

Speaker Biosketches
National Diversity Equity Workshop (NDEW) 2013

Paul Lyon Houston

Dean, College of Sciences
Georgia Institute of Technology

Paul Houston is Dean of the College of Sciences at the Georgia Institute of Technology, a post he assumed in 2007. He is also a Professor in the School of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Georgia Tech. Prior to taking these positions, he was at Cornell University for 32 years, most recently as the Peter J. W. Debye Professor of Chemistry. He joined Cornell in 1975 following undergraduate study at Yale, doctoral work at MIT, and postdoctoral research at the University of California at Berkeley.

Houston was a Senior Associate Dean from 2002-2005 in the College of Arts and Sciences at Cornell, where his job included working with roughly half the programs and departments in the College, from such diverse areas as Medieval Studies, Theatre Arts, and English, to Sociology and Economics, to Molecular Biology and Genetics. Faculty hiring, tenure and promotion, and budgetary matters occupied half of his time. This half is now occupied with teaching chemistry at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

Houston was also Chair of the Cornell Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology from 1997-2001, and previously served as Senior Associate Editor of the *Journal of Physical Chemistry* and as Chairman of the Division of Laser Science of the American Physical Society. His research centers on the interaction of light with matter, particularly how light causes or can be used to study chemical reactions in such environments as the upper atmosphere and in combustion flames. He is also interested in using light to study materials, both inorganic, such as light-emitting devices, and organic, such as biofilms. He has authored or co-authored approximately 150 publications in the field of physical chemistry and a textbook on chemical kinetics. In 2001 he shared the Herbert Broida Prize of the American Physical Society with colleague David W. Chandler. In 2002 he was elected as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and in 2003 as a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

What little is left of his waking day is devoted to his hobbies and family. He is married to Barbara Deutsch Lynch, Visiting Associate Professor in the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs and the Department of City and Regional Planning at Georgia Tech. The family includes three daughters, each of whom is also a professor, one in ecology, one in oceanography, and one in political science. Four grandchildren keep the six parents and two grandparents more than a little busy. Professor Houston often seeks refuge in his wood shop.