FROM DROPOUT TO SUMMA CUM LAUDE

Andrew Kell enrolled in Georgia Tech right after high school, but he blew it. A combination of poor grades, substance abuse, and apathy caused him to drop out after two years. But, he got his life together and is now graduating to Georgia Tech's Staff Tuition Reimbursement Policy Revised

Staff Tuition Reimbursement Policy Revised

Updates to an administrative policy are hoped to encourage greater participation in one of the supplemental benefits available to Georgia Tech employees.

President G.P. “Bud” Peterson recently approved amendments to Georgia Tech’s Staff Tuition Reimbursement Assistance Program (STRAP) Policy. Changes are in response to staff feedback regarding the types of continuing education programs that are eligible under the program. In particular, the amended policy notes that an employee may pursue education or training in a field not directly connected to their current position, as long as it fits into a job category at Tech.

“Georgia Tech supports educational advancement for all its employees,” said Lynn Durham, associate vice president and executive liaison to the Staff Council. “We want to thank members of the Staff Council for their advocacy in bringing this to the attention of our leadership.”

According to newly updated policy, Administrative Policy 13 5, to qualify for reimbursement, employees must have a 2.0 GPA for at least two years, complete a 40-hour training course, and have a written statement of support from their supervisor.

See STRAP, page 3

Deck the Halls, or Bah Humbug? Tips for Managing the Holidays

Ready or not, the holidays are here. Advertisers, retailers, and the Hallmark Channel proclaim it’s the most wonderful time of the year — complete with parties, engagement rings, and luxury cars adorned with giant red bows. But, what if the holidays aren’t one of your favorite things? What if you don’t like being told how you should feel?

“The push to be happy during the holidays is a microcosm of the impact that media has on us all of the time,” said Andy Smith, interim associate director for Clinical Services in the Georgia Tech Counseling Center. “We get a really concentrated dose of it during the holiday season. We are inundated with messages that it’s holiday time, and it should be great, and we should all be happy and enjoying ourselves.”

Smith said that people often enter this time of year with very high expectations that are also unrealistic.

“We start with a big setup right from the beginning, expecting that this will be the best time of the year,” he said. “Often, it doesn’t live up to that expectation. The reality is these are not happy and joyful times for everyone.”

See HOLIDAYS, page 2

Preliminary Draft Prepared from Ethical Culture Indicator Findings

In September, employees were asked to provide feedback to leadership on the state of the Institute’s ethical climate and culture. More than 50 percent of employees did so, and all will soon have a chance to learn the full findings of the assessment.

Comprehensive Administrative Review Continues

An information session this week will highlight recent activity and what is to come. The session will place Dec. 11 at 10 a.m. in Clough Commons. Learn more about recent updates at:

See NEWS BRIEFS, page 2
HOLIDAYS, from page 1

The holidays can be filled with a lot of important memories going back to childhood. It’s a time when many people remember loved ones who have died or people who are ill and are no longer able to participate in the holidays the way they used to.

“It’s perfectly normal to feel a range of emotions during this time, particularly if you have difficult memories,” Smith said. “Maybe a spouse, parent, sibling, grandparent or close friend is no longer here. We usually associate the holidays with those relationships and memories. The season can bring painful memories and suffering to the forefront.”

Smith said people should allow themselves room to accommodate those memories and feelings. He said it’s important to be strategic when approaching the holidays because, in addition to bringing up sad memories, the holidays can shake up our daily routine.

“As humans, we are creatures of habit, and our routines usually serve us well,” he said. “The holidays are a recipe for breaking those routines. We are off work for days at a time. We are going to multiple holiday parties, family gatherings, and other social events. We’re eating a lot more carbohydrates, sugar, and fat.

Because alcohol consumption often accompanies social gatherings, Smith said he reminds his clients that alcohol is a depressant and can affect a person’s mood. He also notes that sleep patterns and exercise routines are often disrupted during the holidays.

“The first step in being strategic is to acknowledge the likelihood that changes in your routine will occur during the holidays,” he said. The second step is to plan ahead. “Maintain habits that are important — diet, exercise, and sleep — as much as we can. Anticipate disruptions to those habits.”

