**Whistle While You Work**

How Employees and Students Coexist with the Steam Whistle

VICTOR ROGERS
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

Georgia Tech’s steam whistle cannot be ignored — especially by those in close proximity when it sounds to signal classes changing. So, for those who work or study near the whistle, how does the piercing sound affect their day?

“In theory, I should be very accustomed to it, nevertheless, when I am in a meeting it interrupts,” said Steven Girardot, associate vice provost for Undergraduate Education, whose office in the A. French Building overlooks the whistle. “It’s difficult to continue the conversation [as the whistle blows]. I have to pause, and let it go.”

Girardot said that he is cognizant of when the whistle is about to blow, especially if he is on the phone or participating in a webinar. If he times it correctly, he will either mute his phone or mute the webinar so that others don’t have to hear it.

But, if Girardot doesn’t mute the phone and the whistle blows, someone usually asks about it.

“The most common question I get from people outside of Georgia Tech who aren’t familiar with the whistle is, ‘Are you standing in a train station?’ So, I have to explain what the whistle is,” he said.

The whistle, located atop the Holland Plant, came into use around 1896 as a way to call students to their shop classes. It retains that purpose today.

“It can serve as a great reminder that I have class, because sometimes I lose track of time,” said Janni Adlsson, a fourth-year electrical engineering major. She often studies in the OMED study room in the Chapin Building, located next to the whistle.

Salbu speaks at a campus event held in April focused on organizational effectiveness.

**ETHICS AWARENESS WEEK: CULTIVATING CHARACTER**

“Doing the right thing, whether or not it is mandated”

Salbu Talks Workplace Ethics and Coming Back from Crisis

VICTOR ROGERS
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

Total compliance with the law does not guarantee that an organization or individual is also behaving ethically. There is a gap.

Steve Salbu discusses this gap and other dilemmas during his ethics classes. Salbu is the Cecil B. Day Chair in Business Ethics at the Scheller College of Business, where he leads the Cecil B. Day Program in Business Ethics.

“The goal of the program is to develop the highest ethical standards in our community, both through the curriculum and through various kinds of extracurricular offerings,” said Salbu.

A professor of law and ethics, Salbu joined the Scheller College of Business in July 2006 as dean and Stephen P. Zelnak Jr. Chair. After eight years as dean, in 2014 he elected to return to his research and focus on leading the Cecil B. Day Program in Business Ethics.

In light of the upcoming Ethics Awareness Week (Nov. 12–16), we asked Salbu to answer a few questions regarding ethics and the challenges facing organizations and individuals.

Let’s start with a broad question. How do you define ethics?

There are as many definitions as there are philosophers, but I like to keep it simple: evaluating our behavior as morally right or wrong.
ETHICS, from page 1

Can ethical behavior be learned? Don’t we innately know if an action is ethical or unethical?

I teach a 3-credit undergraduate class in ethics, and I’m often asked, “Can you teach ethics?” Or I’m asked, “Isn’t university too late? Aren’t ethics formed during childhood?”

There are many ways ethics can be taught, both to children and to adults. Ethics faculty make the intellectual case for living a good, ethical, virtuous life. We also teach what the philosophers over the ages have taught us about living an ethical life. Moreover, my students’ knowledge comes from class discussions, it’s often very difficult to assess the ethical implications of the complex situations we all face. Just as our students get better at making ethical decisions, so too they gain from such exercises around difficult ethical challenges.

What is the difference between ethics and compliance? How does this difference get individuals and organizations in trouble?

Compliance refers to laws and regulation. If we follow those, we are in legal compliance. Legal compliance obviously is very important, and it has become a big industry employing lawyers, and consultants. Ethics is the right direction, whether or not it is mandated. Because law and regulation don’t cover all ethical challenges we face in life, there is a gap. This means that we can’t view total compliance as a guarantee that we are also behaving ethically. Or that our behavior will be acceptable within the organizations where we work. For these reasons, organizations and individuals need to consider more than just technical compliance. We also must consider whether what we do is ethical.

Are there specific behaviors or situations that tend to lead to problems for organizations and individuals?

