**Powerful connections**

Affinity Groups offer way to get involved

Robert Nesmith
Communications & Marketing

While the Alumni Association’s Affinity Groups are primarily populated by Georgia Tech’s young graduates, Debra Thompson, senior manager of the groups, wants to make it clear that faculty and staff are also invited. “All groups are open to faculty, staff and students, not just alumni,” Thompson said. “Anyone can join.” Thompson adds that while groups tend to be “event-heavy,” the schedule varies for each group. “Some groups meet and have events continually,” she said. “Some meet once a month, and others meet quarterly.” One of the newest additions, the Georgia Tech Bar Association, offers a quarterly speaker series. “The next seminar in November is about employment law.” Sponsored by the Alumni Association, Affinity Groups allow alumni, current students, faculty and staff to stay connected through participation in a variety of subjects and interests. The Association assists the groups, helping them get started, as well as providing benefits and creative ways for members to sustain each group. “[They] are based on academics, professions, sports and culture,” Thompson said. “Someone generally contacts us wanting to form a group. We then help identify alumni with similar interests, depending on the type of group.”

Groups continued, page 3

**Tech earns USG awards**

Robert Nesmith
Communications & Marketing

In Tech’s first year of applying for the University System of Georgia Chancellor’s Customer Service Awards, the Institute’s three nominees were all named as award-winners. Chancellor Erroll B. Davis Jr. established the awards to recognize USG faculty and staff members who exemplify customer service.

Part of Gov. Sonny Perdue’s “Faster. Friendlier. Easier.” initiative across all statewide programs to provide more efficient service, the awards were created in August 2007. Customers in the context of the USG are defined as students, parents, visitors or any entity conducting business with a member institution.

Groups continued, page 3

**Charitable Campaign under way**

During the Georgia Tech Charitable Campaign, The Whistle will highlight different organizations to show the broad range of groups eligible for donations. To donate to the organization of your choice, speak with your departmental campaign coordinator and visit TechWorks or the Charitable Campaign Web site.

**Holding the line against cyber threats**

Lt. Gen. Robert J. “Bob” Elder was the keynote speaker at last week’s 2008 GTISC Security Summit, held at the Ferst Center for the Arts. The sixth such summit held at Tech since 2004, “Emerging Cyber Security Threats” explored strategies to combat danger in the interest of storing and sending digital information. During the conference, Tech researchers released an Emerging Cyber Threats Report for the coming year, which included the possibility that hackers could soon begin attacking cell phones. Elder, commander of the Eighth Air Force, also commands the Air Force service component headquarters for cyberspace, global strike and network operations. For more information on this year’s summit, visit www.gtiscsecuritysummit.com.
Tech models show how flu would spread

Abby Vogel

Research News

The 1918 flu pandemic killed more than 40 million people worldwide and affected persons of all age groups. While it is difficult to predict when the next influenza pandemic will occur or how severe it will be, Institute researchers have developed models to help organizations like the American Red Cross and Georgia Department of Education prepare emergency response plans.

“Companies have developed models to see which options meet a certain goal,” said Pinar Keskinocak, an associate professor in the Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering (ISyE). “This goal can be different for various groups, such as serving the most people given the availability of limited resources or minimizing the number of people infected while not negatively affecting businesses.”

Details of the models, developed with ISyE associate professor Julie Swann and graduate student Ali Ekici, were presented Oct. 12 at the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences Annual Meeting.

Knowledge of how many people will need food, how many food distribution facilities will be necessary, where the facilities should be located and how the resources should be allocated among the facilities is very important, according to Marilyn Self, manager of disaster readiness for the Metropolitan Atlanta Chapter of the American Red Cross. Self has been collaborating with Tech researchers on this project.

“These models have provided solid food distribution data that has helped us formulate the questions we have to ask and the decisions that we have to make about food distribution during a pandemic on a local and state-wide level,” said Self.

The Georgia Department of Education is using the models to investigate whether or not schools should be closed during a pandemic.

“Closing schools affects both families and businesses because parents will have to stay home and take care of children,” said Garry McGiboney, associate state superintendent at the Department of Education.

To estimate the number of meals required for a given area or determine if closing schools would be beneficial, the researchers first needed to determine how many people and/or households would be infected. To do this, they constructed a generic disease spread model, which described how the influenza disease would spread among individuals.