Smith’s third suggestion is to be realistic about what we can accomplish during the holidays.

“Some people will get invited to multiple holiday gatherings. It’s OK to say no. We don’t have to go to every single thing we’re invited to,” he said. “If you go to five parties in one night, are you really fully present at any of them? As soon as you get there, you start planning your exit strategy for the next one. That’s a recipe for stress and not enjoying any of them,” he said.

On the other hand, what if you did not get invited to any parties? Or, what if your family lives in another state or country and you cannot visit them for the holidays?

“We have a lot international students on campus. Their families and primary social networks may be halfway around the world and are not with them during the holidays,” Smith said. “For others, they may be estranged from their family or, for whatever reason, they may be isolated and alone.”

Smith’s advice for anyone who is alone during the holidays is to look for other ways to connect. “For people who are affiliated with a church or religious community, the holidays can be a great time to seek connections through those venues,” he said. “It’s also a good time to volunteer or engage in service. It’s a good way to give if you don’t have a lot of financial resources.”

And no matter what situation, Smith also suggests creating a schedule for yourself including exercising, reading, or other activities to fill the days.

For those who may have existing mental health concerns, such as depression or anxiety, Smith says the holidays can be a good time to reach out to your therapist or seek professional support because this time can be especially stressful.

For the Georgia Tech community, the Counseling Center is available to students, and employees can access up to eight free counseling sessions through the Employee Assistance Program. For more information on either resource, visit counseling.gatech.edu or hwb.gatech.edu/eap.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Through Jan. 12, 2019

Set in a postindustrial Rust Belt city in the 1990s, The End of TV explores the quest to find meaning amid a constant barrage of commercial images. The presentation features cinematic shadow puppetry and live video, with music performed live by a five-piece band. It will take place from 8 to 10 p.m. at the Ferst Center for the Arts.

arts.gatech.edu

Through Jan. 31, 2019

The Office of the Arts hosts the Faculty/Staff Art Exhibit at the Ferst Center for the Arts.

arts.gatech.edu

SEMINARS AND LECTURES

Jan. 9, 2019

Georgia Tech hosts Hot Cities 2050 to discuss climate challenges and ways of addressing them, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Technology Square Research Building Auditorium.

c.gatech.edu/hotcities

Jan. 8, 2019

Georgia Tech hosts Hot Cities 2050 to discuss climate challenges and ways of addressing them, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Technology Square Research Building Auditorium.

c.gatech.edu/hotcities

WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING

Jan. 9, 2019

Teaching assistant orientation takes place from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Peachtree Room, Student Center.

cit.gatech.edu

Jan. 17, 2019

A free bike/scooter safety class will take place from 11 a.m. to noon in Room 240, Campus Recreation Center.

guts.gatech.edu

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Dec. 12

The Resilience Employee Resource Group hosts a session on Building Resilience through the Holiday Season, from noon to 1 p.m. in Room 319, Student Center.

edw.gatech.edu

Changing the World, Together

Georgia Tech will again host an ambitious slate of events to commemorate the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr. in January. For complete event descriptions and to RSVP for events, visit diversity.gatech.edu/mlk-celebration-events.

King Holiday Observance Kickoff and Reception
Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019
10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Center and Aquatic Center

Civil Rights Journey to Alabama
Jan. 11-13, 2019
Selma, Montgomery, and Tuskegee, Alabama

Students with King: Celebrate Differences
Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2019
9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Location: TBD

Campuswide Student Celebration: Bending the Arc Towards Justice
Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2019
7 p.m.
Student Center Ballroom

“The Moral Education of Albert Einstein”

Distinguished Lecture:

Einstein on Politics
featuring Dr. Robert Schulman
Wednesday, Jan. 16
3 p.m.
Student Center Ballroom

FOCUS Program
Jan. 17-19, 2019
Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center

“Salute to Greatness”

Awards Gala
Saturday, Jan. 19, 2019
6 to 10 p.m.
Hyatt Regency Atlanta

MLK Day of Service
Monday, Jan. 21, 2019
8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Student Center Ballroom
RSVP: engage.gatech.edu

National MLK Holiday Observance – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Annual Commemorative Service
Monday, Jan. 21, 2019
10 a.m.
Emerson Baptist Church
RSVP: engage.gatech.edu

