broke our immigration laws, and I believe that they must be held accountable, especially those who may be dangerous. That's why, over the past six years, deportations of criminals are up 80 percent.

**18% of ICE detainees do not have a criminal record or pending criminal charges. In previous years, the percentage of ICE detainees with no criminal record has averaged 4-11%**

And that's why we're going to keep focusing enforcement resources on actual threats to our security. Felons, not families. Criminals, not children."

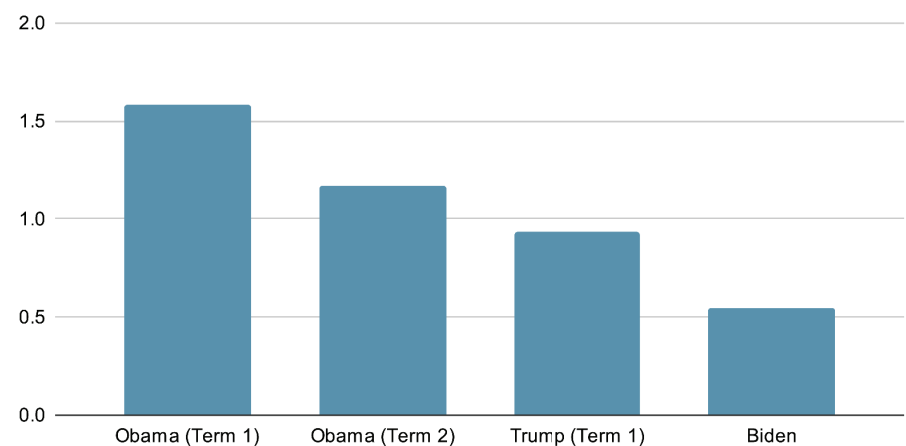
During Obama's second term, undocumented immigrants who passed a criminal background

check were allowed to stay in the U.S. temporarily without being deported if they paid taxes. In 2011, the Obama administration released an ICE memo that formalized protections for sensitive locations. Sensitive locations refer to places that are vulnerable or meant to be respected, such as schools, hospitals,

This analysis relies on data from the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), a non-profit organization founded in 1989 at Syracuse University, which collects and distributes immigration and deportation data from the government. Figure 1 compares the total deportations conducted by ICE by

### Total Deportations in Past Administrations (Removals)

In the Millions



Total Deportations From Fiscal Years 2009 To 2023 // Data from TRAC

NOTE: Fiscal years do not align exactly with presidential cycles, meaning that there may be some overlap between presidential cycles.

and churches. For example, ICE agents arriving at schools could inflict trauma, fear, and confusion on growing adolescents.

Trump's first presidency had different policy goals compared to the Obama Administration. The administration's focus on immigration emphasized building a wall between the U.S. and Mexico. By the end of his first term, the border wall remained unfinished. Additionally, according to the Washington Post's analysis of ICE data, the number of undocumented immigrants detained by ICE without a prior criminal background was nearly double the average compared to the Obama administration.

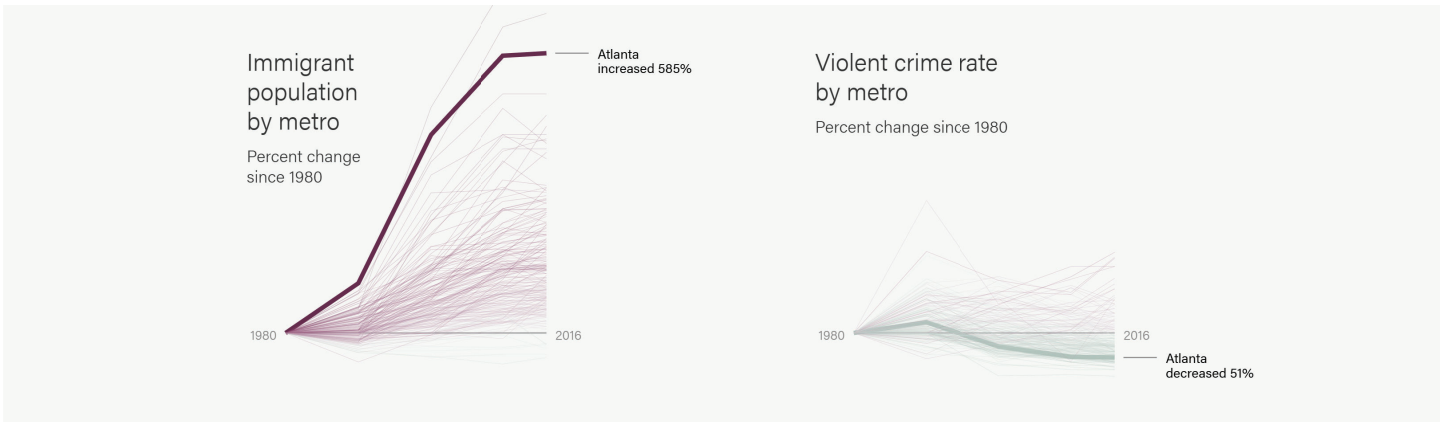
The Biden administration temporarily halted the building of the border wall, but construction restarted in 2023. On April 27, 2021, the Biden administration extended ICE's "sensitive locations" policy to courthouses.

administration. This figure displays removals by ICE and excludes deportations made at the border and due to COVID-19. Overall, the Obama administration had the highest number of deportations compared to Trump's first term and Biden's term.