There are many dynamics that can lead to problems more than people would ever imagine. One is highlighted in the rich literature from social psychology that identifies many ways in which people with good intentions go in a bad direction because of cognitive limitations, irrationality, or biases. We cover these in my class, and my students tell me they recognize many of them in their own decision-making. By being aware of our cognitive limitations and biases, we can work to surmount them.

On the organizational level, when I consult with business executives, I recommend they explore basic questions that affect ethical organizational climate: To what extent are leaders and managers motivating [their direct reports] by fear rather than by inspiration? Cultures of fear breed bad behavior. Has the organization clearly communicated how people can distinguish taking an ethical stance and refusing to follow unethical instructions versus insubordination for which they risk being written up, disciplined, or fired? Does the organization provide clear guidance for how employees should handle such situations when they have ethical concerns with what they are being told to do? Is the ethics hotline outsourced to help assure callers of anonymity and protection? If so, do people actually know that it’s outsourced? If they don’t know the hotline is outsourced, many won’t even consider using it.

When faced with an ethical dilemma, what are the steps for getting on the right track?

First, get as much information as possible within the time frame for action. People have agendas, and can be biased or misinformed when raising concerns. So to understand a situation well, we need to get as much information as we reasonably can from all sources. Second, to the extent possible, when we have the information, we should solicit counsel from appropriate trusted advisors. These people are with whom we can ethically share the issues, and whom we trust. They often also are people with specialized expertise in the relevant area, such as accounting, human resources, or law.

How can the leader of a large organization with dozens of departments and thousands of employees know what is going on at all levels?

The horrible truth is, in big companies or universities, leaders will never have all the information they want or need. That’s simply a function of size and complexity. Moreover and ironically, the higher you rise in the organization the harder it is to learn about bad or concerning situations as they develop. Most people tend to smile at the bosses and want to appear positive and optimistic. They know that messengers bringing bad news are risk being shot by some people above them in the organization.

For these reasons, my advice to leaders and managers who want to know about possible ethical timebombs is threefold. You have to lead by inspiration rather than threats and fear. You should cultivate numerous trusted sources of information — key colleagues, and you should create regular opportunities for open dialogues among important stakeholder groups in the community, during which all concerns are received and discussed with respect — and absolutely never with defensiveness.

What advice do you have for an organization that is working through an ethical crisis?

Ethical crises are also organizational morale crises. They lower morale, they create new problems, tasks, and requirements for people who are already trying very hard to do the right thing in their organization. This is unavoidable, as ethical lapses highlight important ways that effective leaders can and should strive to keep improving, however, invariably, some of the improvements entail new work, new requirements, heightened vigilance, and increased controls.

As organizations naturally focus on all of these during crises, they must remember a challenge that’s equally important: maintaining the good spirits and rewarding work environments for the majority of people who have always worked hard to do the right thing. During a crisis, morale is naturally at a low, and people in the organization need regular communication, assurances, information, and answers to questions they have about how the crisis events affect their work and their daily environment.
ETHICS AWARENESS WEEK: CULTIVATING CHARACTER

University System Updates Conflicts of Interest Policy

RACHEL POCCLINTON
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

To help maintain an ethical culture and preserve the public trust, the University System of Georgia (USG) recently made several revisions to the Conflicts of Interest and Conflicts of Commitment policy to provide additional detail and guidance to all employees in the USG system.

“When Georgia Tech encourages participation in approved outside activities, they must be appropriately disclosed and managed, as requested by the employee,” said Aasha Oliver-Staley, interim vice president for Ethics, Compliance, and Legal Affairs. “Understandably, it can be difficult to determine whether your activity should be disclosed and approved — the appropriate action isn’t always that obvious. This is why we recommend that you always ask the question and seek guidance up front, before participating in the activity.”

