NEWS

BRIEFS

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Tech Wins Governor’s Cup for Ninth Year Running

KRISTEN BAILEY
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

For the ninth consecutive year, Georgia Tech has been recognized for the giving spirit of its employees through the State Charitable Contributions Program.

Georgia Tech received the 2016 Governor’s Cup, awarded annually to the state institution with the highest average contribution per employee in the statewide fundraising endeavor.

Joe Hughes, 2016 campaign chair, and Leanne West, 2017 campaign chair, attended the annual awards ceremony on June 9.

“I want to express my great appreciation to everyone within the Georgia Tech community who contributed or pledged and, specifically, acknowledge each of you who worked to make this campaign a success,” said Hughes, professor in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering. “Because the Georgia Tech community cares, there are many children, adults, and families throughout Georgia who are being helped to live healthier, safer, and better lives.”

This year, 1,135 individuals contributed or pledged a total of $331,694. This is the second-highest total fundraising amount for the annual campaign.

Tech employees gave to 390 charitable organizations. Top recipients were the American Cancer Society, Atlanta Community Food Bank, Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta Foundation, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, and United Way of Greater Atlanta.

Georgia Tech has won the Governor’s Cup 14 out of the past 16 years for state agencies or universities with 1,001–9,000 employees. The annual campaign collects donations for nonprofits and charitable organizations that serve communities all over the state. All state entities, including University System of Georgia (USG) schools, participate in the annual fundraiser.

Learn more about the annual charitable campaign at charitable.gatech.edu.

President Sets Off for Annual Summer Tour

KRISTEN BAILEY
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

As the summer season officially begins today, so does President G.P. “Bud” Peterson’s annual summer tour of Georgia.

This week marks Peterson’s eighth tour as president. Each summer since his arrival at Georgia Tech, the President and First Lady Val Peterson have used the summer as an opportunity to visit communities across the state. The tour is a chance for the Petersons to meet with alumni, Regents, businesses, lawmakers, and other friends of the Institute.

“The summer tour provides us with a great opportunity to see firsthand the many ways the people and programs of Georgia Tech are making a positive impact here in Georgia,” said Peterson. “With a statewide economic impact that approaches $3 billion a year, the number of partners and friends we have continues to grow. It’s always good to be with state leaders, alumni, current and prospective students, parents, and people whose businesses have been affected in a positive manner by Georgia Tech.”

Since 2009, the summer tours have covered 5,100 miles, with the Petersons visiting friends and leaders in more than 40 cities and nearly each of Georgia’s 159 counties.

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BRAVES’ NEW WORLD

This summer is a history-making one for baseball in Atlanta. It’s the last of the hometown Braves’ two-decade run in Turner Field. By next season, the team will have moved a few miles north to Cobb County, where a flock of construction cranes is helping draw a new 41,000-seat stadium and entertainment complex out of the ground near the junction of Interstates 75 and 285. Some School of Civil and Environmental Engineering alumni have had a direct hand in the new legacy under construction on what was more than 60 acres of mostly empty land. Adam Karabenli (right) and Kyle Manweiler (top) are engineers with structural engineering firm Walter P. Moore. Adam Cobb is the project manager overseeing the ballpark’s interiors for American Builders 2017, the joint venture of the four general contractors putting the stadium together. See more images from inside the ballpark at c.gatech.edu/braves.

A Second Wave

After initially confirming the existence of gravitational waves in February, Georgia Tech researchers were involved in the confirmation of a second wave last week. c.gatech.edu/morewaves

Say That Again?

