Fifth Street work continues

False alarm triggers campus evacuation

AAAS names four to 2007 Fellows list

Finalists announced for Academic Diversity post
Evidence of ‘memory’ seen in cell interactions

Research could have effect on past tests' accuracy

John Toon
Research News

Research findings scheduled for publication in the Nov. 13 issue of the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) provides evidence that some molecular interactions on cell surfaces may have a “memory” that affects their future interactions. The report could lead to a re-examination of results from certain single-molecule research.

Researchers who use sequentially repeated tests to obtain statistical samples of molecular properties usually assume that each test is identical to—and independent of—any other tests in the sequence. In their article, however, Tech researchers provide examples of test sequences that may not be composed of independent and identically-distributed (i.i.d.) random variables.
Women honored at conference

Held Nov. 2 and 3, the Women’s Leadership Conference offered faculty, staff and students opportunities to enhance their lives, both professionally and personally. Workshops and lectures by women in key academic and business positions all helped to fulfill the conference’s mandate: “Inspire and prepare women to become strong leaders and equal partners in the community.”

The 11th annual conference, themed “Leading a Vibrant Life,” honored attendees at the newly established Gall D’Sabatino Women of Distinction Awards Ceremony. Planning has begun for next year’s conference. For more information, visit www.cyberbuzz.gatech.edu or www.womenscenter.gatech.edu.

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the lab area’s fume hood. No one was injured.

“That message should never have gone out,” said Emergency Preparedness Director Andy Altizer, who credits the lapse in judgment to “human error.” An individual had bypassed approval procedures in place for GTENS messaging and unilaterally activated the system. “Any electronic notification message should be approved by four or five people.”

Although much of campus was disrupted for more than an hour, not all that came out of the situation was bad. “I immediately learned a lot about the technology part of the system,” Altizer said, referring to feedback from the campus community.

Some said the evacuation message lacked enough description, and that more information was needed. Others said they never received the initial text messages despite signing up for the service, while some said messages delivered via e-mail went into their “junk” folders. Still others said they did not recognize the number on their phones.

A review panel met Friday morning to analyze the previous day’s events and make recommendations for improving the fledgling system. Members included building managers and undergraduate and graduate students, as well as the Dean of Students and representatives from Institute Communications and Public Affairs, Environmental Health and Safety, Facilities, the Office of Information Technology and the Institute’s police department.

“Bottom line, we’re really sorry the message went out,” Altizer said. “But, we’re going to learn a lot from it that will make the process stronger in the future.”

Altizer said the panel’s findings will be available to the administration by the end of this week.

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meeting that goal.”

Major responsibilities will include overseeing the Office of Minority Educational Development (OMED), the Institute’s FOCUS program and the Center for Women in Science and Technology, along with other programs as designated by the provost and president. As a member of the president’s cabinet, the VPAD will provide input in the recruitment and retention of underrepresented minority and women faculty and students. This position also will initiate grant-writing efforts and will work with the Development Office toward these efforts.

Prerequisites included at least 10 years of combined higher education experience in administration, instruction and research; a tenured position in a field appropriate to the institute’s disciplines; a record of demonstrated leadership and experience in initiative and program development; and a personal history of research and scholarly involvement. The VPAD will be appointed at Tech as a tenured faculty member in his or her respective field.

Finalists begin visiting campus this week and will continue until December. The Office of the Provost expects the inaugural vice provost will be in place by the start of the next academic year.

IN BRIEF:

Sting I to aid other applications

While Sting I, the autonomous Porsche Cayenne designed by Georgia Tech and Science Applications International Corp. (SAIC), failed to qualify for the final challenge at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Urban Challenge, team members already are considering the technology’s usage in different arenas.

Researcher Tucker Balch said on the team’s Web site that Sting I played “a key role in our future research agenda, particularly as we study the safety and viability of implementing robotic elements on the road and in the home.”

Held in Victorville, Calif., the challenge required driverless, robotic vehicles to navigate an urban environment. For more information, visit www.sting-racing.org.

Conference presents global focus

The Institute, along with the Oak Ridge National Lab, presents a three-day conference on bioinformatics. “In silico Biology: Gene Discovery and Systems Genomics” presents researchers from around the globe to speak on the progress and challenges in genomics and bioinformatics.

The event will be held at the Global Learning and Conference Center Nov. 15–17.

Researchers from Johns Hopkins University, Harvard and Princeton will be present, as will researchers from Barcelona, Kyoto and Berlin. Tech School of Biology Assistant Professor Sjoon Yi is scheduled to speak on "CpG Islands, Promoter Evolution and Vertebrate Genome Evolution.”

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the first biennial conference, “Gene Discovery in silico.” Registration continues until Nov. 15. For more information, visit www.issye.gatech.edu.

Be prepared to stop

Fourth Street traffic will be required to stop at the intersection of Fowler Street, effective Nov. 15. Due to poor visibility for vehicles turning from Fowler, stop signs will be installed, changing the intersection into a three-way stop. The project is a joint effort between the offices of Public Safety, Parking and Transportation, Landscape Services and Environmental Health and Safety.

Vice Provost for Academic Diversity

Finalist candidates at a glance

| Luis Echegoyen | 2006: director, Division of Chemistry, National Science Foundation | 1998-2001: senior policy officer for the National Science Board, National Science Foundation |
| Debra Walker King | 2003: associate provost of academic development | 1994: joined the English faculty at University of Florida |

For more information, visit www.gatech.edu/emergency/