The researchers used U.S. Census Bureau tract data—including household statistics, work flow data, classroom sizes and age statistics—to test the model. Crowded areas, including Atlanta and its suburbs, were always affected around the same time regardless of where the disease initiated. However, the time required for the disease to spread to rural areas depended on the number of people infected at the peak time if it was implemented at the beginning of the fourth week.

“These results are important because during a pandemic, communities have limited resources, including food and volunteers to distribute the food,” noted Swann. “If fewer people require the resources, especially during the peak time period, organizations such as the American Red Cross can meet the needs of more people.”

For more information...

www.isye.gatech.edu

Alumni, Legislative Network and International Affairs Alumni affinity groups (“The band group is our oldest,” Thompson said), many other groups have started up in just the last few years, according to Associate Vice President Len Contardo.

“We started with three groups, now we have 14, with four groups awaiting charter status,” he said. The groups with the largest populations are the Co-op Alumni, Band Alumni, Black Alumni and the Military Affinity Group. The fastest growing, according to the duo, is the GT Bar Association, which was chartered in May.

Groups, according to Contardo, are not just an avenue for alumni to reconnect with fellow graduates, but also offer opportunities to reconnect with faculty and staff.

“Faculty and staff members serve as advisors, particularly when the groups are student-run,” Contardo said. “It’s a great way for faculty and staff to stay connected with current and former students. (Group) members are so active, and it’s a great resource for people to stay involved.” According to Contardo, many Affinity Groups begin as student groups, which require faculty or staff advisors.

Other times, faculty or staff have an interest in the subject matter at hand. The Military Affinity Group (GTAMG), started in 2006, recognizes the Institute’s role in military history. Retired National Guard member Arthur Hughes has worked with GTAMG since 2005, when the group was still in the planning stages. “Military is in my family bloodstream,” the building attendant said. “We discuss fund-raising opportunities, scholarships, new equipment for the ROTC departments, involving veteran alumni and ways to keep patriotism alive on campus.”

Although run by the Association and populated with alumni, many groups have as their goals to grow and develop students both within and outside of the academic departments. “With groups such as the Military, Black Alumni, Co-op and Health Professions, the main focus is to help and support current students,” Contardo said. “In Health Professions, for example, ‘pre-med’ students have academic advisors and people who are also in the profession.”

Jennifer Nimble, director of the Office of Pre-Health Advising, works with 850 Tech students who strive to work in the medical profession after earning an undergraduate degree. “I became involved with the group in January 2007 at the first interest meeting,” said Nimble, who came to Tech in October 2006. “Someone heard there was interest from (alumni) Dr. Joe Cofer to create (the Health Professions Affinity Group) HPG, and put me in contact with him.”

(Director of Development for the College of Sciences) Philip Bonfiglio and I crafted the petition to the Alumni Association to get (the group) approved. As the primary advisor with the HPGM, Nimble works to connect new group offices with students and with those already in the medical field. “We encourage our faculty and staff to join HPGM if they work closely with pre-health students,” Nimble said. “Through the group, they can help educate alumni on the advances in research and services offered at Tech. (Philip) Bonfiglio provides speakers from the Tech faculty for HPGM meetings.”

And several of these groups assist and serve students in other ways. Thompson said, “The Military, Black Alumni, Lacrosse and other groups provide scholarships.” Affinity Groups also encourage the Association’s annual Roll Call fund-raising.

Service, cont’d from page 1

Rosalind R. Meyers, associate vice president of Auxiliary Services, won a silver 2008 Outstanding Customer Service Leadership Award. As outlined in her nomination, Meyers worked with the Office of Organizational Development to install an annual customer satisfaction survey eight years ago. Departmental planning and new programs are all a result of the surveys. Highlighting each department, the survey shows customer satisfaction has increased over the eight-year period.

Student Center Operations Manager Loren Vous, Summerlin won a silver 2008 Excellence of the Year Award in the individual category. Summerlin, who has previous experience in the hospitality industry, was recognized for his friendly and courteous attitude to Association Vice President Len Contardo.

