Shaping Leaders Through the Great Outdoors: Meet David Knobbe

VICTOR ROGERS
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

David Knobbe says he “loves to watch things grow.” He’s referring to gardening, but the statement could just as easily be applied to his professional life. Knobbe is the assistant director of Outdoor Recreation at the Campus Recreation Complex. A native of St. Louis, Missouri, Knobbe earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of Missouri. After college, he worked for 16 years with an outdoor program that focused on teen leadership. In 2003, he came to Atlanta to work with a leadership initiative for teenagers that was sponsored by The Coca-Cola Company. In 2010, he came to Tech, where he coordinates outdoor recreation with the help of two professionals and about 30 student employees — not to mention a community of more than 200 student volunteers.

“They’re an essential resource that allows us to deliver the quantity and quality of programming that we provide,” Knobbe said. “They really make the magic work when it comes to leading trips and expeditions all over the Southeast and, frankly, all over the world.”

During the summer, Knobbe, his staff, and Outdoor Recreation Georgia Tech (ORGT) volunteers are busy coordinating Tech Treks, outdoor orientation trips that are an optional way for incoming first-year students to kick off their time at Georgia Tech. This summer, there are eight Tech Trek expeditions to Montana, Alaska, Corsica, and Canada, with approximately 30 student volunteers serving about 85 students.

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Atdc Companies Exceed $56M in Investment Capital

Startups in the Advanced Technology Development Center’s (ATDC) current portfolio raised $56 million in investment capital in the first half of 2018. That’s more than three times the amount recorded at mid-year in 2016.

ATDC.org

Second Cohort Completes Inclusive Leaders Academy

With the conclusion of the second cohort, which numbered 78 staff and faculty members, more than 250 members of the community have now completed the program. Nominations for the next cohort will begin this fall.

Diversity.gatech.edu

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BOTTLES BREED JURASSIC CREATION

The Recyclosaurus recently on display on the first floor of Clough Commons was a wonder of recycled materials. The piece was made of recycled plastic bottles by Turkish artist Baris Karayazgan, who created it as part of an art therapy project with the Art Reach Foundation and the Clarkston Community Center. Georgia Tech’s Office of Solid Waste Management and Recycling donated around 1,000 of the 10,000 bottles needed for the project. More than 305 children enrolled in summer camp with the Clarkston Community Center participated in the creation of the Recyclosaurus over the course of two weeks. The Recyclosaurus was on display at Clough Commons for two weeks in July.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Aug. 25
DramaTech Theatre hosts A Night of Terrifying Tales from 7 to 10 p.m. at its black box theater on the back side of Ferst Center for the Arts. dramatech.org

Through Sept. 7
The Robert C. Williams Museum of Papermaking hosts the exhibit Golden Legacy: Original Art from 75 Years of Golden Books. Museum hours are Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

July 25; Aug. 2, 8, 15
The Biltmore hosts Namaste Wednesday, with a free yoga class from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the Biltmore Courtyard (rain location: Biltmore Ballroom).

Aug. 22
Human Resources hosts a Be Well session on Planning for Your Georgia Tech Retirement from noon to 1 p.m. in Room 320, Scheller College of Business.

WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING

July 25
Human Resources hosts a Be Well sessions on Saving for the Holidays from noon to 1 p.m. in Room 202, Scheller College of Business.

MISCELLANEOUS

July 23-24
FASET Orientation will take place for incoming fall first-year students. Additional FASET dates include:
• July 26-27
• August 12-13
• August 14-15

For more information and registration, visit diversity.gatech.edu/diversitysymposium.
students. In addition, Outdoor Recreation runs six three-day Tech Trek sessions in the Southeast, serving another 80 incoming students.

“The outcomes of those experiences are long-lasting friendships, an understanding of what people do well and the strengths that set them apart, and a foundation for building a strategy for being more successful when they encounter the challenges of being a Tech student,” Knobbe said. “What is amazing about the trips is how powerful they can be in building awareness and shaping students’ career direction.”

Knobbe said that he and the ORGT volunteers often stress that a degree from Georgia Tech will get a graduate a very prestigious interview, but the degree alone won’t actually secure the job.

“It’s really the experiences that you build doing things other than coursework that seal the deal and get you hired,” he said. “We see students — who sometimes volunteer between 5,000 to 7,000 hours over four to five years at Tech — building leadership, communication, and coaching skills.”

Knobbe enjoys seeing students grow and find their way. It’s his favorite part of the job.

“What I like most is the impact that we have on the trajectory of students,” he said. “We have individuals who encounter us as shy, uncertain, unsure students. By the time they graduate, they are the sort of individuals who are impressive at every level. They understand their power to affect the trajectory of other students. They see their involvement with ORGT not as a way to ‘get outside,’ but as a way to serve the Georgia Tech community.”

While most Outdoor Recreation programs are targeted to students, there are opportunities for Tech employees to engage. Last year, ORGT operated 162 one- and two-day adventure programs and 16 expeditions of approximately 10-12 days each. Faculty and staff are welcome to sign up for weekend programs but not the expeditions. For those seeking to structure their own outdoor adventure, Outdoor Recreation can help support that by offering boat, tent, and even backpack rentals.

In the past eight years, ORGT has led 95 expeditions to six continents. In December, ORGT will set foot on Antarctica, conquering the seventh continent. A small group of five students and one guide will meet in Chile, skirt the edge of Antarctica, fly back to Chile, do a sea-kayaking expedition on the sub-Antarctic coast of Chile, and do some trekking across glaciers.