In a 2017 Fiscal Year report, ICE attributed the lower deportation numbers during the first Trump Administration to a "deterrent effect of strong interior enforcement," implying that the administration's stricter policies toward undocumented immigrants reduced illegal immigration.

### CURRENT ERA OF DEPORTATIONS

A central part of Trump's 2024 presidential campaign was focused on deporting the estimated 11.7 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. The administration states that the raids are targeting undocumented criminals; however, as of March 28, according



Immigrant And Population And Crime Rates // Infographic from The Marshall Project

to TRAC, 18% of ICE detainees do not have a criminal record or pending criminal charges. In previous years, the percentage of ICE detainees with no criminal record has averaged 4-11%.

This jump is due to the current administration carrying out more collateral arrests. Arrests are considered “collateral” when the arrest is based on factors irrelevant to whether the suspect is guilty of a criminal charge.

For Trump’s second presidency, the administration revoked limitations on sensitive locations where ICE can detain people, which may be contributing to the increase in collateral arrests. Five days after the sensitive locations policy was revoked, one of the first reported ICE

**The majority of these voters believed that immigrants in the U.S. illegally increase crime, take advantage of public resources such as housing, education, and health care, and overall worsen the U.S. economy.**

arrests at a church occurred in DeKalb County, GA. The detained individual had a work visa, reportedly sought asylum, and had no criminal record.

**A MISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN**

Why has there been a shift in the Executive Branch’s policies and rhetoric about undocumented immigrants?

President Trump has claimed throughout his campaign and presidency that his predecessors didn’t enforce immigration laws and that the US borders are being invaded. Furthermore, in a press release, DHS Secretary Kristi Noem stated, “Our team at ICE will help us continue moving forward to make America SAFE again,” suggesting that the country had previously been in danger due to the presence of illegal immigrants.

A 2024 Pew Research Center study highlights how Trump supporters’ views align with the tonal shift, finding that 87% of Trump supporters were concerned about undocumented immigrants. The majority of these voters believed that immigrants in the U.S. illegally increase crime, take advantage of public resources such as housing, education, and health care, and overall worsen the U.S. economy.

On the other hand, in 2020, a federal study conducted by the Texas Department of Public Safety found that between 2012 and 2018, undocumented immigrants in Texas had lower criminal arrest and conviction rates when compared to U.S.-born citizens and legal immigrants. Similarly, a research study conducted by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that immigrants are 60% less likely to be incarcerated than U.S.-born citizens. Researchers from the State University of New York at Buffalo, the University of Alabama, Kennesaw State University, and Georgia State University compared immigration rates with crime rates for 200 metropolitan areas from 1980 to 2016. They found that, on average, the immigrant population in the U.S. grew by 137% between 1980 and 2016, and the average crime

rate fell by 12% over that same period. Crime rates in Atlanta follow a similar trend. In the Metro Atlanta area, crime has decreased by 51% as the immigrant population has increased in the region.

In recent weeks, the US government websites have removed key information on the crime rates of undocumented immigrants, which are widely used to display that documented and undocumented immigrants commit fewer crimes.

**ADVOCACY/SUPPORT IN METRO ATLANTA**

The rhetoric of the current administration has sparked fear in the Atlanta immigrant community. Ten days after the Presidential election, an alarming number of Latino teenagers in Georgia received texts saying that they were “set to be deported” by immigration authorities. While these messages were fake and meant to spark fear in the Latino-American community, they triggered a reaction in advocacy groups such as the Latin-American Association of Atlanta (LAA).

Santiago Marquez, the CEO and Executive Director of LAA, shared that they responded by planning and providing information to the community. LAA has been helping their clients prepare for what might happen if they’re in a mixed-status family (undocumented parents with a U.S.-born child). Marquez said, “If mom or dad, or both, were undocumented, but their kids are American citizens, thinking about what would happen if you were deported, what would happen to your kids? Who would take care of your kids and your assets?” He asserted that these mixed-status families are at risk and said, “For us, that’s always a concern because we serve a lot of people [who] are already having difficult times. The folks that we serve are the essential workforce. Family separation and deporting a

breadwinner or a parent just creates complete and total hardship on that family,” he continued.

Moreover, LAA works to open opportunities for job placement and education. They host job fairs and job readiness programs for individuals looking for work. Additionally, they provide

## Immigrants are 60% less likely to be incarcerated than U.S.-born citizens.

English classes for individuals who are struggling with English. Marquez stated, “We tend to target entrepreneurship for women because 70% of our clients are women, and many of them have to bring in revenue for their families. But, they’re struggling to do so, and in many cases, entrepreneurship is a way for them to generate some revenue to help out the family.”