Stingerette Driver Rosser Johnston received an honorable mention as an individual in the 2008 Excellence Award of the Year. Rosser’s dedication to customer service was exemplified by her providing late-night Stingerette shuttle service to students across campus.

Service, cont’d from page 1

Affinity Groups with Homecoming events

Band Alumni Association
Black Alumni Organization
GT Bar Association
Military Affinity Group
Georgia Tech Health Professions GT Crew Alumni Affinity Group
Co-op Alumni Affinity Group International Affairs
GT Lectures

For more information
Alumni Association
www.gtalumni.org

Schuster to deliver State of the Institute

Interim President and Provost Gary E. Schuster will deliver the fall faculty and staff meeting address, “A Legacy of Strategic Growth,” Oct. 21 at 3 p.m. in the Pfen Hall Center for the Arts. For more information, visit www.gatech.edu/president.

Johnston remembered

School of Public Policy Assistant Professor Jon Johnston, a longtime professor of philosophy, science and technology, died Oct. 4 from injuries suffered in an automobile accident.

Johnston, born in Arkansas in 1928, graduated from Haverford College in 1950. He also studied at Columbia University and the London School of Economics at the University of London. He joined the Tech faculty in 1967.

Johnston emphasized the importance of philosophical and critical thought and organized a philosophy club for students and faculty. A memorial is planned for early November.

Tech joins NASA institute

NASA has chosen a Georgia Tech research team to be part of the NASA Astrobiology Institute. The five-year grant, averaging $7 million, assists the Georgia Tech Center for Ribosome Adaptation and Evolution as it works to understand the nature of protein synthesis by living systems prior to the last universal common ancestor (LUCA) to all living organisms.

School of Chemistry and Biochemistry Professor Loren D. Williams is the principal investigator. NASA named a total of 10 teams across the United States. For more information, visit www.astrobotnolgy.nasa.gov.

Glass shop relocating

From Oct. 22 to Nov. 14, access to the Institute’s Glass Shop will be available only during the morning hours, for emergency fabrication and repair only. From Nov. 17 to Dec. 1, the shop will relocate from the building underground to room L205 in the Ford Environmental Science and Technology building, adjacent to the WVR stockroom.

Road closures ahead for 14th St.

As part of the city’s 14th Street Bridge Improvement Project, removal of old power line poles and installation of new poles on 14th Street will require lane closures throughout the month of October. For specific information and lane closures, visit www.14ststreetbridge.com.
Classifieds

Autobiles/Motorcycles


Motorcycle for sale, 1984

Honda VT 70 Shadow, runs great, 40,000 miles, $1,500 OBO. Call Matt Ryll at 678-215-8313 or e-mail matt8r@comcast.net.

Real Estate/Roofuses

For rent: Furnished house on quiet street in Lake Claire. 2BR/2BA, bonus room, furnished incl. linens, etc. No pets. Lease negotiable. $1,400/month plus utilities. For pics or info, call Beth 404-578-0723 or e-mail playbass.beth@gmail.com.

For sale or rent: Top floor 1BR/1BA condo in Buckhead. Located on the West Architecture lawn at 706-833-6071 or e-mail mrsallyn46@yahoo.com.

For rent: Furnished house on quiet street in Lake Claire. 2BR/2BA, bonus room, furnished incl. linens, etc. No pets. Lease negotiable. $1,400/month plus utilities. For pics or info, call Beth 404-578-0723 or e-mail playbass.beth@gmail.com.

Miscellaneous

For rent: Furnished house on quiet street in Lake Claire. 2BR/2BA, bonus room, furnished incl. linens, etc. No pets. Lease negotiable. $1,400/month plus utilities. For pics or info, call Beth 404-578-0723 or e-mail playbass.beth@gmail.com.

For sale: 4BR/3BA in north Atlanta. 4BR/3BA, bonus room, yard. $185,000. Call 770-928-7344 or e-mail kwwhitehouse@kw.com.

For sale or rent: Top floor 1BR/1BA condo in Buckhead. Located on the West Architecture lawn at 706-833-6071 or e-mail mrsallyn46@yahoo.com.

For sale: 4BR/3BA in north Atlanta. 4BR/3BA, bonus room, yard. $185,000. Call 770-928-7344 or e-mail kwwhitehouse@kw.com.

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