Away from the Office

When asked what he does for fun, Knobbe quickly replied, “I have three teenagers, and I enjoy hanging out with them.” He is married, and their three children are 17-year old twins (a girl and a boy), and a 15-year-old son.

An avid gardener, he prefers to be outside whenever possible. He points to a couple of jars of homemade pickles sitting on his desk.

“I grow cucumbers, squash, green beans, tomatoes, carrots, radishes, eggplant, okra, and collards,” he said.

Knobbe is trying his hand at writing, too. He’s writing a book about his experience hiking the Appalachian Trail 30 years ago. The hike took 160 days.

“I was in graduate school. It came time to work on a thesis project, and I just didn’t feel like it,” he said. “So, I hiked the Appalachian Trail.”

His book is titled 10,000 Better Days because approximately 10,000 days have passed since the hike. The book is based on the idea that the premise of any life-sized adventure done right is that every day thereafter will be just a little better than it might have been otherwise.

“I use this as the opportunity to tell the story and share a little bit of insight,” he said. “I walked away with the idea that the simplicity and focus of that experience really is one of those things that drives success afterward. I can tie every good thing in my life back to that experience.”

Knobbe enjoys gardening and pickling vegetables during his personal time.

(Above) Knobbe manages gear rental for Georgia Tech’s Outdoor Recreation programs, which are open to faculty and staff. (Below) Knobbe enjoys gardening and pickling vegetables during his personal time.

**HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATES**

**Off-Cycle Checks**

The Georgia Tech payroll policy regarding off-cycle checks has been updated to align with the University System of Georgia.

Beginning Aug. 1, off-cycle checks will no longer be allowed for special payments, extra compensation, or incentive compensation payments. Moving forward, these payments will be processed with the first on-cycle payroll processing date after supporting documentation for such payments has been received.

In addition, off-cycle checks will not be processed for late timesheets unless a financial hardship case is made. Employees and managers should ensure that timesheets are submitted and approved in a timely manner.

To learn more, visit ohr.gatech.edu/managers.

**GradHiring**

More than 500 graduate students will start jobs at Georgia Tech this fall, an onboarding that would normally exceed HR’s capacity. To meet the demand, GTHR brings the hiring process directly to the new employees by hosting a two-day onboarding event called GradHiring.

GradHiring will take place Aug. 15–16 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the third floor of the Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons. Graduate students and managers should expect direct emails with more information. To learn more, visit ohr.gatech.edu/gradhiring-2018.

**STREETS**, from page 1

between the Kendeda Building for Innovative Sustainable Design and the Dabney project site will be closed to all pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic.

**State Street**

State Street is expected to reopen to all vehicular and bicycle traffic on Aug. 1. The sidewalk along the west side of the street adjacent to the Kendeda Building for Innovative Sustainable Design will remain closed. The sidewalk along the east side of State Street adjacent to the Nanotechnology Building will remain open.

**Ferst Drive**

The sidewalk along the north side of Ferst Drive adjacent to The Kendeda Building for Innovative Sustainable Design will remain closed.

Farther to the east on Ferst Drive, the Georgia Tech Athletic Association is planning to re-sod Russ Chandler stadium beginning the week of July 18 and lasting until September. While no road closures are anticipated, increased construction traffic is expected on Hemphill Avenue, Ferst Drive, and Fifth Street. A flag person will be on-site supporting traffic flow during heavy congestion times.

For a map and details of the planned changes to street access, including parking areas, visit news.gatech.edu.
French Appointed to Second Term as Dean of Design

CHRISTI CAMPBELL
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

Effective July 1, Steven P. French, dean and John Portman Chair of the College of Design, has been reappointed for a second five-year term. As required by the Georgia Tech Faculty Handbook, a performance review of academic deans occurs at the fifth year of service. In December 2017, Provost Rafael L. Bras appointed a committee to evaluate the progress of the programs under the leadership of Dean French, as well as to review his professional contributions and performance as leader and administrator for the College of Design.

“The committee commended Dean French’s commitment to advocating and honing the ongoing vision for the College of Design, as well as his leadership and investment in increasing enrollment and program offerings within the College, said Bras. “Based on their review, I have offered Dean French reappointment for another term and am glad he has accepted.”

Reviewers praised French for strengthening the College of Design, as well as improving cross-College communication and collaboration. Their report also noted that Dean French’s new and ongoing projects, including the Masters of Real Estate program, have solidly “connected [him] with the alumni, the faculty, the students, and the Atlanta community.” Enrollment growth in the past five years, as well as new degree offerings in the College, helped improve the College culture and helped it move forward overall into a newly refined and robust part of the Institute.

French’s new appointment extends through June 2023.

THE POSTAL DISTRIBUTION CENTER

Email is immediate, but many people still enjoy receiving cards, magazines, and packages via good old snail mail.

Proof can be found at Georgia Tech’s Postal Distribution Center, located at 711 Marietta Street. Depending on the time of year, employees process between 28,000 and 35,000 pieces of metered mail per month. Mail is distributed all over campus, including 10,480 mailboxes at the Student Center Post Office. Take a look inside at c.gatech.edu/postal.

(Hidden Georgia Tech is a photo essay series highlighting places on campus that may largely go unnoticed but are sometimes hidden in plain sight. If you know of a place worth exploring, email editor@comm.gatech.edu. View more from the series at c.gatech.edu/hidden)