Marquez shared that the scale of these programs is important because of the number of Latinos in Atlanta; he said, “There [are] over a million Latinos here in Georgia... if you look at the stats, in 25 years, [Latinos are] going to be 21% of the metro Atlanta area. Our goal is to help our Latino community not only stabilize but thrive and participate in the American dream.”

### CAMPUS IMPACT AND CONCERNS

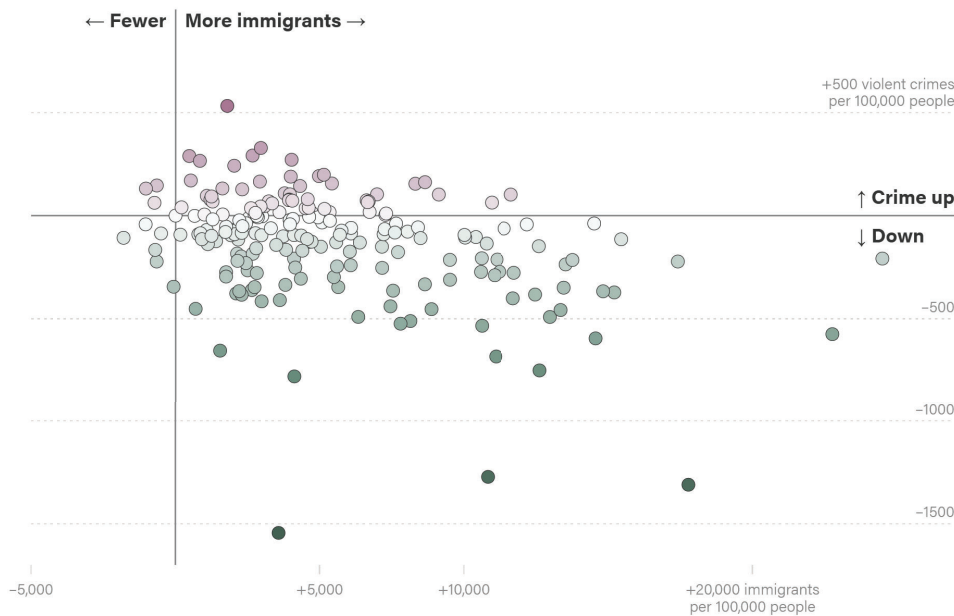
Since Trump’s inauguration, the U.S. State Department has canceled more than 300 visas, with the majority being student visas. The purge targeted students who were pro-Palestine and marched in protests on their respective college campuses. The Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, stated, “We gave you a visa to come and study and get a degree, not to become a social activist that tears up our universities and campuses.” As of April 18, “Some international students studying at Georgia Tech” have had their visas rescinded, according to the Office of the Provost.

### JUDICIAL CHALLENGERS

On January 27, a day after the first deportation took place at a church, a coalition of Quaker

meetings sued the DHS to end ICE raids at churches. The suit alleges that these raids violate the First Amendment, specifically, an individual’s right to worship and associate freely because the presence of armed government agents might disrupt the peace.

The same coalition, represented by Democracy Forward, requested courts to temporarily block the policy. On February 24, the U.S. District Court of Maryland issued an order that prohibited ICE officials from entering houses of worship to conduct immigration enforcement operations.



Immigrant And Population and Violent Crime // Infographic from The Marshall Project



**Peach State  
Prospects:  
*Can Georgia  
Lead the Rare  
Earth Rush?***

## Can Georgia lead the rare earth rush?

NATASHA PIETAK-WALSH, author  
JEMMA SIEGEL, designer

Mining has a negative public perception, stemming from a robust history of environmental destruction, resource depletion, and harsh working conditions. However, since most environmentally friendly technologies, such as solar panels, wind turbines, and electric vehicles, require mined rare earth elements, also referred to as rare earths, the potential for sustainable mining has become an increasingly popular discussion. With the increase in mineral and element demand required for new technological developments, a new strain has been put on the mining community: how can they mine sustainably, efficiently, and innovatively, meeting this large demand, while prioritizing the needs of an equitable modern market? The mining community in Georgia provides insights into the potential Georgia has to shift the narrative to a more sustainable one.

As of 2025, the state of Georgia is ranked 13th in the country for mineral production, being valued at 2.7 billion USD, according to a Newsweek study. The most mined mineral, kaolin, makes Georgia recognized as a world leader in mining, production, processing, and application of Kaolin products, according to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The mineral has a wide variety of functions, including being used as a high-brightness paper coating, a natural filler in manufacturing polymeric materials, which make up many man-made and natural materials, in agriculture as crop and solar protectants, wastewater treatments, and pharmaceutical mixtures. In addition, kaolin is used in technology production and is predominantly popular in the construction of fiberglass, which is used to create electric circuit board substrates and catalyst carriers that are pivotal for fracking petroleum, according to Developments in Clay Science. Researchers discovered that kaolin is made up of a variety of rare earth minerals, which can be extracted when kaolin is refined, bringing new attention to the mineral and its potential impact on the state.

