
The former president and first lady are being jointly recognized for their partnership in a courageous collaboration to improve human rights and alleviate suffering around the world. Over the span of more than four decades their work has focused on improving health, preventing and resolving conflicts, and enhancing freedom and democracy.

They are the first couple to receive the award, which recognizes those who demonstrate leadership to improve the human condition despite personal risks and challenges.

The Carters will be honored during a symposium on the power of partnerships taking place Feb. 17 at the Biltmore, adjacent to Tech Square in downtown Atlanta. Planned activities include a town hall discussion between Georgia Tech students and the Carters.

“Rosalynn and I are humbled and honored to receive this award,” said Jimmy Carter, who attended Georgia Tech and received an honorary degree from the Institute in 1979. “Our work to advance peace and health for the world’s least fortunate people through the Carter Center has been the pinnacle of our lives,” he said. “We are grateful if our experiences offer some inspiration to others to reach out to do what they can to help make life better for their neighbors next door or those in other nations. You don’t have to be a former president or former first lady to make a difference in the lives of others. Anyone can find the courage to speak out against injustice and lend a helping hand within their own circle.”

The Carters, who have been married for more than 70 years, have accomplished much together, whether it be their time in the White House, his receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002, or her groundbreaking work in mental health advocacy.

“For more than four decades, the Carters have worked tirelessly to improve global health and human rights, as well as to promote democracy in more than 65 countries throughout the world,” Peterson said. 

see COURAGE, page 2

The Living Building at Georgia Tech has reached a major milestone with the approval of the schematic design. Approved by Georgia Tech’s Planning and Design Commission in December, the schematic design provides a working blueprint for what is anticipated to be the most environmentally advanced research and educational building ever constructed in the Southeast. This rendering shows the future northwest corner of the building, which will be at the corner of State Street and Ferst Drive. Learn more at livingbuilding.gatech.edu.

see BUDGET, page 3

On a Wednesday morning, Jim Kirk is in his office in the Lyman Hall building with public radio playing quietly and blood on his shirt. It’s the product of a messy morning commute.

Kirk uses a combination of bike and bus to get to campus from Cobb County every day, and this morning, he “got into an argument with the curb.”

“I was trying to thank someone for letting me in and take a turn at the same time,” said Kirk, assistant vice president for Institute Budget Planning and Administration. “It’s always when I’m trying to do two things at once.”

Two things he excels at handling simultaneously, though, are managing Tech’s budgets and a legendary holiday initiative. Kirk has been at Tech for 16 years, and for 15 of those, he’s helped organize the Lyman Hall holiday party.

It began in 2003 with a group of Tech staff members collecting clothing for the nearby Atlanta Day Shelter for Women and Children. The following year, a staff member suggested that the team’s efforts be used to help the family of a fellow Tech employee in need.

Since then, the effort has grown to include multiple campus departments and community beneficiaries, including hundreds of Georgia Tech families. Kirk started the multiparadigm effort, and it continues with the help of a fellow Tech employee in need.

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The acceptance rate for this round was 28 percent. Applications for regular decision admission closed Jan. 1, and the Institute received a record number of applications. cgatech.edu/ea2017

Following the success of Tech’s Online Master of Science in Computer Science, a new Online Master of Science in Analytics will begin enrolling students this fall, providing another high-quality, low-cost master’s degree available worldwide.

cgatech.edu/omsanalytics

see NEWS BRIEFS, page 3

Dropbox Now Available for Faculty and Staff
Board of Regents Updates
In the Classroom with Florin Niculescu
ARTS & CULTURE

Jan. 25
What's Going On, an original musical production written by Tech student Danielle Mathis, depicts college life with a focus on social justice issues. The free event takes place at 7:30 p.m. at the Ferst Center for the Arts.
c.gatech.edu/mlk2017

WEllness

Jan. 25
through March
An exhibition of the work of designer Santiago Calatrava combines architecture, sculpture, art, and engineering in the Flex Space of the Caddell Building.
space.gatech.edu/calatrava

SEMINARS & LECTURES

Feb. 1
Faculty members from Georgia Tech and Macau University host a panel discussion on Contemporary Chinese Foreign Policy from 1 to 2:30 p.m. in Room 1116 East, Klaus Advanced Computing Building.
cistp.gatech.edu

TRAINING

Jan. 25
Human Resources hosts a Be Well session on Preventing Identity Theft, from 11 a.m. to noon in Room 330, Student Center. Register at c.gatech.edu/bewellidentity

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Feb. 8
Human Resources hosts a Be Well session on Understanding Mental Health and Important Triggers from noon to 1 p.m. in the Piedmont Room, Student Center. chp.gatech.edu/bewell

COURAGE, from page 1
“Looking beyond the safe and the convenient, they have traveled to dangerous places and fearlessly confronted injustice. Their shared vision, tenacity, and courage have resulted in conflict resolution between countries and peoples, the eradication of diseases in the developing world, and advancements in mental health understanding and support. Former President Jimmy Carter and Rosalynn Carter exemplify the far-reaching global changes that are possible through a lifetime partnership in social courage.” Early this month the Carter Center announced it is poised to wipe out the Guinea worm disease from the planet. In the mid-1980s the painful disease afflicted as many as 3.5 million people each year in 21 countries across Africa and Asia. Today the number of cases has dropped to just 25 in three countries — Chad, Ethiopia, and South Sudan.

