10 YEARS OF SOUTHERN STARGAZING

The Georgia Tech Observatory celebrates 10 years this week with a special event on Thursday, April 6. The day will include a planetarium set up in the atrium of the Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; a public lecture from WSB-TV Chief Meteorologist Glenn Burns at 7:30 p.m. in Room 152, Clough Commons; and a public night at the observatory (weather permitting) from 8 to 11 p.m. at the Howey Physics Building. Learn more at c.gatech.edu/observatory. (Above, students pose with the observatory’s new telescope during its installation.)

Progress Made on Black Student Experience, Gender Equity Initiatives

ANNETTE FILLIAT
INSTITUTE DIVERSITY

For the past two years, Georgia Tech students and leaders have made a concerted effort to evaluate and improve the campus climate for its many diverse groups. Two driving forces of those efforts have been groups meeting on the Black Student Experience and Gender Equity.

Both groups finalized recommendations last fall that are in the process of being addressed, and both groups are providing quarterly updates on their progress. As part of a three-year process, implementation of the 11 recommendations for the Black Student Experience started in August 2016. Gender Equity initiatives are being addressed over two years, also through the implementation of 11 initiatives. These initiatives first emerged from President G.P. “Bud” Peterson’s listening sessions on inclusiveness and gender equity in 2013, during which faculty and staff expressed that some of the Institute’s collective actions, practices, and policies fell short of fully recognizing women’s contributions.

“After discussing with the committee, we expanded the implementation of two areas from the original 11 recommendations of the Black Student Experience Task Force – Challenge and FASET,” said Archie Ervin, vice president for Institute Diversity. “The implementation committee identified broader and more long-term academic issue areas beyond the Challenge program and orientation processes beyond the FASET program as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Though its scope now extends beyond Challenge, the Challenge program’s enrollment will grow from 75 to 105 underrepresented minority and women students this summer.

To address issues in the black student experience and gender equity, Institute Diversity and the ADVANCE Program have offered more than 20 Implicit Bias Workshops to nearly 300 faculty members, or nearly one-third of all tenured or tenure-track faculty at Georgia Tech, since Fall 2015. Additional workshops will be offered this fall. Other new opportunities for engagement include the Inclusive Leaders Academy, Diversity and Inclusion Councils, Diversity and Inclusion Fellows Program, a Certificate in Multicultural Competence, Provost Emerging Leaders Program, and Leading Women@Tech.

How a Bridge Burns

Two sections the size of a football field will have to be replaced on Interstate 85 in Atlanta, just north of campus, because of the fire and road collapse on Thursday, March 30. Officials project the repair will take several months to complete.

Lauren Stewart, assistant professor in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, has a professional engineering license in civil engineering with a structural focus. Her research area is hazards engineering of structures, such as fire, blast, and wind.

“Any time you have a high heat source like this, you see material properties — especially for steel — degrade,” she said. “Especially when the fire burns for a long duration. That is what happened to the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001. As the materials degrade, it weakens the ability to carry loads.

“As far as what happens next, we’ll see coordination on investigations about the cause of the fire on the federal and state agency side. We’ll also see coordination with engineers to determine the level and extent of the damage.”

For employees with a commute affected by the road closure, Parking and Transportation Services provides information about metro transit options, along with some employee discounts, at pts.gatech.edu.

During the incident, commuters were stuck in their cars for several hours, similar to the aftermath of 2014’s “Snowpocalypse.” The Office of Emergency Preparedness encourages employees to evaluate their car safety kits and be sure they are prepared for possible emergency situations. A kit should include water, a phone charger, food, a blanket, clothes, and a flashlight. See a complete guide, which also applies to winter weather planning, at c.gatech.edu/emergencykit.

Compliance Campaign Closes Friday

All faculty, staff, and student workers must affirm their understanding of Tech’s and the University System of Georgia’s ethics, conflicts of interest, and cybersecurity policies by April 7. techworks.gatech.edu

Feedback Wanted on Campus Sustainability Plan

The Strategic Plan for Sustainable Practice lays out a long-term vision and goals to guide campus sustainability efforts for the next 10 years. Read the plan and provide feedback online or in person at an April 5 event. c.gatech.edu/sustplan

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Register Youth Programs by May 1

RACHEL FOCKLINGTON
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

It is estimated that, on an annual basis, more than 40,000 minors, ages 17 and under, attend a program sponsored by the Institute or conducted on campus. A special duty of care and supervision is required to protect Tech’s youngest learners.

To help ensure a safe and healthy environment for all who participate, volunteer, or work in these youth programs, the University System of Georgia (USG) and the Institute are requiring that all minor-focused programs be registered by youthprograms.gatech.edu/youth-programs-registration by May 1. This must be done on an annual basis, and failure to do so may result in the cancellation of programming.