Dr. Bobby Harris, a Georgia Tech assistant professor of economics, detailed Georgia's production of kaolin ore. He outlined how Georgia provides an interesting perspective on



A chunk of unrefined Kaolin // Photo by Emanuele Longo via Flickr

mineral and rare earth mining because Georgia's kaolin ore contains more rare earths than other deposits. Still, when extracting these rare earths using current mining processes, the quality of kaolin and the rare earths is significantly reduced. Because of the decrease in quality when attempting to mine both simultaneously, it is currently more affordable and efficient to import rare earths from other countries and continue to mine kaolin ore in Georgia. However, Georgia Tech research and technological advancements might bring a new era to mining where co-production of both is possible.

Laura Taylor, Director of the Energy Policy and Innovation Center at Georgia Tech and a professor of economics, shared the power that research institutions like Georgia Tech can bring to the table. Taylor explained, "Maybe there is a role for the federal government to subsidize the recovery of rare earth to diversify our supply chains—a strategic national goal." A recent executive order, EO 14156, from the new presidential administration, similarly depicts mining's role in national security. The order includes goals for increasing U.S. mining through regulatory action and by reducing the importation of minerals. This regulatory shift would require the collaboration of industry partners, substantial congressional

funding, interagency coordination, and a careful navigation of the legalities involving



Dr. Bobby Harris, environmental economics assistant professor at Georgia Tech // Photo via Georgia Tech School of Economics

environmental regulations. At the same time, this policy shift represents a potential for changing mining culture to balance the goals of the nation's economy, with the needs of the environment.

Expanding sustainable mining brings challenges, especially when regarding the state of Georgia. Harris proposed a scenario that encapsulates



# GEORGIA MINING ASSOCIATION

The Georgia Mining Association states on their website that they work “as the voice of the mining industry in Georgia” // Logo from georgiamining.org

the dilemma. If Georgia has the rare earths that are critical to sustaining these advancing technologies, there is more inclination for industry partners to invest in more efficient mining processes, helping change the mining industry for the better and allowing sustainable innovation. If Georgia is just another actor in the mining realm, and cheaper options still exist elsewhere, there would be little to no interest in changing the sphere partners interact with today. This uncertainty would be unlikely to provide investors with the confidence needed to undergo innovative mining. Harris added, “It wouldn’t make sense for Georgia to do this alone. Maybe it makes sense for the federal government to provide some incentives for critical mineral development if it believes uncertainty is delaying investment in critical mineral extraction and production. The advantage of the federal government doing this over the state is that

Taylor is confident that the federal government has an opportunity that should be seized and stated, “We should be investing in research to advance technology and processes that can change the economics. Technological advances are adopted because they change an equation and make an activity more beneficial [and] more

**“With innovation and expansion of an economy that relies on rare earth elements and other critical minerals, Georgia can be an example to other states of how to balance a strong economy, high quality of life, and environmental protection.”**

**– Lee Lemke**



Laura Taylor, Director of the Energy Policy, and Innovation Center at Georgia Tech // Photo via Georgia Tech Research’s Blog

it will encourage firms to pursue rare earth or critical minerals in the places in the US with the highest potential/least cost, which may or may not be in Georgia.”