The Carter Center’s unique focus on disease eradication has filled a vacuum in the world when few were paying much attention to this problem. The last disease eradicated was smallpox in 1980. The Ivan Allen Jr. Prize for Social Courage honors the people behind the efforts to improve the human condition. The award is named for former Atlanta Mayor Ivan Allen Jr. Funded in perpetuity by a grant from the Wilbur and Hilda Glenn Family Foundation, recipients are awarded a $100,000 stipend. The inaugural prize was awarded in March 2011 to former Senator Sam Nunn. Other past recipients include William Forge, U.S. Rep. John Lewis, and humanitarian activist Nancy Parrish.

Due to space limitations, the event will be invitation-only. The campus community is encouraged to view a live webcast beginning at 10 a.m. on Feb. 17 at ivanallenprize.gatech.edu.
Board of Regents Updates

Jan. 11 Meeting
The Board of Regents convened Wednesday, Jan. 11, in Atlanta. Georgia Tech student Azell Francis opened the meeting by leading the Board with the morning invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

Meeting activity related to Georgia Tech:
• The Board authorized certain named personnel to apply for and receive United States government security clearance related to classified government research. This is an annual renewal item for Georgia Tech.
• The Board authorized the first-floor renovation of the Boggs Chemistry Building with a total project budget of $4.5 million to be funded from institution funds.
• The Board approved Georgia Tech’s tuition and fee request for the existing Master of Science in Analytics by Distance Learning through Massive Open Online Courses (OMS in Analytics).
• The Board received a campus spotlight presentation from Ashok Goel, professor in the School of Interactive Computing, and students Bobbie Fisher and Ken Brooks on the artificial intelligence teaching assistant Jill Watson.
• The Board temporarily suspended business in order for the Regents to hear Georgia Governor Nathan Deal’s State of the State address in the Capitol. President G.P. “Bud” Peterson was in attendance at the address as an invited guest of Governor Deal.
See meeting agendas and future dates at usg.edu.

Political Activity Reminder
With the new year in full swing, the University System of Georgia (USG) recently issued a reminder to employees about its policies on political activities.

USG employees are encouraged to fulfill their civic obligations and share their views on political issues, but in doing so may act only in their personal capacities and must not use Institute resources or appear to be speaking on behalf of the Institute.
In addition, USG employees may not hold elective political offices at the state or federal level while employed by the USG. Political campaigning during work hours, or in a way that interferes with Institute responsibilities, is prohibited.

Additional questions may be submitted to the Georgia Tech Office of Legal Affairs at asklegal@gatech.edu.

Budget, from page 1
of a committee of representatives who now span multiple buildings.
“We decided back then that instead of just celebrating ourselves we wanted to help people at the holidays,” he said. The organizing committee solicits nominations from several campus departments, including Auxiliary Services, Dining Services, and Facilities Management. Supervisors are asked to submit nominations with details of the employees’ situations, but not their names, and they are vetted by the supervisor and committee. Though they don’t look for a specific number of families to support each year, they’ve never turned one away.
“We’ve always found a way to support them,” Kirk said. “Several departments are very generous in sponsoring families.” Many offices that participate will sponsor more than one family, or smaller groups team up to take on larger requests. The Budget office even once nominated an employee from within its own staff who was facing particular hardship that year.
At times, employees have felt a special connection with the beneficiaries. This year, one nominee is raising his son and daughter as a single parent following the death of his wife. Two contributing employees could relate, having lost their own spouses and experiencing similar circumstances themselves, so their two offices teamed up to sponsor him.
The season of giving culminates in a celebration that would be the envy of many offices (and may be reminiscent of the popular TV show “The Office,” without the bungling boss). The atrium of Lyman Hall becomes center stage for a performance contest, desert contest, and tacky holiday clothing contest, as well as door prizes and a visit from Santa. Gift donations are brought to the party, all wrapped, and supervisors pick up their employees’ gifts to keep the recipients anonymous.
“We hear stories from supervisors about the families when they receive the gifts, a lot of them in tears,” Kirk said. “A lot of these families would otherwise not have gifts for their children or grandchildren, and some are struggling to just pay their bills.” In many cases, families have taken on an additional responsibility of caring for an older parent, grandchild, or other extended family members who have added strain to their finances. The 2016 efforts supported 14 employee families, and the estimates they’ve supported around 175 families over the years.
The “service” part of Tech’s “progress and service” motto has become a hallmark for Daily Kirk manages his office. They also do an annual fall clothing collection for the Atlanta Mission and Kirk is raising his son and daughter as a single parent who has added strain to their finances. The 2016 efforts supported 14 employee families, and the estimates they’ve supported around 175 families over the years.