Georgia Tech provides educational and recreational opportunities to minors throughout the year. Youth programs are activities for non-student minors organized and run by Tech individuals or units, outside of regular academic programs. These programs include, but are not limited to, working with minors in labs, student organization youth events, camps, after-school and enrichment activities, and mentoring/training in local schools. Campus or lab tours and school field trips to the Georgia Tech campus are generally not considered youth programs.

“Georgia Tech prides itself on the great educational value of its youth programs — programs that challenge, educate, and mentor young people, as well as introduce them to the campus and students,” said Mia Reini, director of Enterprise Risk Management. “It is important for the Institute to have a complete understanding of these youth programs so that we can identify these programs and provide the training and best practices for the benefit of all involved.”

By registering, programs that work with minors will receive information on resources and policies developed for the protection of the minors, and the program volunteers and workers. These include a code of conduct, safety and security planning resources, mandatory training programs, and mandatory background checks and pre-screening.

Georgia Tech has been selected as a recipient of the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts Award of Distinction for Excellent Financial Reporting for FY16. Jim Fortner, interim vice president of Financial Services, accepted the award at the March Board of Regents meeting.

Dhruv Batra, assistant professor in the School of Interactive Computing, earned a Young Investigator Award from the Office of Naval Research.

Gen. (Ret.) Philip M. Breedlove and Admiral James “Sandy” Winfield, both distinguished professors at the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, were recognized by the Georgia House of Representatives through a State House Resolution adopted March 14 for their service to our nation and for reaching their alma mater as distinguished professors.

Kate Pride Brown, assistant professor in the School of History and Sociology, earned the 2016 Routledge Social Movement Studies Best Article Prize for The Prospect of Activism: Discerning and Delimiting Imagined Possibility.

Mary Frank Fox, ADVANCE Professor in the School of Public Policy, has been elected to the Electoral Nominating Committee of the Section on Social, Economic, and Political Sciences of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). The committee selects candidates for AAAS positions.

Zaher Hani, assistant professor in the School of Mathematics, earned a National Science Foundation CAREER Award.

School of Interactive Computing Associate Professor Karen Liu and School of Interactive Computing Assistant Professor Devi Parikh each earned a Google Research Faculty Award.

FACULTY AND STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

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Dr. Gregory Moore, senior director at Stamps Health Services, received the Charles F. Bohnman Award at the Southern College Health Association Annual Conference in March in Orlando, Florida. The annual award is the conference’s highest honor, reserved for those who have dedicated their careers to college health and service.

Juan Rodriguez, an associate professor in the School of Modern Languages, has been selected to join the New Voices Global Advisory Panel organized by the Atlanta Regional Commission.

Jacqueline Royster, dean of the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts, was named to the Advisory Council of the Endicott College of International Studies at Woosong University. Professor Jianjun “Jan” Shi, who holds the Carolyn J. Stewart Chair in the H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial & Systems Engineering, has been appointed to a four-year term as the editor-in-chief of IFSE Transactions, the monthly flagship journal of the Institute of Industrial and Systems Engineers.

Thad Starner, professor in the School of Interactive Computing, was named to the CHI Academy, joining six other colleagues from the School in the prestigious group.

Chuck Zhang, professor in the H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial & Systems Engineering, has been selected for a 2017 Fellow Award by the Institute of Industrial and Systems Engineers.

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The Georgia Tech Faculty/Staff Newspaper is published biweekly throughout the year by Georgia Tech Institute Communications.

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For more information and to RSVP, visit specialevents.gatech.edu/events/faculty-staff-honors.
DIVERSITY, from page 1

At FASET this summer, a new message from Ervin will greet students that emphasizes Tech’s diversity and inclusion values. FASET is also working to encourage a more diverse representation of student leaders and staff at summer sessions.

A Multicultural Student Advisory Committee has been formed to advise and recommend actions that enhance diversity and inclusion experiences, related to both the black student experience and gender equity. The group will host an April 12 event called Fearless Dialogues that will facilitate conversations on seeing gifts in others, hearing value in stories, and working for positive transformation in self and others.

Though faculty and staff may be familiar with EthosPoint for ethics concerns and violations, the service was not previously available to students. Now, the entire campus community will be able to submit information detailing any experienced discrimination on campus, and submissions will remain anonymous.

Also for students, new member education programs have been expanded to include diversity and inclusion topics. A group of students from Greek organizations have formed Greeks United for Inclusivity, Diversity, and Equity (GUIDE), which includes delegates from Tech’s four existing Greek councils. GUIDE is planning campuswide events that will also include non-Greek students, and 30 Greek students have participated in ally training through the LGBTQIA Resource Center.

