Georgia Institute of Technology  
Post Doctoral Fellows

It is proposed that current and future employees occupying positions designed as “Post Doctoral Fellows” 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 specific wording to add Post Doctoral Fellows to the General Faculty membership defined in Section 5.1.1 of the Statutes. 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.

Rationale

The Institute currently employs 203 Post Doctoral Fellows, principally in the Colleges of Engineering and Science. "Post Docs" are appointed as staff and are provided the same benefit eligibility as classified employees. As such, their retirement program election currently is limited to the Teacher’s Retirement System option, a defined benefit plan with a 10-year vesting requirement.

The average length of service for Post Docs is less than two years. Clearly, the nature and intent of their appointment precludes them from meeting this vesting provision. Consequently, at departure, participation in TRS becomes little more than a forced savings account, yielding 4.5% simple interest (compounded annually) on their portion (5%) of the total contribution.

At a time when these young men and women are starting their professional careers, many in academe, having the option of electing a defined contribution retirement program, such as ORP, that provides immediate vesting and portability is very advantageous. Unfortunately, the Board of Regents’ policy requires Faculty Status as a prerequisite to ORP participation; hence this recommendation.

NOTE: If this proposal and the requisite Statutes changes are ultimately approved, both current and future Post Doctoral Fellows would become members of the General Faculty. However, current members of TRS would not have the option of changing retirement plans.