MLK Lecture: featuring Mae Jemison
Tuesday, Jan. 22, 2019
7 p.m.
Ferst Center for the Arts

MLK “Sunday” Supper:
A Community Meal and Conversation
Thursday, Jan. 24, 2019
6 to 8 p.m.
Bill More Student Success Center

Komansé Dance Theater:
Skil
Jan. 25-26, 2019
8 p.m.
Ferst Center for the Arts

Forces Behind Movements
Tuesday, Jan. 29, 2019
6:30 p.m.
Bill More Student Success Center, President Suite A and Hall of Success

Break Free from Poverty
5K Walk/Run
Saturday, Feb. 9, 2019
8 a.m.
Student Center
In Memoriam

Michael “Mike” Thomas, 1937 – 2018

Professor Emeritus Michael “Mike” Thomas died Nov. 23. Thomas had a profound influence on Georgia Tech during his more than 24-year tenure with the Institute. He served in various leadership roles that included chair of the H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering (ISyE) and provost and vice president of Academic Affairs.

Thomas’ academic career began at the University of Florida in 1963. He initially became chair of the industrial engineering department at the University of Florida and shifted his focus toward administration. He came to Georgia Tech in 1978 to serve as chair of the Stewart School.

“Mike was a true scholar,” ISyE was certainly worthy of being labeled a strong program, especially at the undergraduate level,” said R. Gary Parker, professor emeritus and former graduate chair. “However, in terms of graduate education, particularly at the doctoral level — though solid — there was room for improvement. Additionally, Georgia Tech, as an institution, was poised to make a move, because its administration — under President Joseph Pettit’s authority — was also looking to move up to a higher tier.”

Thomas helped achieve that goal with his faculty recruiting skills that ultimately elevated industrial engineering to a top-ranked program. According to his many friends and former colleagues, Thomas’ greatest strength was his unique ability to identify and attract the right academic talent at various stages in their careers.

“The most amazing thing about Mike was his ability to spot great talent,” said George Nemhauser, A. Russell Chandler III Chair and Institute Professor in the Stewart School. “He was able to expose and achieve excellence by identifying and hiring faculty, both young and senior, who were among the best in the field. He changed ISyE at the graduate/research level from pedestrian, to among the top, to the very top.”

Industrial engineering at Georgia Tech has been the top graduate program of its kind for 28 years. The undergraduate program followed and became No. 1 shortly thereafter and has retained its place for 24 consecutive years.

“Mike Thomas made a significant impact on ISyE; Georgia Tech, and the fields of operations research and industrial engineering,” said Edwin Romeijn, H. Milton and Carolyn J. Stewart School Chair and Professor. “He leaves behind a legacy of excellence.”

Thomas left ISyE in 1989 to join the President’s Office as acting executive vice president, responsible for overseeing Georgia Tech’s academic restructuring, which resulted in the formation of three new colleges and numerous new degree programs. In addition, he administered the implementation of many of the new degree programs, created new promotion, tenure, and reappointment standards for the Institute, and managed the budgeting process. In 1996 he was named provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, where he oversaw all academic and most administrative areas for the Institute.

“As the first provost of Georgia Tech, Mike Thomas shepherded a transformation that would build the foundation on which the Georgia Tech of today has developed,” said Rafael L. Bras, provost and executive vice president for academic affairs and N. Harrison Brown Family Chair. “I have been honored to follow in his steps. He was a kind and caring man who will be missed.”

Thomas retired in 2002 but came out of retirement soon thereafter to briefly serve as interim chair of the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering while the search was underway for a new chair. He left retirement once again for Georgia Tech in 2010 to serve as interim chair of ISyE.

In addition to his many leadership roles, Thomas also received numerous awards throughout his career. He was elected a fellow of both INFORMS and the Institute of Industrial Engineering; headed the Industrial Engineering Society; was made an Honorary Alumnus of Georgia Tech in 2000; and received the Dean’s Appreciation Award from the College of Engineering at Georgia Tech in 2001.