A new Georgia Tech study led by the School of Psychology’s Audrey Duarte found that older people struggle to remember important details because their brains can’t resist the irrelevant “stuff” they soak up subconsciously. As a result, they tend to be less confident in their memories. c.gatech.edu/memory

see TOUR, page 3
Social Media Claims Place in News Reporting

In the era of social media, what is news?" said Eric Gilbert, assistant professor in the School of Interactive Computing. "How we get information and how we make decisions has changed," Essa said. "This has created a beast with a much bigger head than ever before. Everyone is trying to be first to get out news or information — especially breaking news — is being shared more often through social media instead of through authoritative sources," Essa said. He noted that several U.S. Supreme Court decisions have been live blogged and/or tweeted even as the news media was waiting for the decision. "Everyone is trying to be first to get out news," Essa said. "The news organizations have realized — or have not realized — that they are not always first, and they’re struggling to be first. Reporters cannot be everywhere, but citizens are everywhere." Essa also said that part of this conversation is that anyone who takes a picture and reports it is a citizen journalist. In essence, they are eyewitnesses with more direct access to a larger viewership. He refers to them as eyewitnesses because they are recording or photographing events as they see them, without contextualizing the events. They are not adding a layer of what’s relevant to it. "I believe they are serving a much bigger need by giving us eyes where there are none," Essa said. "This has created a beast with a billion eyes. We can see things everywhere."

Significant Changes in Journalism

"News was being aware of the environment around me," Essa said. "What remains is my interest in knowing what’s happening around me." He said there is a general belief that the younger generation follows social media more than traditional media, and they don’t want to know what is happening in the world. "From the little evidence I have, that is not entirely true," Essa noted. "They are just using different sources to get the information they’re interested in. With the election happening, if you go to the younger generation, their awareness is pretty good." He said that as the father of two teen boys, he’s always impressed by the younger generation’s interest in the news. "The younger generation follows social media more than traditional media, and they don’t want to know what is happening in the world. From the little evidence I have, that is not entirely true," Essa said. "They are just using different sources to get the information they’re interested in. With the election happening, if you go to the younger generation, their awareness is pretty good." He said that as the father of two teen boys, he’s always impressed by the younger generation’s interest in the news.

Buzzin’ Back to School Supply Drive Underway

Myra Ovatt
Human Resources

Georgia Tech Human Resources has acquired 456 backpacks to distribute through its Buzzin’ Back to School Drive, and now needs help filling them with supplies.

The annual school supply drive benefits Georgia Tech employees who may lack the financial resources to purchase school supplies for their children in grades K-12. Following are the supplies kids typically need for school that will be used to fill backpacks in the coming weeks:

- College-ruled or wide-ruled paper
- College-ruled or wide-ruled notebooks
- No. 2 pencils
- Black or blue pens
- Erasers
- Glue sticks
- Rulers
- Pocket folders
- Crayons
- Markers
- Three-ring binders
- Index cards
- Composition notebooks
- Pencil sharpeners

Donations can be taken to unit human resources representatives or to the Human Resources office at 500 Tech Parkway.

The deadline for donations and to apply to receive a backpack is Monday, July 18. Backpack recipients will be drawn at random, and backpacks will be distributed beginning July 26. For more information on applying for a backpack or donating, visit ohr.gatech.edu/buzzinbacktoschool
Relentless Advocacy in Government and Community Relations

KRISTEN BAILEY
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

Each June, the Office of Government and Community Relations works with the Alumni Association and the Office of Development to organize the President’s annual summer tour. That’s just one week out of the year, though.

This team of people works year-round to help Georgia Tech connect with surrounding government, community, and business partners.

The Staff Council’s recent Inform Georgia Tech event, Dene Sheheane, vice president of Government and Community Relations, shared some insight on the department’s goals and how it operates.

“Our motto is, ‘gentle pressure relentlessly applied,’” Sheheane said.

The office consists of three teams focused on community, federal, and state relations.

Community relations primarily focuses on connections with surrounding neighborhoods and entities, including Atlanta Public Schools, the City of Atlanta, and the Westside Communities Alliance.

The federal team consists of two full-time staff members, one in Atlanta and one in Washington, D.C., who work with government leaders and agencies on a national level. Georgia Tech receives $408 million in federal funding for research — among the top of its peer institutions that do not have a medical school. This means maintaining relationships with federal agencies is crucial to the research enterprise.

