Celebrating GVU’s ‘Impact’

Impact Award Recipients
- Jim Foley: GVU founder
- Larry Hodges: Former GVU faculty
- Jessica Hodges: Former GVU faculty
- Randy Carpenter: Past lab manager
- Joan Morton, Christy Hendrick: GVU staff
- Jim Pitkow: GVU alumnus
- Krishna Bharat: GVU alumnus
- Al N. Bardre: Retired GVU faculty
- Wayne Wooten: GVU alumnus
- James O’Brien: GVU alumnus
- Gregory Abowd: current, former faculty members
- Mark Guzdial: GVU faculty
- Irfan Essa: GVU faculty
- Anind K. Dey: GVU alumnus
- Jay Bolter: GVU alumnus
- Blair McIntyre: members

Founded in 1992, the Graphics, Visualization and Usability Center is an integral part of the College of Computing, becoming an interdisciplinary home—both literally and figuratively—for research in human-computer interaction, scientific data visualization, and computer graphics and animation. GVU celebrated its day-long 15th anniversary October 25 with keynote speakers and by honoring those who have contributed to the center. From left, GVU faculty members Jay Bolter and Blair McIntyre receive Impact Awards for their work in augmented reality from the center’s founder, Jim Foley, who was also honored. For more information, visit www.gvu.gatech.edu.

Tech takes sixth in Solar Decathlon

Teri Nagel
College of Architecture

On the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the U.S. Department of Energy announced Georgia Tech took sixth place in its debut showing in the Solar Decathlon—a collegiate competition in designing, building, and operating completely solar-powered houses.

“We are so proud of the strong performance,” said Doug Allen, interim dean of the College of Architecture. “The tremendous effort put forth by students, faculty and supporters reflects a deep commitment on behalf of Georgia Tech and the College of Architecture to move universal, sustainable design and building technologies to market.”

Encompassing leading-edge research in sustainable technologies; architecture, engineering and design challenges; business management; and interdisciplinary communications, the effort has allowed students and faculty to craft a comprehensive, sustainable approach to living. The aim is to educate builders and consumers about energy-conserving options and alternate energy source possibilities as concerns over the dependence on fossil-fuel energy sources deepen worldwide.

“This is more than a competition—it is also a truly unique exhibition,” Allen continued. “In many ways the honor is in the invitation to participate and the value is in the results of the research and design collaboration. Producing this kind of collaboration among students and faculty is very important but very difficult in the

Sustainable, energy-saving, solar-powered houses. The College of Architecture’s entry in the Solar Decathlon, a competition to build a solar-powered house, won sixth place out of a field of 20 international universities.

Unified e-mail, calendar prepped for ’08 rollout

Robert Nesmith
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

By summer 2008, a majority of Georgia Tech’s faculty, staff and students will work on a unified e-mail and calendar system. With fewer than 2,000 licenses, relatively few faculty and staff use Corporate Time (Oracle) calendar, while the rest have only departmental or personal calendars.

Zimbra provides an all-in-one solution for Tech’s community, as e-mail, calendar and address list programs are included. The process to pick a new system was exhaustive. “We looked at a fairly extensive list of criteria,” says Pamela Buffington, a research scientist with the Institute’s Office of Information Technology. “Bolstered by surveys, we researched other products, but found that Zimbra fits our needs. There’s more of a Web 2.0 look and feel to Zimbra, she said, referring to the system’s open-source code and information management. Users will have the ability to manage more than one calendar, as well as overlay as many as exist on...
Cramer tapes ‘Mad Money’ in Management courtyard

Brad Dixon
College of Management

Cries of “boooyah” echoed through Technology Square October 18 as CNBC’s “Mad Money with Jim Cramer” filmed in the courtyard of the College of Management building. The hit stock-picking show, which airs Monday through Friday at 6 and 11 p.m., came to Tech as part of the program’s “Back to School” college tour.

The titular host is known for his manic hosting style, involving sound effects, props and frequent use of the catchword “boooyah!” Management students enthusiastically supported Cramer’s performance in pop-culture style by wearing Georgia Tech T-shirts and chanting school cheers from the bleachers set up in the courtyard. Buzz and some cheerleaders were on stage to work the crowd.

“I do some entertaining, and I do some educating,” Cramer said. “Some people say it’s wrong to do stocks and entertain. I say I’m a showman in the tradition of Jack Benny and Bob Hope.”

He also fielded questions from members of the Student Foundation Investment Committee. He praised their performance investing endowment funds in recent years. The student-run group has consistently outperformed the S&P 500 Index Fund, distributing earnings to student organizations.

Jonathan Clarke, associate finance professor at Georgia Tech, said he’s a fan of “Mad Money” because it “gets students interested in finance and investing that helps bring some excitement to the classroom. Cramer’s very passionate about what he does.”

