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GEORGIA TECH TO RENOVATE FERST CENTER FOR THE ARTS

ATLANTA – The Georgia Institute of Technology announces that the Ferst Center for the Arts has initiated planning for renovation of the 20-year-old campus arts center. The Atlanta architectural firm BLDGS will lead the design and is now in the discovery phase of the project.

The renovation is expected to include a redesigned lobby area that will open up the existing space to provide a more flexible and functional area with a lobby stage, a permanent concessions area, new box office space and a donor event area. Other elements that the renovation will address include an outdoor plaza to replace the existing outdoor walkway and grounds, a new stage lighting system, renovated bathrooms and dressing rooms, and other facility improvements.

“The Ferst Center is almost constantly in use by professional artists, campus departments, student organizations, summer camps and community groups. After 20 years it is clear that this kind of daily wear and tear has taken its toll, and renovations are needed to ensure that the Ferst Center is a viable part of the Institute for the next 20 years,” said Ferst Center Director George Thompson. “The renovations will provide a better audience experience and new performance spaces that are appropriate for different types of performing artists. The initial plans are to visually ‘open up’ the building to the campus and we expect all the changes to greatly expand the functionality of the building.”

Initial renovation discussions began two years ago with Thompson and Howard Wertheimer, Director of Georgia Tech’s Capital Planning and Space Management department. Georgia Tech President G.P. “Bud” Peterson, Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance Steve Swant and Vice President of Student Affairs William Schafer endorsed the project and it was approved by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents last May. Georgia Tech’s

Planning and Design Commission reviewed the preliminary plans prepared by Capital Planning and chose the architectural firm of BLDGS in the summer of 2011 following a very competitive presentation process. Brian Bell and David Yokum, architects at BLDGS, are currently meeting with various constituents including faculty, staff and students to explore the use of the building and the possibilities involved in the redesign.

The total cost and timeline of the renovation is a part of the initial discovery process and will be determined at a later date, although the work is expected to take place at a time of year when it will have the least impact on public performances. The renovation will be funded by private donations and fundraising efforts are underway. Inquiries about naming opportunities, lead gifts and other contributions to the project can be made to Trish Wichmann, Director of Development for Student Affairs, at 404- 894-9190.

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About the Ferst Center for the Arts

The Ferst Center for the Arts is a part of the Division of Student Affairs at the Georgia Institute of Technology and is located in the heart of the Georgia Tech campus. Named after Georgia Tech alumnus Robert Ferst, the mission of the Ferst Center is to enhance the education of Tech students and to serve as a bridge to the greater Atlanta community by offering a showcase of some of the most highly-acclaimed talent from around the world, through arts education programs for all ages, and by providing a professional theatre venue for campus and community events. Funding is provided in part by contributions from individuals, foundations, corporations, the Georgia Council for the Arts through appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly, and the Fulton County Board of Commissioners under the guidance of the Fulton County Arts Council. Major corporate support is provided by the Coca-Cola Company and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. For ticket or venue information call 404-894-9600 or visit www.ferstcenter.gatech.edu.

Venue Information:

Ferst Center for the Arts at Georgia Tech
349 Ferst Drive, Atlanta, GA 30332-0468
Tickets and Info: 404-894-9600
Administrative Office: 404-894-2787
www.ferstcenter.gatech.edu