Key updates include the following:

- The USG Chancellor must approve any outside activities for all 26 USG presidents and USG office employees. Each president, or appropriate designee, is responsible for approving outside activities for their institution’s respective employees. If these employees are direct reports of the president or have the rank of vice president or higher, the institution’s president must forward the proposed outside activity approvals to the USG for review prior to giving final approval.
- USG employees who accrue annual leave, including 12-month faculty with administrative duties, must take annual leave (commonly known as vacation time) for compensated outside activities including consulting. Oliver-Staley said there are several things to remember when engaging in outside activities. First, there is a difference between “consulting” and “professional services.” Consulting is participating in outside activities that relate to the employee’s area of expertise or responsibility as an Institute employee where a fee-for-service or equivalent relationship with a third party exists. Professional services consist of activities that are normally expected of faculty members and other professional staff members, such as participating in scholarly publication, peer review processes, or other activities performed on behalf of the Institute.
- Second, only faculty who do not accrue annual leave may report consulting time for the time spent consulting. This has been redefined in Georgia Tech’s Employment Policy 5.4. Full-time faculty with administrative duties and full-time staff are not permitted to report consulting time.
- These employees are required to take annual leave when participating in approved outside activities.
- Furthermore, outside activities for all employees, including faculty, must be disclosed and approved prior to participation in the activity. In general, participation in professional services does not need to be disclosed as a potential conflict of interest. Consulting activities, however, must be reported and approved prior to engaging in the activity. While all employees are required to review and confirm their conflict of interest file during the annual Integrity and Compliance Campaign, employees are also responsible for submitting and updating any activities as soon as the opportunity for the outside activity arises at any point in the calendar year. To disclose an activity, visit the Georgia Tech Conflict of Interest and External Activities Reporting Portal.
- Assistance regarding how to disclose and manage outside activity is available at COI@gatech.edu. Questions about conflicts of interest in business transactions can be sent to businesscoi@gatech.edu.

The complete policy can be found on the USG website at usg.edu/policymanual.

COI Resources
- Board of Regents Policy Manual, Personnel Conduct 8.2.18: c.gatech.edu/USG-personnel
- Georgia Tech Employment Policy, Conflict of Interest: c.gatech.edu/GT-COI
- Georgia Tech Conflict of Interest and External Activities Reporting Portal: c.gatech.edu/COI-reporting
- FAQs about Faculty Consulting Practices (pdf): c.gatech.edu/fac-consulting
- FAQs about Compliance Reporting Hotline: c.gatech.edu/USG-personnel
- FAQs about Personnel Conduct 8.2.18: c.gatech.edu/USG-personnel

**QUIZ YOURSELF**

How familiar are you with the ethics policies that apply to you as a USG employee? Take the quiz below to find out — answers are on page 4.

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1. The USG Ethics Policy applies to:
   A. Volunteers acting on behalf of the USG
   B. Vendors who provide goods or services to the USG
   C. All USG employees
   D. Members of the Board of Regents
   E. All of the above

2. Which of the following statements are true?
   A. USG employees have an affirmative duty to report wrongdoing and unethical practices in a timely manner.
   B. USG policy prohibits retaliation against those who report wrongdoing or assist with authorized investigations.
   C. It is the policy of the USG to refer all criminal acts to law enforcement for USG approval.
   D. It is preferred that employees report wrongdoing to their immediate supervisors; however, other reporting avenues are available, including the HR, Legal, and Audit Departments; wrongdoing can also be reported confidentially on the Ethics and Compliance Reporting Hotline.
   E. All of the above

3. USG employees can attend conferences, meetings, and demonstrations related to official or professional duties but must first obtain approval in writing from the chancellor or designee if an outside party is covering expenses associated with the trip.
   True
   False

4. According to the USG’s Conflict of Interest Policy, which of the following statements are true?
   A. USG employees must obtain written approval in advance from the institution president or designee prior to engaging in compensated outside activities that relate to an employee’s expertise or responsibilities as a USG employee.
   B. USG employees must avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest.
   C. USG employees must not engage in any occupation or pursuit that interferes with the regular and punctual discharge of official duties.
   D. USG employees are encouraged to participate in professional activities that serve the community and/or is a means of professional development.
   E. All of the above

5. According to the USG Ethics Policy, which of the following statements are not true?
   A. All USG employees and members of the Board of Regents must participate in on-boarding ethics training and ethics refresher training.
   B. The Ethics Policy requires USG employees to act as good stewards of resources and information.
   C. The USG Ethics Policy only applies to conduct at work.
   D. The Ethics Policy requires USG employees to disclose and avoid improper conflicts of interest.
   E. None of the above

**EVENTS**

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**Nov. 1**
An Overtuners Anonymous meeting takes place Thursdays from noon to 1 p.m. in Room 230, Stamps Health Services.