For many people, though, the most visible area of Government and Community Relations’ work may be at the state level. As the University System of Georgia (USG) institution with the largest economic impact, Georgia Tech has numerous partners statewide but a smaller number of alumni engaged directly in politics. Of the 236 state congressional representatives, 10 are Tech graduates. (In U.S. Congress, it’s just three of 333.)

Locally, the numbers fair slightly better, where 2 out of 15 Atlanta City Council members are Tech alumni (and one, Andre Dickens, is a Tech employee).

Government and Community Relations is careful to serve in a bipartisan role, making friends and allies on both sides of the aisle under Atlanta’s Gold Dome. It connects both College Democrats and College Republicans with guest speakers and local representatives to educate and advocate for student issues.

The office also manages internship programs both in Atlanta and Washington, D.C., placing Tech students in various roles at the intersection of policy and technology at both capitol.

“We have people request Tech students because they know they make great interns,” Sheheane said.

Sheheane then discussed the 2016 legislative session in particular and the challenges it brought.

“This was my 26th session, and I’ve never had anything quite like it,” he said.

Though Georgia Tech voluntarily withdrew its request for funding for the Library Renewal project until completion of abatement of the facility, Sheheane said the project is well positioned to receive that funding next year.

Successes this year included funding for an expansion of the Advanced Technology Development Center. Georgia Tech’s startup incubator serving the state of Georgia; legislation to provide a HOPE GPA boost for students taking STEM courses; full formula funding and full major repair and renovation funding; and funding for salary merit increases.

Meanwhile, the team is already looking to next year to prepare for continued conversations about ongoing issues such as tuition rates and campus carry legislation.

“Several states now have campus carry in some form, and USG schools are doing safety reports now in response to the legislation that was put forward this session,” Sheheane said. Georgia Governor Nathan Deal ultimately vetoed the bill that had passed both chambers but was opposed by several USG police chiefs and presidents, including Georgia Tech’s.

Sheheane reminded attendees of the USG’s political policy, which encourages employees to engage in citizen obligations and normal political processes, including holding local office, so long as the position does not conflict or interfere with their professional duties and responsibilities. Employees may not hold state or federal office, though. (The full policy can be viewed at c.gatech.edu/usg-personnel.)

The Staff Council will host its next Inform Georgia Tech session in August, with a focus on campus services, health, well-being, and parking. A session later in the fall will focus on campus planning.

Learn more and see archived presentations at staffcouncil.gatech.edu.
Finding Fulfillment in Safety and Adventure

Biosafety Officer Partners with Researchers to Keep Labs Safe

KRISTEN BAILEY
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

For someone who initially set out to be a full-time researcher, overseeing biosafety for a large research enterprise is a natural fit.

Meagan Fitzpatrick, biosafety officer in Environmental Health and Safety, studied biology and chemistry as an undergraduate at Loyola University. Once she started doing research, though, she realized the lab was not where she wanted to be.

“I like working with people and wasn’t getting to do that,” she said. Now, she’s able to support academic research in a different way.

“I still get to read science and talk about it a lot, but on a broader, macro level.”

The Biosafety Office within Georgia Tech’s Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) unit oversees training, resources, and protocols for biohazards for research labs across campus. Their job is to ensure the safety of both those in the labs and those on the rest of the campus.

“We’re not just here to dictate rules, but to coach,” she said. “We strive to develop a partnership with the researcher community. We see them as our clients.”

When dealing with biosafety, no two days are alike. One challenge on the job can be trying to plan long-term when you never know what the day will bring.

“We’ve had incidents where researchers will have an exposure to a biological material due to a percutaneous injury involving a sharp object, like a needle, piece of broken glass, or a razor blade,” Fitzpatrick said. “We teach them to wash the exposed area for 15 minutes with soap and warm water at the sink and then to call the Georgia Tech Police Department, who dispatch to the EHS emergency phone so we can assist with next steps. After the incident, we work to ensure that the individual receives any required medical care.”