Kirk at Work
Kirk, who has made a career in the public sector, previously worked in local and state government, as well as at the University of South Carolina before coming to Tech 16 years ago. He and his wife left behind three adult children (and now seven grandchildren) when they relocated to Atlanta for the job.
His cycling began following a knee surgery eight years ago, and he found a way to weave it into his commute. It’s only led to a handful of wipe-outs over the years — thankfully, he always wears a helmet.
Kirk’s team is responsible for overseeing Tech’s $1.7 billion budget (as of Fiscal Year 2017), including all submissions from campus departments. They prepare all budget schedule documents for the Board of Regents and support Tech’s executive leadership team in its budgeting decisions.
“When you get a lot of good people good data and advice,” he said. “We have a huge budget compared to the number of students because we have so much sponsored research.
Kirk’s group also works with all capital projects on campus. Even in instances where funding may come from outside Tech, such as private philanthropy, Kirk’s team still has to project and budget for every facility’s ongoing operation and maintenance.
Though his career is financially focused, Kirk has always been drawn to the human aspects of the job. He took an interest test in college that matched him with “helping” professions, such as ministry, counseling, and education, but he finds similar fulfillment in his work with finances.
“You have to look beyond the numbers and see who or what the money will go to,” he said. Kirk also does presentations and educational sessions, including speaking at a Staff Council Inform Tech event last year on Georgia Tech’s Colors of Money. “I like to use comics. Numbers can bore people. You have to laugh about budgets and finance so you don’t cry.”
Marius Florin Niculescu has always loved mathematics. Since the fourth grade he entered individual mathematical competitions at the county, then district levels in his home country of Romania. From grade seven through 12, he made it to the national level of competition, and in the 12th grade he was first among the first place group.

It wasn’t until he was a course assistant as an undergraduate at Harvard University — grading students’ assignments and holding recitation sessions — that he started thinking about teaching.

“Grading is not the part that excites you the most,” he said. “But, it clicked that I enjoyed the interaction … clarifying things for students.”

After earning his bachelor’s degree in applied mathematics from Harvard, Niculescu felt passionate about research. He did his graduate studies at Stanford University, pursuing in parallel a master’s degree in financial mathematics offered jointly by the Mathematics and Statistics departments, and a Ph.D. in operations, information, and technology from the Graduate School of Business. He joined Georgia Tech in 2009 and is an associate professor with tenure in the IT Management area in the Scheller College of Business. He is also the Ph.D. coordinator for his area.

Niculescu’s ability in the classroom is often recognized by students and honored by his colleagues. Based on student feedback, he was awarded the Georgia Tech Class of 1940 Course Survey Teaching Effectiveness Award in 2013 and 2014. And, he received the 2013 CTL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award.

**Classroom Strategies**

Niculescu teaches at undergraduate, MBA, and Ph.D. levels. In Fall 2016, he began teaching Managing Information Resources (MGT 6503), a core class for the MBA program. The seven-week course introduces students to a blend of foundational business concepts and hands-on tools. On the conceptual part, the course gravitates around emerging trends and business models, opportunities, transformations, and challenges faced by consumers, firms, and governmental institutions as a result of the rapid advances, interconnectedness, and ubiquity of information technology. The course also introduces students to modern methods and software tools associated with the visualization, analysis, and management of data.

Niculescu embarked on an ambitious redesign of the course, revamped more than 90 percent of its content. In the fall iteration of the course, most business cases were from the past two years.

“Given the breathtaking pace of IT progress and its increasingly transformational impact on businesses and society, the teaching materials in this field have to be updated frequently to reflect the present with a glimpse of the future,” he said.

Beyond providing fresh, relevant examples, Niculescu also embraces the use of technology for learning purposes for all courses he teaches at the undergraduate and master’s level. He extensively uses visual aids such as slides, videos, and in-class software demos, as well as simulations to illustrate various market dynamics.

In addition, he uses learning tools such as ForClass (for the MBA course) and Turning Point (for undergraduate courses) to poll students and increase classroom engagement. For the MBA course, students have to answer several questions via ForClass before lecture (based on assigned readings) as well as in-class questions based on the material taught that day. Niculescu uses students’ answers to these questions as starting points for classroom discussions.

