Report: Tech tops in graduating minority engineers

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N ationwide, Georgia Tech is the number one producer of African-American engineers at the bachelor’s and master’s degree levels, according to Black Issues in Higher Education magazine’s annual college rankings report.

The Black Issues rankings, considered by Tech to be an important tool to measure the success of campus diversity endeavors, underscore its efforts to create a diverse campus through strong recruitment and retention practices.

“The 125 bachelor’s degrees awarded to African-Americans were the most in the country. The 2002 academic year accounted for the top five universities to rank in this category, Tech is the only institution that does not have a predominately black student population. Rounding out the top five are: North Carolina A&T State University (124); Florida A&M University (76); Morgan State University (72); and Tuskegee University (70).”

Georgia Tech also awarded 37 master’s degrees in engineering to African-Americans (six percent of the class) and four doctoral degrees in engineering, which accounted for two percent.

Black Issues, a publication that covers minorities in American higher education, used statistics collected by the U.S. Department of Education to compile the rankings edition. The special report identifies the top 100 minority degree producers among institutions of higher education and is the only national report of U.S. colleges and universities awarding degrees to African-American, Latino, and Native American engineers.

The 125 bachelor’s degrees awarded to African-Americans were the most in the country. 10 percent of the total number of undergraduate engineering degrees awarded at Tech that year. Among the top five universities to rank in this category, Tech is the only institution that does not have a predominately black student population. Rounding out the top five are: North Carolina A&T State University (124); Florida A&M University (76); Morgan State University (72); and Tuskegee University (70). Georgia Tech also awarded 37 master’s degrees in engineering to African-Americans (six percent of the class) and four doctoral degrees in engineering, which accounted for two percent.

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Led by Clough, telecom task force advises governor

David Terraso
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The state should streamline its procedures for buying and operating its telecommunications and computing systems. That’s the central finding of a task force chaired by Tech President Wayne Clough and commissioned by Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue.

In a report to Perdue, the Governor’s Telecommunications and Technology Task Force said allowing state agencies to purchase technology from various vendors rather than using a one-size-fits-all approach will help agencies serve the public more effectively and efficiently, and will result in lower costs for state taxpayers. The governor said the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) has already begun implementing some of the recommendations and is ready to apply more in coming months.

“The 14-member task force members for their commitment to working with state agencies and the telecommunications industry to review options for the state in meeting our technology and telecommunications needs in the future,” said Perdue.

The 14-member task force was appointed by Perdue in February after an insufficient competition led to the cancellation of the state’s Converged Communications Outsourcing Project (CCOP). Perdue asked the task force to study the reasons for the CCOP’s failure and make recommendations to improve the state’s telecommunications and technology. The task force, made up of representatives from academia, government and industry, sought input from the GTA, more than 55 state agencies, and 20 industry providers and associations.

“Would like to commend Governor Perdue for taking this bold approach, allowing a group with specialized expertise to apply their knowledge to help solve a complex problem for the state,” said Clough.

“We believe that using a flexible approach to acquiring telecommunications and computing services will result in significant savings to the state as well as offer an opportunity for considerably enhanced efficiencies in state services.”

The CCOP was developed in January 2001 to use the state’s tremendous buying power to reduce costs and improve the state’s telecommunications and computing systems. It called for the state to purchase telecommunications and computing technologies separately, with shorter contracts that fosters competition and allows agencies to buy its technologies from a GTA-agency partnership than from a GTA-agency partnership.

Other recommendations included:
• Using common technology standards to make it easier for agencies to integrate systems.
• Revamping the state purchasing system in phases to allow agencies to learn what works so the system can be improved incrementally.

Members of the task force also counseled the Georgia Technology Authority to review its mission and focus on its role in supporting the telecommunications and information technology needs of the state instead of promoting economic development in rural areas. The GTA, they said, should reconsider its role as a technology reseller to state agencies and concentrate on advising agencies on their technology needs. The state can benefit more, the task force reported, from a GTA-agency partnership than it does from the current system.

For more information...
Telecommunications and Technology Task Force Report

Shirley Mewborn, one of Tech’s first female graduates, dies

Shirley Clements Mewborn, one of the first two women to graduate with a Tech degree, died on July 10, 2003, after a battle with cancer. She was 68.

Transferring to Georgia Tech in 1953, Shirley earned a degree in electrical engineering in three years. “Tech offered a wonderful opportunity for education at an affordable price,” she said during a recent radio interview.