**Nov. 5**
The University System of Georgia hosts a retirement transition session for those 65 and older or within two years of retirement, from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. in the Student Center Ballroom.

**Nov. 9**
The Veterans Resource Center hosts a lunch for all students, faculty, and staff who are veterans, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Student Center Ballroom. Major General Ron Johnson will serve as guest speaker. RSVP to David Ross at dross@uga.edu.

**Nov. 10**
Georgia Tech hosts the University of Miami at Bobby Dodd Stadium. Discounted tickets are available for faculty and staff members. Purchase tickets at c.gatech.edu/gtmiami.

**Nov. 12**
The Event Coordinators’ Network Workshop is an all-day event that includes educational presentations to help new employees and provide inspiration for planning veterans. The workshop will take place from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Lowe’s Hotel.

**OPEN ENROLLMENT**

**Oct. 30**
An information session will take place at 2 p.m. in the West Village Ensemble Room.

**Nov. 1**
An information session will take place at noon in the Gordy Room, Wardlaw Center.

**Nov. 5**
An information session will take place at 1:30 p.m. in Room 300, Scheller College of Business.

**Nov. 6**
Benefits Fair will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Student Center Ballroom.

**Nov. 9**
Open Enrollment closes. hrgatech.edu

For a more comprehensive listing of events, or to add your own, visit calendar.gatech.edu.

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4 Benefits You Forgot You Had

BETHANY SCHUSTER
HUMAN RESOURCES

October and November are often dedicated to benefits education, as eligible employees prepare to select plans during Open Enrollment (which, for 2019, closes Nov. 9). From leave to discounts, Georgia Tech’s expansive network of benefits was likely part of your initial draw to work here. But perhaps you’ve forgotten some of the less common ones, or worse — never realized they existed. Many of Georgia Tech’s benefits come from the University System of Georgia (USG), which governs and administers benefits to its 26 state institutions. Here are four benefits you may not have known you had:

Educational Support Leave
Is your child presenting at their science fair? Or your 5th-grader graduating elementary school? The USG provides a paid day away from work to promote education in Georgia. Any amount of paid leave per calendar year (does not accrue or rollover).

Eligibility: Full-time, non-temporary employees regularly working 40 hours. Learn more at hr.gatech.edu/edu-leave.

Perks at Work
You probably received an email about Perks at Work during your first month, but it might have been a whiff at (all if at) what you’ve visited the site. The USG leverages its large employee pool to provide discounts on movie tickets (30 percent), the Georgia Aquarium (20 percent), and Adidas (25 percent), to name a few.

Eligibility: Active employees, family, and friends. Learn more at perksatwork.com or hr.gatech.edu/perks-and-programs.

Tuition Assistance
Effective January 2018, the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) was amended to provide a full tuition waiver. Prior to the change, it only covered about half. Join the more than 1,350 employees enrolled in TAP. Georgia Tech also offers two additional tuition assistance programs, STRAP and GTRC.

Eligibility — TAP: Employees who have been full-time, benefits-eligible for at least six months by the application deadline date. Eligibility — STRAP and GTRC: Employees who have been full-time, benefits-eligible for at least one year by the application deadline date. Learn more about the TAP change and tuition assistance at hr.gatech.edu/education-assistance.

Learn about USG Institutions at usg.edu/institutions.

Will Preparation
Georgia Tech’s Taps and Programs partner, LifeSuite Services, offers customized will preparation for free.

Eligibility: Active employees.

Go to the Perks and Programs page and enter the username and password listed. Hover over the link that says “Life” at the top of the page next to the Securian Financial logo and select “Legal Services.” Then navigate to Wills by clicking Go to Legal Resources > Legal Forms > Personal Documents > Wills, Powers of Attorney, and Estate Planning.

More resources are available at hr.gatech.edu.

Steven Girardot in his office in the A. French Building, in the direct shadow of the whistle.