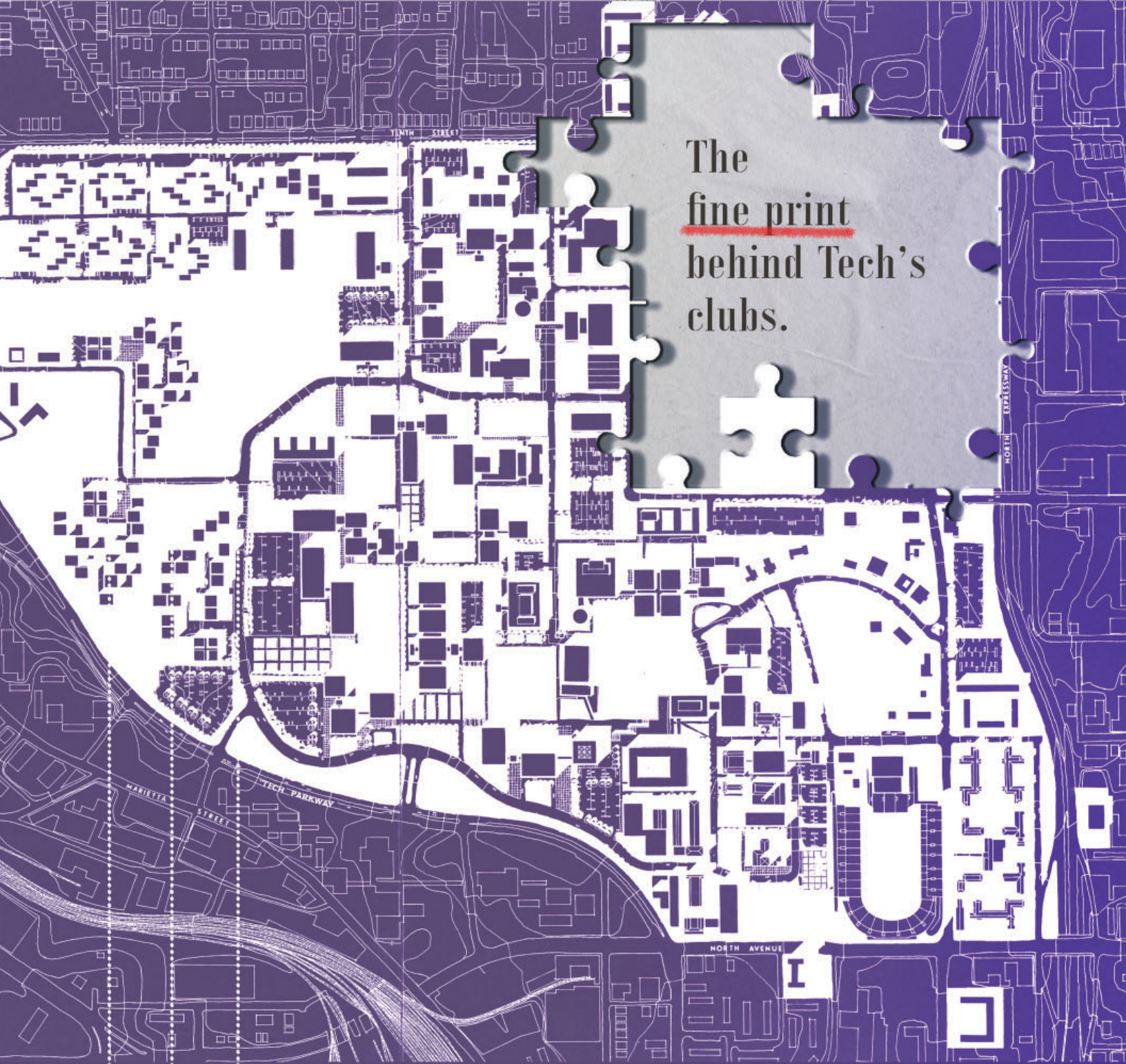
the national rare earth mineral supply chain. We have mineral resources that can be developed, and the industries that use rare earth elements are continually moving into our state. Currently, the only missing link is a facility to process the rare earth minerals into the intermediate forms utilized in manufacturing processes. Such a facility could be developed in Georgia, or we can work with groups in nearby states to establish a regional economic powerhouse.”

The Georgia Mining Association, Georgia Tech, Georgia State, The University of Georgia, and many corporations, state, and Federal agencies have established the Georgia Essential Minerals (GEMs) Partnership to promote research, pursue federal funding, and advance commercialization of rare earth and other critical mineral resources. This partnership involves including all stakeholders in the conversation and funding of where the mining industry will go in future years.

This opportunity could bring a variety of impacts to the state: a potential increase in sustainability efforts, more efficient mining practices, further development of research to focus on technological advancement in the sector, economic strength to the Southeast region, and perhaps most importantly: the potential for all stakeholders to work together to bring needed reform to the industry, setting Georgia and the nation up for industry advancement.

profitable.” The issue is that the industry often does not have the resources to invest in this research and development, which signifies the important role of state and federal influence and funding.

The Georgia Mining Association’s Executive Vice President, Lee Lemke, discussed his confidence in what more innovation could mean for the state and the industry. He said, “I can’t think of a state better positioned to play a leading role in



The fine print  
behind Tech's  
clubs.

**RSO** u n d e r  
r e v i e w

Written by Blaine Branch  
Designed by Vu Ly

# RSO Under Review

## A look into the investigations of RSOs

BLAINE BRANCH, author  
VU LY, designer



From engineering to art, the clubs at Georgia Tech reflect the diverse passions of its students. // Photo by John Spink



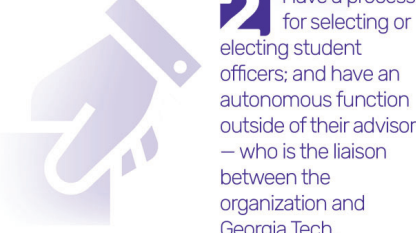
The Center for Student Life at Georgia Tech's purpose is to "empower and support registered student organizations to catalyze belonging and create an engaging campus community," per their website. The over 600 clubs at Tech create a starting point for enhancing the Tech community by providing an inclusive and vibrant space for all to share their voice and interests. As Georgia Tech is a large institution with many organizations, it is necessary to have regulations to continue to promote and uphold these ideals of belonging, inclusivity, an engaging campus, and justice.

### THE RSO PROCESS

Organizations must complete the chartering process to become a registered student organization (RSO) at Georgia Tech and register annually to maintain status. Chartering gives the organizations privileges of support, potential funding, and reservation space from Georgia Tech, as long as the organizations follow the outlined RSO policies. Annual registration is a requirement to remain "active" and in "good" standing with the Center of Student Engagement. Per Georgia Tech, the outlined policies for RSOs define "their respective types and categories; establish the institutional requirements for RSO Chartering and Annual

Registration; outline requirements for RSO faculty/staff Advisors; provide requirements for RSO governance; and outline the requirements for RSO funding."