After an incident, EHS debriefs those involved in an incident to determine the cause and what can be done to prevent a similar incident and improve future response.

“The number one thing we want to do is prevent the incident from happening again,” she said. “All exposures and injuries can be prevented and that’s what we seek to do.”

Fitzpatrick held a similar position at Emory University for six years before coming to Tech in 2014. While there, she received a Master of Public Health in Environmental Health from the university’s Rollins School. Her master’s capstone project on standard operating procedures and risk assessment for a patient isolation unit used to transport highly infectious patients within the Department of Defense to Emory University allowed her to work with Emory’s physicians as they prepared to receive and treat patients with infected with highly infectious diseases, like those infected with Ebola in 2014. Fitzpatrick also trained doctors at Samps Health Services on Ebola protocols when she came to Tech.

Beyond campus, Fitzpatrick is involved in the larger biosafety community through the Campus Safety Health and Environmental Management Association, as a member of its board of trustees. She’s also a member of the American Biological Safety Association.

“You learn a lot from working on different things and with people you don’t normally interact with,” she said. “Sometimes a new problem can feel like this huge elephant, but there’s probably someone out there who has already dealt with it and can help you work through it.”

Originally from Maryland, Fitzpatrick and her husband have made a home in Atlanta over the past eight years. They’ll soon be growing their family, as their first child is due in September.

“A variety of sustainability projects is underway in the Facilities and the Office of Undergraduate Education.”

“Georgia Tech is such a warm and welcoming place … if you show an interest, there are going to be opportunities for you.”

— Meagan Fitzpatrick

(Misclassified)

AUTOMOBILES


2002 Toyota Avalon XL. Gray with gray interior, 165K miles. Second owner, excellent condition, well-maintained, maintenance records available for review. $4,395 OBO. Contact Densel at dennisaline@comcast.net.


REAL ESTATE

For rent: 2BR/2.5BA house in East Cobb/Marietta. Johnson Ferry and Peet Oak Trill Road. Fully furnished, sun room, enclosed patio, garage, pool. Lawn service provided. $1,800/mo. Includes Direct TV and Netflix. Contact Sandra Sheepard, 770-364-3692.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Georgia Tech Research Institute’s Human Systems Engineering lab is looking for males ages 18-49 for a one-time study. Study involves the use of tools that require a level of activity equal to yard work. Study will take approximately one hour. Participants will be compensated $30. Contact 404-407-7948 or amandafoster@gti.gatech.edu.

For sale: Shafer/Mission Style Stonehouse Desk. Dark wood finish, 5’ x 2.5’, pull-out tray under desk for keyboard or supplies, good condition. $250 firm. Text 404-790-9831 for photos.

For sale: Valid, unused GRTA XPRESS Blue 31 Day Pass for Blue Routes. Normally $125 ($15 through Georgia Tech payroll deduction), will sell for $75. Text 912-531-4793 or email pbrown49@gatech.edu.

For sale: Exercise elliptical trainer. Fully assembled. $125 or best offer. Call 678-481-8170.

For rent: 3-piece full size bedroom set (bed, side table, 5-drawer dresser), cream-colored painted wood. Excellent condition, $600. Antique oak 5-drawer dresser and mirror. $300. Upholstered chair, $100. Maple armchair with red and green staine highlights. $150. Text 770-576-0704 for photos.

For sale: Schwein Mountain bike. 2003 model in excellent condition, only ridden a few times. Needs a tune up and new tires. Can provide pictures upon request. Asking $200. Interested, email rponger@gatech.edu for additional information.

Free yellow jacket nest removal. Needs to be used before research in the School of Biology. Call 404-385-6311 or e-mail michael.goodisman@biology.gatech.edu.

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