Both the black student experience and gender equity initiative groups are working on evaluating the campus climate assessment, which will be distributed to campus in October.

“Although not visible to the campus community yet, there has been a large amount of background, foundational work from the implementation committee to move forward on the recommendations from the Black Student Experience Task Force report,” said John Stein, dean of students and vice president for Student Life. “I applaud the work of the committee, and we look forward for the campus community to experience these recommendations and see the positive changes in an effort to further advance a culture of close collaboration, global perspective, and intercultural respect at Tech.”

Gender Equity work has also focused on developing a framework and best practices for faculty and senior staff searches that are transparent and fair, and yield the most qualified and diverse applicant pools. The Office of Institutional Research and Planning and Human Resources have conducted faculty and staff equity studies and will determine a schedule for future reviews.

Other education has included workshops on critical legal issues in graduate education and Title IX issues last fall. An information sheet on Family Friendly Benefits and Policies was provided to school chairs and associate chairs from Faculty Affairs in Fall 2016, and Faculty Affairs submitted a proposal for a new Active Service Modified Duties program to be finalized. Faculty Governance’s Family Benefits Committee is evaluating availability and accessibility of on-campus summer camp and child development centers.

“I’ve been in many meetings where I was the only woman,” said Nazia Zakir, assistant vice president for Environmental Health and Safety and participant of the Leading Women@Tech program. “We’ve come a long way in regard to gender equity, but Georgia Tech still has a way to go.”

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Rafael L. Bras has addressed innate associations, the Implicit Bias Workshops, and search and appointment guidelines in memos distributed in Fall 2016 and Spring 2017.

Several recent campus events have prominently celebrated and highlighted women, including the Eighth Annual Diversity Symposium, which focused on gender equity and featured keynote speaker Marcia McNutt; Black History Month Lecturer Janet Mock; Leading Women@Tech Closing Ceremony Keynote Speaker Cheryl Dozier; and WST Distinguished Lecturer Alice M. Agogino.

“I applaud the work of the implementation committee to promote gender equity policies and procedures and celebrate the contributions of women in the Georgia Tech community,” said Ervin. “We look forward to implementing the next phase of initiatives in the year ahead.”

For complete progress tracking on both the Black Student Experience and Gender Equity Initiatives, visit c.gatech.edu/bse and c.gatech.edu/ge.

Events

April 12
Human Resources hosts Bank at Work Day from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Student Center Ballroom. ohr.gatech.edu/bewell

April 13
The Institute for People and Technology hosts Industry Innovation Day, showcasing research, keynote speakers, and panel discussions, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Garage at Tech Square. Register at c.gatech.edu/industryday

April 14
Women’s Tennis hosts Boston College at 2 p.m. at the Ken Byers Tennis Complex. ramblinwreck.com

April 14
The Resilience Employee Resource Group hosts Getting Grounded in Times of Chaos, a workshop focused on well-being, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., in Room 319, Student Success Center. ctl.gatech.edu/grad-students/awards

April 18
TA and Future Faculty Awards Day will recognize outstanding graduate and undergraduate teaching assistants from across campus, from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Bill Moore Student Success Center. c.gatech.edu/chaos

April 19
The Staff Council holds a general meeting from 10:30 a.m. to noon in Room 319, Student Center. RSVP at staffcouncil.gatech.edu

April 19
The Ideas 2 Serve finals will showcase student innovations designed to create a better world, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. in the Nanotechnology Building. RSVP at c.gatech.edu/uncertainty

April 21
Georgia Tech celebrates the 20th annual Earth Day festival with activities, performances, awards, and giveaways from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tech Walk. earthday.gatech.edu

April 24
Faculty, staff, and students are invited to provide feedback on the search for the next College of Engineering dean from 2 to 3 p.m. in the Student Center Theater. c.gatech.edu/coeddean

For more comprehensive listing of events, or to add your own, visit calendar.gatech.edu.
By the time Dana Randall finished college, she had five years of teaching experience under her belt. She started teaching during her senior year at Stuyvesant High School, a math and science magnet school in New York. Then, while an undergraduate at Harvard University, she taught fellow students how to prepare for and pass the freshman requirements in quantitative analysis, and in computer science and programming.

“I had no experience programming,” said Randall, now ADVANCE Professor of Computing in the College of Computing. “So I learned it to pass the exam. When I went to tell them that I had passed the test, they said, ‘why don’t you try out to teach?’”

She did, and then she spent several years teaching other students from her self-described perspective of “I know nothing extraneous. I am going to teach you how to learn and get through this exam.”

During those early years, Randall said she very deliberately tried to make the classroom comfortable for the students. Sometimes, she would sit on the desk to be different from the students’ usual classroom experiences, causing them to have different expectations.