The main points of the policy for RSOs are the following: RSOs must subscribe to and

-  RSOs must subscribe to and uphold Georgia Tech's equal opportunity, nondiscrimination, anti-harassment, and Code of Conduct;
-  Have a process for selecting or electing student officers; and have an autonomous function outside of their advisor — who is the liaison between the organization and Georgia Tech.
-  Finer details regarding the advisor, bills, budget, constitution, and more specific policies are housed on GT's policy library website.

uphold Georgia Tech's equal opportunity, nondiscrimination, anti-harassment, and Code of Conduct; have a process for selecting or electing student officers; and have an autonomous function outside of their advisor — who is the liaison between the organization and Georgia Tech. Finer details regarding the advisor, bills, budget, constitution, and more specific policies are housed on GT's policy library website.

### THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS

Similar to how most citizens are not fully aware of laws at their state and federal levels, most Georgia Tech students are likely unaware of the finer details of the institution's Code of Conduct. On average, Georgia Tech has two to four investigations into RSOs per semester. These investigations have caused great challenges for some groups, while effectively bolstering others.

A student or organization will be investigated if an official complaint for a violation of the Student Code of Conduct has been filed with the Office of Student Integrity (OSI). In the case of fraternities and sororities, they have slightly different governing rules established by the Interfraternity Council, which acts as a trade association to promote the common interests and support Georgia Tech fraternities; however, any related investigation would still be handled by OSI. For all organizations, any individual or department can file a complaint, but the Georgia Tech Police, the Housing Department, and the Office of Parking and Transportation most commonly file complaints. The complaint must be submitted within thirty days of the incident or the discovery of the incident; in rare circumstances, OSI can waive this timetable.

The recipient of the filed complaint may choose for a decision to be made via a Student Conduct



Administrator (a representative from OSI) or a student conduct panel. Although uncommon, the recipient's preference for who hears the case can be overwritten by the Associate Vice President of Student Engagement and Well-Being or the Dean of Students. The right to overwrite the recipient's preference can be the pending graduation of a student, the end of the semester, or other extraordinary circumstances.

If the recipient chooses the student panel path, then the Undergraduate Judiciary Cabinet (UJC) receives the case. A group of justices, from the 18 - 24 active members, will hear the case and make a decision. Students can apply to become a justice on the UJC if they have completed two full semesters at an accredited university, are not a part of any other branch of student government, and are in "good" standing with Georgia Tech. Justices must serve a term of at least two consecutive semesters. Their decision becomes a recommendation to the Director of Students, who makes the final decision on whether the recipient of the violation is responsible or not. If found not responsible, then the case is closed, while a responsible decision for one or more of the alleged violations warrants an appropriate sanction.

Sanctions usually result in disciplinary probation for the first violation, followed by a suspension for the second violation. Any further violations are subject to expulsion.

Per OSI's website, most of the investigations OSI conducts seem to be related to hazing or distributing alcohol to underage persons. However, there are still rare instances of investigations for violation of a Georgia Tech rule, policy, or regulation. Most organizations investigated by OSI have been fraternities.

The nature of this investigation process, however, has caused both frustration for some and relief for others.

### WHAT THE STUDENTS THINK

In the Fall of 2024, accusations of hazing against one Georgia Tech competitive sports team limited their ability to gather as a club and compete. "[It was] frustrating to be cut out of the club," one representative said. Another representative continued, "We were cut off from all of our friends... it was hard mentally." The other replied, "Mental health squashed." The lack of the ability to communicate with team members, practice, and play games took a toll on the whole team.

The three-month-long investigation and accusations caused them to fall in national ranking and forfeit championship games. These were grave consequences for them, only for them to later be found not responsible for the accusation; in other words, incoming players had not been subjected to hazing.



During the investigation, all functions of the club were dismantled. Players could not communicate with other team members about the case or the ongoing situation.

Representatives said this caused confusion across the team, which increased frustration from not being able to gather, practice, or compete. The team could not register funding requests, meaning that multiple future events will have to be funded out of pocket.

Additionally, the team was told the process would last a couple of weeks. On the months-long delay, the team representatives said they "felt like we were on the back burner." Representatives further stated that the lengthy investigation was "not an efficient process for us" and that it "felt like they were dragging on something that was not productive."

Club members expressed more frustration as they referenced other investigations of hazing for their same sport at similar-sized universities lasting only two weeks. The team is still facing the repercussions of the investigation process in "recruitment of players, funding, a lost season, and classes, not to mention some people's last season [before graduating]," as said by one of the representatives.

It is not clear whether OSI always pauses club activities and functions during an investigation.

Team representatives ultimately summed up the investigation's length and suspension of functions by stating: "They were so indifferent about the situation. If this [were] an actual hazing case [and] they took so long, something could have happened with how long they took." Representatives suggested that if a team member was actually being hazed, the long investigation could have exacerbated the problem.

Contrarily, one Georgia Tech political club had a complaint filed against it

for discrimination. A complete investigation resulted in the club being deemed not responsible for the allegations of discrimination. Club representatives offer that the Institute "handled [the accusations and investigation] pretty well."

