It is proposed that current and future employees occupying positions designated as “Athletic Affairs Professionals” become members of the General Faculty as defined in The Statutes of the Georgia Institute of Technology and Faculty Governance.

This proposal has been reviewed by the Executive Board, which voted to recommend approval by the General Faculty. If endorsed by the General Faculty, the Statutes Committee would be charged with proposing (1) specific wording to add Athletic Affairs Professionals to the General Faculty membership defined in Section 5.1.1 of the Statutes, in a manner similar to that for “Professional Classified Staff,” and (2) additions or modifications to Section 13.2.1 and others, as needed to implement this policy. The committee's proposal would be brought back to the General Faculty for approval of an amendment to the Statutes in accordance with procedures in the Statutes.

General Description

Athletic Affairs Professionals are defined as persons whose primary assignments involve performing management or professional level work related directly to the Institute's Intercollegiate Athletic Programs. Functional areas covered by this description include athletic program administration and management; coaching; player conditioning, development and training; sports information, communication and promotion; and compliance. It specifically excludes persons in general administrative, clerical, craft and maintenance positions as well as those professional and management positions which by their nature are not exclusively linked to intercollegiate athletic program support.

Organizational Restrictions

Athletic Affairs Professional positions are limited to assignments within the Georgia Institute of Technology’s Athletic Department.

Representative Titles/Positions

- Director of Athletics
- Senior Associate Director of Athletics
- Coaches
- Directors of Broadcasting & Sports Communication
- Director of Player Development
- Director of Nutrition
- Director of (Major Sport) Operations
- Director Level Fund Raising Positions

Impact

While the Athletic Affairs Professional designation applies to all individuals whose position meets the criteria defined above, it would only apply to approximately 50 individuals currently employed by the Georgia Tech Athletic Association and not otherwise qualified for faculty status based on reporting level or as Classified Professional Staff. Of that 50, 35 are coaching positions. This represents approximately 33% of all Athletic Association employees.

Rationale

The Athletic Association is structured as a not-for-profit independently incorporated 501(C) (3) and as such, employs its own workforce. The Institute and the Athletic Association believe it to
be mutually beneficial to incorporate the Athletic Association into the Institute's existing structure; both in terms of economies of scale in supporting business activities and in creating stronger academic and athletic programmatic links. This merger also will support and facilitate enhanced institutional oversight of the athletic association.

One of the challenges associated with this merger is converting to a new retirement system. The Athletic Association currently has its own independent retirement program with an immediate vesting provision to attract key administrative and coaching staff. When these individuals come under the BOR retirement structure, they will be folded into the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) with its 10 year vesting requirement, as only those with faculty status are permitted to elect the Optional Retirement Program (ORP), a plan which also provides an immediate vesting provision.

This proposal to create an Athletics Affairs Professional with General Faculty status is intended to offset the loss of the Athletic Association's current retirement program as well as address recruitment of talented coaches and senior administrative staff in the future. In making this recommendation the following was considered:

- The average retention of assistant coaches is between three and four years. Consequently, eligibility for these individuals to participate in the Optional Retirement Plan is critical for the Athletic Association's ability to successfully compete in its new status as a public employer. (It should be noted that senior level coaching and administrator positions reporting to the Athletic Director would be eligible for General Faculty Status under the current provisions of section 5.1.1 if affirmed by the Executive Board and the President).

- As members of the General Faculty, these employees would not be eligible to vote on matters restricted to the Academic Faculty and the Academic Senate.

- The University of Georgia and Georgia State University currently grant General Faculty Status to their coaching staffs and other select Athletic Program administrators.

- The proposal to grant General Faculty status to this group of individuals is driven only by the need to attract a very specialized group of individuals for a relatively short tenure with us. Certainly, it is an imperfect solution thrust upon us by circumstance. Recognizing such, Georgia Tech has approached the Chancellor, through membership in his Benefits Advisory Committee, and recommended that eligibility for ORP participation should not be dependent on Faculty status. The Chancellor was receptive to the proposal and will discuss at the Board level.* Should that proposal become policy, there would be no continuing need to grant General Faculty status to this group of employees or others similarly situated.

*NOTE: Final approval may require legislative action.