VIP Status: Harris Supports Georgia Tech Research Program

Two representatives from Georgia Tech recently visited Harris' Palm Bay, Florida campus to mark the kickoff of a new partnership between the school and the company – Harris' participation in Georgia Tech's Vertically-Integrated Projects, or VIP, program.

VIP is an undergraduate education program in which students join research teams, earning academic credit for their participation in design/discovery efforts that assist faculty and graduate students with research and development activities. The teams are multidisciplinary and draw sophomores through PhD students. Each team has 10 to 30 students, along with one to three faculty members – all working on research in areas of interest to both Georgia Tech professors and the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI), a U.S. government-sponsored organization that conducts research of interest to the Department of Defense and industry.

"Harris has a rich history of supporting both graduate and undergraduate research at Georgia Tech," said Tom Wells, Harris University Research Manager. "This relationship has been so rewarding that we've recently decided to increase the amount of undergraduate research that Harris supports."

The VIP program is the brainchild of Dr. Ed Coyle, who originally started a similar program at Purdue University, then transplanted his idea to Georgia Tech after accepting a position there. Ed, along with Paul Garver, one of his PhD students (and VIP team member), visited Harris on October 28, 2015, participating in a tour of our facilities.

Georgia Tech's Dr. Ed Coyle and Paul Garver take a tour of some of our Palm Bay facilities.

"The focus on innovation of both VIP teams and Harris makes them natural partners," Coyle said. "Collaborations with Harris will be great learning opportunities for the students on our VIP teams. Collaborating with VIP will enable Harris to participate in the new type of innovation-focused communities that VIP creates at Georgia Tech."

The VIP program has nearly 400 students enrolled in more than 30 projects. Harris is interested in funding two of these projects. For each, one of our engineers will serve as a Principal Investigator, collaborating with the team, providing ideas and directions to help guide the research, and visiting the school for key reviews.

"Harris has extensive experience in robotics, with representation from both our Electronic Systems and Space and Intelligence Systems segments. With our expertise and interest in this field, we decided to fund the VIP program's GTRI Robotics project, and are currently finalizing our decision on the other project," said Dr. Joel Johnson, Harris Senior Technologist in the RF

Engineering department and the Florida coordinator of Harris' involvement with capstone research projects at a number of universities.

"This is a win-win for both Harris and Georgia Tech students," added Tom. "The students are gaining valuable experience that they'll be able to use as they pursue their degree and after graduation. And Harris has the opportunity to learn from the projects and apply those lessons to our programs and practices. We look forward to growing this relationship with our Georgia Tech partners."