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“It can also be slightly disruptive, but it is only for a short period of time,” she said. “I usually continue the conversation if the person is sitting near me. I may ask the person to repeat what they were saying if I couldn’t hear.

Adksion said she is indifferent about the whistle. And, she has learned to work around the noise. “I have grown accustomed to it so it doesn’t bother me anymore,” she said. “I hardly notice it anymore since my first year.”

The noise doesn’t bother Girardot either. But, he said the interruption can come at an unwelcome moment, especially during meetings. “At those times, I think, “why we didn’t have to stop this conversation and wait for that sound to end.”

“When meeting in his office, Girardot tries to alert guests when the whistle is about to blow,” he said, “but it does take them by surprise.”

For Colin Potts, whose office is next door to Girardot’s, the steam whistle makes him a little crazy, but it is his favorite location and tradition on campus.

“Everybody hears the whistle, but nobody sees it,” said Potts, vice provost for Undergraduate Education. “My office looks out on the whistle. It goes off every so often. Drives me nuts because I have to stop thinking for 15 seconds. But I always rush to the window and have a look if I possibly can, and so should you on a rainy or foggy day because the guts of the steam are really beautiful.”

Potts said he is aware that some think it’s “a bit goofy” having a factory whistle at an institute of higher learning.

“But, I live in Midtown,” he said, “and the whistle is like a beacon. So, it’s a good thing to hear.”

MISCELLANEOUS

Cat named Mika looking for a new home. Feline, suddenly indoor cat with all of her shots (no health problems, spayed). Her owner went off to college, and she is now often home by herself. Contact Mody, 404-983-5390.

Microwave for sale: 1.3 cu. ft. Panasonic, stainless steel. 1 year old, barely used. $85 USG. Contact John, 404-430-7650.

Keurig K-coffeewriter machine w/ reusable coffee filter. Slightly used. Great shape. $35. Pick up on Tech campus or near Midtown MARTA Station. Call Lyrne, 507-547-3189.

Men’s Dry Joy brand golf shoes, size 9M, cloth bag, good condition. Used, in good shape. $35. Pick up on Tech campus or near Midtown MARTA Station. Call Lyrne, 507-547-3189.

For Sale: Queen size mattress set; 25’ JVC TV(10”); red leather couch set; cream La-Z-Boy recliner; brown leather reclining loveseat; 3-piece solid wood wall unit; 9-piece dining room set; 1” x 1” mirror set; couch table and end table set; distressed wood finish patio cabinet w/ glass shelves; plastic patio chairs and table. Pictures available. Contact conor collins@gmail.com for details.

Give for charity: 2007 Yamaha scooter for sale. 50cc. Like new. Drives very well. Cheap on gas. Has 2,300 miles only. Clean title. Great to move around the city! Contact danieleastradar@gmail.com.

2002 Mercedes-Benz 430SL, 24,000 miles, finishes available; $4,500 OBO. Contact bgang20017@bellsouth.net, 404-487-5031.

2010 Chevy Cobalt with 62,355 miles. Excellent condition, Good tires. $6,000 OBO. Contact bdkspy@hotmail.com, 770-377-7177.

REAL ESTATE/ROOMMATES

Room available in furnished 2BR Virginia-Highland apt., 1.5 mi. from campus. $750/mo. includes utilities (gas, electric, water), cable TV / WiFi and use of laundry facilities. Contact card.cristof@allenfitch.com.

Retired professor’s 3BR/2BA hilltop home overlooking Atlanta Memorial Park in Buckhead. Close to jogging paths, playground, golf, tennis, Northwest BeltLine, and Morris Brandon Elementary, 5.5 mi. from Tech campus. Available in October. $2,100/mo. Contact vrbades@yahoo.com, 404-563-5795.

Beautiful 4SR/3BA house, 2,300 sq. ft., easy access to Emory/ CDC/Georgia Tech. Hardwood floors, open floor plan, many windows. 0.5 acres top-of-the-hill blk. Inreeve view. Sought-after Oak Grove Elementary School district. Wonderful neighborhood. Minutes to 1-85/285, shops, restaurants. Contact pixelsinocca@gmail.com, 404-964-9978.

WHISTLE

Hear what it sounds like to work near the whistle at news.gatech.edu/features