Prior to earning his Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins, Thomas attended the University of Texas at Austin where he received a bachelor of science and master of science degree in chemical engineering. He was a proud husband, father of five children, and grandfather of 22 grandchildren.

Michael Thomas is pictured in his office in 2010.
**READING**, from page 1

Scottish castle, she accepts a position for a ‘lady of high breeding’ to help host a party in Tiddelwood-under-Lovey, which, just so happens, is where her mother, an actress divorced from her father years ago, will be. The murder mystery is set around the Christmas party and is very reminiscent of Agatha Christie. The characters range from an American couple and their two-teenaged children to a colonel and his wife just recently from India. They also include a cast of characters from the town — even what amounts to a village idiot (though he managed to have jobs) — a trio of spinster sisters, and the vicar. I recommend this book for anyone who enjoys a classic murder mystery set during Christmas.”

—Aless Linnohi, Licensed Content Coordinator

**What Stays in Vegas: The World of Personal Data**

By Adam Tanner, Public Affairs (2014)

“A fascinating inside look at the data industry, with a focus on Vegas. Caesars CEO (formerly a Harvard Business School professor) set up the first casino loyalty program — the company knows how much you typically wager in a day and what food you like to eat. While customers receive benefits by sharing data in these programs, other companies obtain and resell data about you — with minimal restrictions. Summing it up: thought-provoking.”

—Patricia Kenly, Business Reference Librarian and Government Documents Coordinator

Public Engagement Librarian Charlie Bennett recommended two books: *The Trouble with Reality: A Ruminon on Moral Panic in Our Time* By Brooke Gladstone, Workman Publishing Co. (2017) “Brooke Gladstone is the co-host of On the Media, a WNYC radio show about journalism, technology, and First Amendment issues. The book is a short, straight-to-the-point reminder that we create narratives out of our perceptions, and those narratives are in shockingly polarized and First Amendment issues. The book is a short, straight-to-the-point reminder that we create narratives out of our perceptions, and those narratives are in shockingly polarized...”

*My Twentieth Century Evening and Other Small Breakthroughs: The Nobel Lecture* By Kazuo Ishiguro, Faber & Faber (2017) “Ishiguro, author of Never Let Me Go, The Remains of the Day, and other wonderful novels, won the Nobel Prize in Literature, and this is the text of his acceptance ‘speech’ — really a long talk on his life and how he creates...”

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**FACULTY AND STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS**

Edward Botchwey, associate professor in the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering, received the 2019 Mid-Career Award from the Society for Biomaterials. The award is given to recognize an individual who has demonstrated outstanding achievements in the field of biomedical research (with 10–20 years) following her/his terminal degree or formal training.

The School of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering’s Associate Professor Julie Champion and Professor Dennis Hess, who holds the Thomas C. DeLoach Jr. Chair, won the Association for Iron and Steel Technology’s 2018 T.C. Graham Prize, an international award meant to encourage development of new and innovative uses for steel. The $20,000 prize was awarded for creating nanotexture on stainless steel through electrochemical etching, which decreases the attachment of bacteria and thereby corrosion resistance. Adding this nanotexture surfaces to prevent bacteria infection could have new and innovative uses for steel. The $20,000 prize was awarded for creating nanotexture on stainless steel through electrochemical etching, which decreases the attachment of bacteria and thereby corrosion resistance. Adding this nanotexture surfaces to prevent bacteria infection could have new and innovative uses for steel.

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Laurie Garrow, professor in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, has joined the board of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS), the largest professional group for Operations Research and Analytics. Garrow joined the board of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS), the largest professional group for Operations Research and Analytics. Garrow joined the board of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS), the largest professional group for Operations Research and Analytics. Garrow joined the board of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS), the largest professional group for Operations Research and Analytics. Garrow joined the board of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS), the largest professional group for Operations Research and Analytics. Garrow joined the board of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS), the largest professional group for Operations Research and Analytics. Garrow joined the board of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS), the largest professional group for Operations Research and Analytics. Garrow joined the board of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS), the largest professional group for Operations Research and Analytics. Garrow joined the board of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS), the largest professional group for Operations Research and Analytics. Garrow joined the board of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS), the largest professional group for Operations Research and Analytics. Garrow joined the board of the Institute for Operations Research and...