A sample of her affiliations affirms her dedication to Tech: the first woman to serve as president of the Georgia Tech Alumni Association; a member of the Georgia Tech Foundation Board since 1989; a member of the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering Advisory Board; and chairperson of the Georgia Tech Research Corporation and the Georgia Tech Advisory Board. In addition, she established the Shirley Mewborn Perseverance Scholarship Fund for female students at Tech and the Francis and Shirley Mewborn Endowment Council Fund.

Shirley was inducted into the Georgia Tech Engineering Hall of Fame and was a recipient of the 1994 College of Engineering Distinguished Alumnus Award. In March, she received the Joseph Mayo Pettit Alumni Distinguished Services Award, the highest award conferred by the Georgia Tech Alumni Association.

Earlier this month, Shirley was unanimously elected to the Georgia Technology Hall of Fame, a prestigious award for leaders who have shaped the growth of technology in Georgia.

“Shirley Mewborn was a pioneer at Georgia Tech,” said President Wayne Clough. “We will miss her fine leadership, her excellent judgment, her tireless energy and her warm smile. She was the embodiment of a Georgia Tech education.”

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Closing the loop

By all accounts, the recent computer recycling event — organized and sponsored by Dell Computer and held in the parking lot outside Alexander Memorial Coliseum — was a huge success. According to Sandy Jackofsky, manager of Solid Waste Management and Recycling at Georgia Tech, volunteers processed 500 vehicles during the six-hour event, accumulating 74 tons of unwanted computers.

As the last stop on the 13-city tour, Atlanta finished in third place for the largest amount collected in a single day, behind Denver and Portland, Oregon, at 275 and 142 tons, respectively. Nationwide, nearly 2 million pounds of computer equipment — enough to fill roughly 70 tractor-trailers — was collected.

IN BRIEF:

OIT to remove non-secure services

In an effort to improve the security of the campus infrastructure, the Office of Information Technology has been in discussions with department Computer Services Specialists (CSSs) and Computer Support Representatives (CSRs), and directed them to turn off non-secure services that run on the Prism and Spectrum systems. A few of these services, by name, are: telnet, ftp, non-secure POP, IMAP and SMTP.

These changes, scheduled to take place July 31, are intended to secure information, including your password, by making sure it cannot be seen as it traverses the network.

For more information, review the FAQ located at faq.oit.gatech.edu. If you have any additional questions, contact departmental support, the Customer Support Center at 894-7175 or email support@oit.gatech.edu.

ATDC connects with Columbus

The expertise of Georgia Tech’s Advanced Technology Development Center (ATDC) will now be available to help Southwest Georgia entrepreneurs through the new Columbus Regional Technology Center (CRTC).

Blair Carnahan, an ATDC staff member, was named director of the Center July 18. He will make the program’s resources available to help Columbus-area entrepreneurs launch and build successful technology companies.

The initiative grew out of a partnership between the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism (GDITT), the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce, Columbus State University and the ATDC. It is part of the state’s “Greater Georgia” initiative aimed at developing innovation centers in mid-sized cities where potential has been identified for technology development.

Columbus already has a strong base of banking, investment, transaction processing and insurance companies that, with the Army’s presence, provides a foundation for the growth of technology-based companies,” said Jeff Strane, director of GDITT’s Office of Science and Technology. “This initiative will help develop a new part of the community’s economic engine based on smaller, entrepreneurial companies.”

Beyond assistance to startup companies, the new program will support the attraction of technology companies, offering assistance to “landing parties” of existing technology companies that may wish to establish a presence in Columbus.

Columbus is the fourth community served by the ATDC program, and the third outside the Atlanta metropolitan area.

GTA announces rate reduction

The Georgia Technology Authority (GTA) recently announced significant reductions in long distance rates for all state agencies.

The telephone bill that agencies receive in July for June usage will reflect the lower rates. For example, the in-state rate between call zones will drop to 3.1 cents/minute and the interstate rate will go down to 3.5 cents/minute. The surcharge for calling card calls has also dropped. Details on this reduction will be forwarded to telecom coordinators.

This is the second significant rate reduction this year. In January, GTA announced a 50 percent drop in long distance rates. Through the review and renegotiation of contracts, it is hoped that there will be further reductions in the new calendar year.