“The quality of the answers improves because you’ve got to own your answers,” he said. This gives students more incentive to pay attention during the lectures or when perusing the assigned reading. It also helps Niculescu gauge students’ grasp of the material in real time, allowing him to make quick adjustments to teaching and, if necessary, revisit concepts that need further clarification or reinforcement. Niculescu said it’s exciting to teach courses related to the managerial implications of IT because it is a continuously changing area. It forces him to evolve and learn, which keeps him constantly excited about his job. He wants his students to be ready for what comes next.

“Companies increasingly desire employees who can hit the ground running, and the job market for IT-savvy folks with data analytics skills is booming,” he said. “Part of my job is to identify what knowledge in my domain would help the students succeed further and transfer that knowledge to them in an effective way.”

Niculescu sees knowledge sharing going both ways. “You learn from your students every year, especially when we talk about technology and its impact,” he said. “There will always be one student who knows something you don’t know about a new product, company, or policy change. Embrace it. It’s not my way or the highway.” Students should be encouraged to identify what knowledge in my domain would be one student who knows something you don’t know about a new product, company, or policy change. Embrace it. It’s not my way or the highway.” Students should be encouraged to identify what knowledge to them in an effective way.”

**Advice for New Faculty**

“A lot of new faculty have to pick up a course that was already being taught. Don’t be afraid to introduce new ideas and reshape the course,” he said.

He also reminds new faculty to “be aware that what seems easy for you may not be easy for students. Sometimes course calibration takes a few iterations.”

Niculescu added that students appreciate it if the professor puts extra effort to help them learn better, whether that means well-prepared support materials (such as slides, tutorials, and assignments), well-structured lectures with logical flow and lots of examples, or flexible availability outside the classroom to meet in person or communica- tion via email.

“I have noticed this at all levels, from undergraduate to Ph.D.,” he said. “That doesn’t mean making the course easier. It is about enhancing the learning experience and making sure that the material is taught effectively, absorbed, and stays with the student for a long time.”

**From the Source**

Adams Conrad is a first-year student in the full-time MBA Program at Tech’s Scheller College of Business. The course he took with Niculescu, Managing Information Resources (MGT 6503), is a required core class for MBA candidates. But Conrad said he would have taken the class even if it were optional.

Conrad said Niculescu brings a lot of energy and expertise to the classroom, and his deep understanding of various technologies enables him to clearly articulate very complex solutions.

“This enables Professor Niculescu to connect technology and business in a meaningful way, teaching us how technology can be leveraged to benefit all businesses, regardless of industry,” Conrad said. “His passion for technology is evident the moment you step into the classroom and is energizing and inspiring.”

**REAL ESTATE/ROOMMATES**

**VISITING SCHOLAR FROM GERMANY SEEKING**

1BR/1BA furnished apartment near Tech from April—September. Contact Johannes, richlum@tum.de.

**4BR/3BA house for rent in Oak Grove district. Easy access to Tech, Emory, CDC. Sunroom, fenced backyard, play structure, two-car garage, walking distance to Oak Grove Elementary and Lakeside High. Great neighborhood. $2,800/mo. Contact Olga, 323-229-3190, okgosnov21@gmail.com.

**2BR/2BA house for rent in East Cobb/Marietta (30062). Sun room, enclosed patio, two-car garage, pool. Land and grounds maintained by HOA. Near wonderful shops and restaurants at the Avenue. Fully furnished and includes utilities. $1,900/mo. Contact sandra.sheppard71@gmail.com, 770-364-3692.

**1BR/1BA condo for rent. Amenities: pool, gym, secure gated parking, 24-hour concierge, on-site laundry. Walking distance to Tech and MARTA. $800/mo. Utilities included. Call or text 404-822-6056.

**MISCELLANEOUS**


Tech researchers seeking volunteer families for a usability study of a mobile Android app that gives caregivers a convenient way to track changes in developmental milestones. The goal is early detection of autism spectrum disorder and other issues. See gtol.patech.edu/study-research.

Furnishings and appliances for sale. Thomasville armo, hunter green plaid, 81"x34: $90. LG appliances like new: dishwasher, top load washer. 4.7 cu. ft., white, and ultra large dryer. 7.3 cu. ft., steam dry cleaning feature, 4 years old: $895. Refrigerator — large capacity 3-door french door w/ filler water dispenser and ice maker, 5 years old: $50. Contact aporer.waksron@comcast.net.

Items for sale: Three cream-colored leather look counter-height bar stools, good condition. $75 each or $200 for set. One 1-armchair computer chair w/ pull-out keyboard tray, excellent condition, $50. One maroon cloth computer swivel chair with arms, excellent condition, $35. Contact 678-441-4717.

Two twin box springs and king bed frame for sale. All three are only one year old, from a pet-free, smoke-free home. All purchased from Matthews Firm, $200. Contact cakia.tamman@scheller.gatech.edu.