Randi Lampert, a master’s student in quantitative and computational finance, said he appreciates Cramer’s attitude toward trading. “I don’t think his stock picks are necessarily what’s important,” said Lampert, whose studies focus on trading. “It’s how he picks them. He’s got a very specific understanding of how the market works and how business works, and that’s what’s really important.”

Other components of installing the new system include upgrading the mail-delivery infrastructure in efforts to speed up the system’s processes. According to Buffington, http://lists.gatech.edu also will be upgraded.

For more information...

Office of Information Technology
www.oit.gatech.edu
Also: www.mail.gatech.edu, www.zimbra.com

Fujimoto said the faculty committees worked backward, starting with some “prototypical graduates.” By looking at several leading individuals in the field today, the committee then developed the program necessary to reach that end. According to Fujimoto, the core of the program contains five classes, four of which are new. All had been offered as special topic courses, to which the response, he said, has been good.

“In many other cases, the core is constructed from existing classes. We wanted to establish computational science as a discipline. Computation has gone from a ‘nice-to-have’ aspect of research to a ‘must-have,’” Fujimoto said. “It’s such an instrumental component of research. With this, we’re bringing computational thinking to the graduate’s coursework, which in turn produce a group of scientists and engineers who have a new mindset regarding research.”

This degree joins three other interdisciplinary courses in the College of Computing: Algorithms, Combinatorics, and Optimization; Bioengineering; and Bioinformatics. By providing a platform for educating students in areas such as high-performance computing, modeling, computational data analysis, and simulation and modeling, Fujimoto says the new degree program helps to “fulfill the College’s mission to foster interdisciplinary research related to computing.”

The CSE program will also benefit faculty by attracting new students who have interests in interdisciplinary research that combines computation with mathematics, engineering and science—short, students who may not at one time have applied to Tech.

“For students, it opens up new career opportunities by combining computation skills and knowledge with expertise in engineering or the sciences,” Fujimoto said. “We surveyed existing Georgia Tech students and recent graduates, and 29 percent of those responding to the survey expressed interest in enrolling in a graduate degree program in CSE, and ‘increased employment opportunities’ was cited as a principal reason for interest in the program.”

Fujimoto says this kind of interdisciplinary program promotes research “in the seams,” or research at the edge of disciplines, which is very rich for discovery—and beneficial for the Institute.

“This program significantly enhances both Georgia Tech’s and the College of Computing’s existing strength in high-performance computing and computer-based modeling,” Fujimoto said. “It will make Tech much more competitive in attracting the most talented CSE students from the U.S. and abroad.”

For more information:

Sam Nunn School of International Affairs
www into.gatech.edu
College of Computing
www.cc.gatech.edu

IN BRIEF:

Abraham to head state DOT
Gena Abraham, former assistant professor in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Georgia’s state property officer, made history last week by being appointed the first woman transportation commissioner on Oct. 17. She holds bachelor’s and doctoral degrees in civil engineering from Georgia Tech. Abraham will oversee the agency’s $8.2 billion budget and 5,700 employees, independent of the direct control of the state Legislature. Last year, the DOT oversaw 337 construction projects and managed 115 contractors and consultants. She will work closely with members of the Georgia General Assembly as well as federal officials in further developing Georgia’s transportation infrastructure.

Embretson on national math panel
U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings appointed Professor of Psychology Emeritus E. Embretson to the National Mathematics Panel. She has been recognized around the globe for her research on integrating cognitive theory into psychometrics models and test design.

Embretson currently serves as director of the Qualitative Psychology Program. For more information, visit www.psychology.gatech.edu and www.ed.gov.

Canada recognized for excellence
The Governmental Purchasing Association of Georgia (GPAG) honored Bob Canada, procurement officer for Tech’s Housing Department, as the 2007 Public Official of the Year. The award was made at the organization’s annual Fall Conference in Athens, Georgia.

Canada was recognized for his significant contributions to the purchasing profession and professional development, not only within the Department of Housing, but also throughout the state of Georgia. For more information, visit www.gpag.net.

Rolen retires from OHR
Director of Compensation Jim Rolen will retire Oct. 31, according to the Office of Human Resources. In 1992, he started at Tech as a project director leading the classified hiring redesign project.

Most recently, he served as the interim senior director, with responsibilities for employment and compensation. Ingrid Daley will provide day-to-day leadership for the compensation team on an interim basis. For more information, visit www.ohr.gatech.edu.

G7 grad on Space Shuttle mission
Army Col. Douglas Fl. Wheelock, who earned his master’s in Aerospace Engineering in 1992, is a mission specialist aboard shuttle mission STS-120 to the International Space Station. The shuttle launched Oct. 25. This is the 23rd mission to the ISS, with a duration of 14 days.

Background checks mandated
The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia has mandated all colleges and universities conduct full background checks on all new faculty and staff prior to employment.

Pre-employment background screening, which include driving and criminal history, as well as substance-abuse screenings, were previously required for selected positions. For more information, visit www.admin-fm.gatech.edu.

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