They further stated that "Georgia Tech cares a lot about its image and students." The investigation made the club representative able to "trust [that] Georgia Tech listens to students and push[es] back against necessary forces."

**The investigation made the club representative able to "trust [that] Georgia Tech listens to students and push[es] back against necessary forces."**

The investigation led to the discovery that there was no unjust discrimination inflicted by the political club, which removed the potential for disciplinary sanctions.

While the process was inefficient for the competitive sports team, it was efficient for the political club. Both of these clubs were ultimately found not responsible for their actions; however, the process was not the same. The length of investigations seems to be inconsistent, though whether that is due to the nature of the complaint is unclear. Was this an unfortunate mishap for that competitive sports team, or is it an issue within OSI's investigation process? The lack of detailed public information about the cases of clubs found responsible, such as organizations' unwillingness to discuss their violations, and the limited public information regarding clubs found not responsible make it hard to draw concrete conclusions.

Georgia Tech's Student Life and Dean of Students did not respond to requests for comments on RSO investigations. Although these student perspectives have different attitudes toward the investigation process, every representative interviewed noted that the process is necessary.



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BIPOC  
Black  
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clean energy  
climate crisis  
climate science  
commercial sex work  
community diversity  
community equity  
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# DEI On The Line

# DEI On The Line



## The restructuring and impact of Georgia Tech's policies

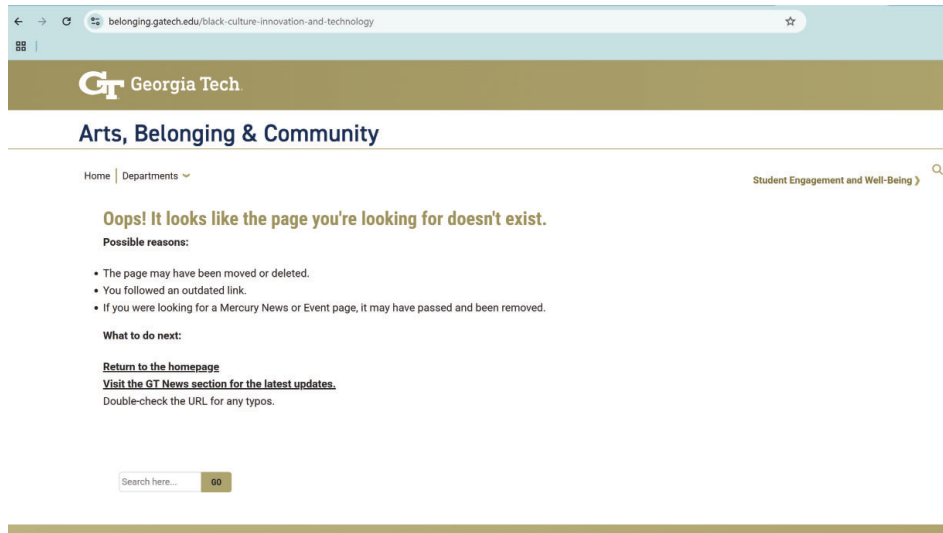
3484 STAFF CONTRIBUTOR, author

AG CHURCH, designer

"We thrive on diversity. We see diversity of backgrounds and perspectives as essential to learning, discovery, and creation." This statement, taken from Georgia Tech's stated

shameful discrimination' and outlined a plan for eliminating DEI and Accessibility programs on a federal level. This plan involved firing DEI and environmental justice employees and providing

who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality." While not directly mentioned in this definition, women and gender minorities are traditionally included in the definition of DEI.



By this metric, DEI affects many people. For instance, among Georgia Tech students, only 20% identify as both white and male. Given that some of these white, male students have other characteristics that fall into DEI categories, more than 80% of Georgia Tech's student body may be affected by these changes.

Biden's order maintains that DEI is not about prejudice against one group of people, but rather states that equal opportunity should not just belong to the group that has traditionally been advantaged, stating that "Entrenched disparities in our laws and public policies, and in our public and private institutions, have often denied that equal opportunity to individuals and communities".

A webpage screenshot reveals an error message when searching for Georgia Tech's Arts, Community, and Belonging Page // Screenshot from belonging.gatech.edu

Values and Beliefs, attests that the Institute seeks to foster diversity and inclusivity as a means to creating a more innovative community.

On the other hand, the Trump administration seeks to remove any presence of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) from college campuses, threatening in a series of Executive Orders and a Dear Colleague letter to cut funding if colleges do not comply. This decision prompted Georgia Tech to make drastic changes concerning campus resources available to students, which will likely continue to further impact students at Georgia Tech.

### FEDERAL DECISIONS

On Inauguration Day, President Trump issued an executive order titled Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing, stating that the previous administration had "forced illegal and immoral discrimination programs" that "furthered DEIs [sic] infiltration of the Federal Government". The order claimed that Biden's DEI programs promoted 'public waste and

the executive branch with a list of employees involved with DEI training or programs. On February 14th, a "Dear Colleague" letter from the Department of Education Office for Civil Rights stated that educational institutions that did not comply with new civil rights orders within 14 days would "face potential loss of federal funding".