Another early experience — two summers during high school spent at a math program at Hampshire College — taught her how to engage people and “trick” them into learning something complex by solving a puzzle. “These experiences really shaped how I teach now,” she said.

Classroom Strategies
This semester, Randall is teaching Honors Discrete Mathematics (CS 2051). She describes the class a little bit — how to think about discrete math, how to do proofs, and how to think mathematically — for mostly discrete math, how to do proofs, and the class as an honors class on “how to think mathematically.”

“Yesterday, I had a day like that. It just wasn’t as smooth as it usually is,” she said. “When I see that they’re amiss, I back up and say ‘let me remind you of the salient points.’ And I think that helps.”

Advice for New Faculty
Randall said one of her biggest assets as a teacher is talking straight to students and having a conversation. That’s one of her recommendations to new faculty.

“Have a real conversation with students, as though you’re having coffee with them,” she said. “The more you get away from this persona of teacher, I think that helps.”

Randall said the demands on a new faculty member’s time are overwhelming.

“You do have to put less time into absolutely everything than you wish you could,” she said. “When teaching, the place not to skimp is the energy you put into the classroom. It’s worth engaging the students and enjoying that hour or hour-and-a-half that you’re standing in front of them.”

Randall suggests being clear about expectations for the class, but new faculty don’t have to polish every piece of material they bring to the class.

“You don’t have to practice your presentations 20 times before you come in,” she said. “Making mistakes is okay as long as you’re honest and you own up, think quickly, and recover.”

From the Source
Sherry Sarkar, a first-year computer science major, is taking Honors Discrete Mathematics (CS 2051) with Randall. The class is required for her major, but because Sarkar has an affinity for math, she wanted to take the honors version.

“I heard the honors version was more proof based, and I am very comfortable with proofs,” said Sarkar, a member of Big O Theoretical Computer Science Club. She also had heard good reviews of Randall’s class. “She’s very meticulous with her proofs,” Sarkar said.

Sarkar said that Randall is a stickler when it comes to ideas and details. “She’s not a teacher who’s afraid to tell you when you’re wrong. There have been times when I was confident about an idea, but she would tell me I’m wrong and show me a better way,” she said.

At other times, Sarkar said she might have the right ideas, and Randall makes sure the details and the thought process are correct.

“Being not only correct but precise with your words is important,” she said. “When I was confident about an idea, but I couldn’t fully solve a problem, she’d give me a better way.”

In the Classroom is a series that showcases some of Georgia Tech’s faculty, delving into what they do, and what motivates them. Read more stories at cgatech.edu/classroom.

Photo by Rob Felt

REAL ESTATE/ROOMMATES
Looking for something working professional, graduate student, or visiting professor to rent private bedroom and bath w/ access to all living spaces in Buckhead. $600/ mo. Includes utilities, cable, internet, parking. Fully furnished large condo in small private community. Near, clean home. Walking distance to food market, restaurants, entertainment, shopping, public transit. Have rented to Italian doctoral student, Brazilian banker, semi-pro soccer player.


Female roommate (student, administrator, or professor) wanted to share apartment in Solace in Midtown from now through May. Contact 404-578-4168.

Roommate (student, administrator, or professor) wanted to share home in Alworth. Furnished room with private bath/shower, cable, and all utilities included. $600/mo. Contact 423-760-6275.

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, 333-229-3180, sakogrevel87@gmail.com.

2BR/2BA house for rent in East Cobb/Marietta (30062). Sunroom, enclosed patio, two-car garage and grounds maintained by HOA. Nearby shops and restaurants at The Avenue. Fully furnished and includes utilities. $1,900/mo. Contact sandra.sheppard67@gmail.com, 770-364-3692.

1BR/1BA condo for rent in East Cobb/Marietta (30062). Sunroom, enclosed patio, two-car garage and grounds maintained by HOA. Nearby shops and restaurants at The Avenue. Fully furnished and includes utilities. $1,900/mo. Contact sandra.sheppard67@gmail.com, 770-364-3692.

Furnishings and appliances for sale. Thomasville sofa, hunter green parked. 8x10: $30. LG appliances like new — ultra large top load washer, 4.7 cu. ft., white, and ultra large dryer, 7.3 cu. ft., white. $800. Furniture, 4 years old: $950. Refrigerator — large capacity 3-door French door w/ filtered water and ice maker, 5 years old: $500. Contact spence.wilkinson@comcast.net.

MISSLECELLANEOUS
Tech researchers seeking volunteer families for a usability study of a mobile Android app that gives caregivers a convenient way to track childhood developmental milestones. The goal is early detection of autism spectrum disorder and other issues. See ipat.gatech.edu/study-recruitment.

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Add run for all three issues in the order in which they are received. Submit your 35-word or less ad to editor@comm.gatech.edu.