The Dear Colleague letter and Trump's Executive Order argue that DEI initiatives provide an unfair advantage to some. However, Biden's executive order, which was referenced in Trump's order, defined who is affected by DEI programming. This order defines equity as "the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons

**"Entrenched disparities in our laws and public policies, and in our public and private institutions, have often denied that equal opportunity to individuals and communities".**

In contrast, the Dear Colleague letter stated that DEI policy is "insidious" and "repugnant", arguing that racism is not systemic in United States policies and that institutions that teach this "toxically indoctrinated... false premise" should be reprimanded. In addition, the letter written by former white-collar defense attorney Craig Turner alleges that current DEI policies place a burden of guilt on white students

and lower admission rates of white and Asian students.

## THE INSTITUTE'S RESPONSE

Shifting DEI policies are not new to the University System of Georgia, which began rolling back DEI policies in 2023, and Georgia Tech began silently erasing or changing DEI programs before the Dear Colleague Letter. On January 29th, a web search for CEED, the previous Center for Engineering Education and Diversity, would reroute to different Georgia Tech webpages or would show results changing the D in the acronym from Diversity to Development.

Georgia Tech President Angel Cabrera sent a letter to Georgia Tech students, faculty, and staff shortly after the Dear Colleague Letter was issued, maintaining that Georgia Tech “does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin and complies with all state and federal laws” and emphasized the potential impact of changes to funding.

In response to these funding threats, Georgia Tech has restructured several resource centers, including the Women's Resource Center, LGBTQIA Resource Center, Intercultural Student Center, and Black Culture, Innovation, and Technology, consolidating them into “Arts, Students, and Belonging”. Attempting to visit websites for any of these centers will produce a “page not found” notice, and the signage in the Smithgall Building, the previous home of several resource centers, was changed on February 16th to remove the names of the restructured programs. This rapid and ambiguous restructuring left much of the campus community confused, which was partially addressed in a series of town halls, led by Georgia Tech Vice President for Student Engagement and Wellbeing Luoluo Hong.

The newly restructured centers provided resources for underserved communities, but none of them were exclusionary towards a specific group in the ways that the Dear Colleague letter alleged—in fact, Dr. Hong attested that 50% of the people who used services in the Women's Resource Center identified as men.

The Dear Colleague specified that hits to funding would take place within two weeks of issuance if institutes did not comply—a timeline that put Georgia Tech in a difficult position. The threat of a loss of federal funding is incredibly powerful at Georgia Tech, which receives as

much as \$1.2 billion annually in federal funding for research. A loss of federal funding would cripple the Institute's operations; yet, the Dear Colleague Letter's threats are not codified into law.

## LOCAL LAW AND STUDENT RESISTANCE

To many students from diverse backgrounds, DEI organizations provide a way to connect with a community and their own culture in an often intimidating campus, while Trump's administration maintains that these communities serve as a form of discrimination against people who do not belong to minority groups. Students such as Diego Shipmon believe that DEI organizations are vital to student success and education.

Shipmon is one of the founders of GT Students for Belonging, a new student organization seeking to preserve DEI programs and the right

**“As much as we wanted to be outraged and say ‘DEI is a human right’...our argument for legislators was we need these DEI programs so that people will choose Georgia schools and choose Georgia careers.”**

for students to express themselves at Georgia Tech. Shipmon, who identifies as Queer and biracial, states that resources for students who are in minority groups are not just important, but vital:

“These are life-sustaining services.... If students can't show up to school and know that they have a safe space, and by safe space, I mean a place where people respect their cultural identity, and people who, you know, share their cultural identity are with them. If they don't feel like they can interface with things that are familiar to them, if they can't feel like they can make a home here because they don't have the resources that they're used to having, that their community

would have provided to them... then there is no education, and there is no learning.”

Alongside Shipmon's leadership, GT Students for Belonging was one of the student groups that had a significant impact on blocking the Georgia Senate Bill 120 (SB 120). This bill had the potential to limit student organizations and clubs from participating in anything the state deemed DEI and was condemned by civil rights groups as an infringement on free speech and for its potential to increase discrimination and harassment based on race and sexuality.

Georgia Tech students attended the senate hearings and testified against the bill's passing. According to Shipmon, their strategy mostly focused on the potential impact on human capital that the bill could have: “As much as we wanted to be outraged and say ‘DEI is a human right’... essentially our argument for legislators was we need these DEI programs so that people will choose Georgia schools and choose Georgia careers.” He argued that students who now do not have the support they need “are going to choose to go to schools in more liberal parts of the country, and that just takes valuable capital” away from Georgia. SB 120 and bills with similar verbiage were blocked from passing in the 2025 Georgia Legislative session, thanks in part to Georgia Tech students' efforts.

Shipmon shared the following advice to students who may be affected by these DEI changes: “Stay motivated....I think it's really hard to get involved, especially when it comes to like actually making change, because this work moves really quickly.... My advice would be not letting that discourage you, not letting yourself get daunted by the scope of everything that's going on, there's always one small thing you can do. There's always one small phone banking, one small letter writing, one small event that you can go to, one small something.”

SPRING 2025

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