Three decades of support
OMED celebrates its anniversary with students, alumni

Robert Nesmith
Communications & Marketing

Soon after S. Gordon Moore Jr. received his bachelor’s degree in management from Georgia Tech, then-President Pat Creecie asked him to join a group of other students and faculty to undertake reorganization of the Office of Minority Educational Development (OMED). After the group of alumni—comprised of Moore, current College of Computing Assistant Dean Cedric Stallworth, alumni Gavin Samms, Raymond Hart, Guy Primus and Jonathann Ogle—delivered their recommendations to the president, he asked if they would come in and effect the changes.

“We were just out of school,” said Moore, referring to that year between 1992 and 1993. “We were young and naive, and weren’t privy to the nuance of bureaucracy. [Creecie] said ‘don’t worry about budgets—just build it.’ Now, we’re the template for other schools to follow.”

He was named OMED managing partner and director in 1999.

Utilizing a National Science Foundation grant facilitated in 1992 by Jack Lohmann, OMED staffers started noticing a five-year “cycle” with incoming students. “The students in 1993 are completely different from the students today,” Moore said, adding that OMED staffers started noticing a five-year “cycle” with incoming students. “The students in 1993 are completely different from the students today.”

Begun in 1979, OMED’s mission is to aid in the retention, development and performance of Georgia Tech students who are traditionally underrepresented. While the organization’s services are targeted toward African-American, Hispanic and Native American students, their services and programs are open to all Tech students. Resources available to students include transition programs for freshmen, transfer students and graduates, peer mentoring, strategy development and academic support programs for current students.

As part of the Institute’s Homecoming festivities, OMED celebrated its 30th anniversary. On Oct. 15, members met at the Twelve Hotel’s ballroom to hold its celebration. A Georgia Tech Black Alumni Organization (GTBAO) seminar kicked off Oct. 16, and both the GTBAO and Georgia Tech Hispanic Alumni Network (GTHAN) held receptions and a joint Homecoming party later that evening. OMED sponsored Homecoming Week.

OMED, continued on page 3

Robert Guldberg

New IBB director named
Professor Robert Guldberg takes helm

Don Fernandez
Communications & Marketing

After the completion of a nationwide search, Mechanical Engineering Professor Robert Guldberg has been named the new director of the Parker H. Petit Institute for Bioengineering and Bioscience (IBB).

Guldberg, who currently serves as IBB associate director, assumed his duties as director on November 1.

“We’re thrilled that Bob Guldberg has accepted this appointment,” said Senior Vice Provost for Research and Innovation Mark Allen. “We had an enormous amount of interest and we attracted candidates of the highest caliber. He has thorough grounding in IBB and a great understanding of where it needs to go strategically in the next few years.”

Guldberg first joined the faculty ranks at Georgia Tech in 1996, serving both in IBB and the George W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering. He was appointed associate director of IBB in 2004.

“It is a great honor to be asked to serve as the next director of the Parker H. Petit Institute for Bioengineering and Bioscience,” said Guldberg. “IBB’s original mission when it was launched in 1995 was to be a vehicle for accelerating Georgia Tech’s move into bio-related research. This was an incredibly successful experiment made possible by the generous support of alumni Pete Petit and Sir Harold “Harry” Kroto, recipient of the 1996 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, presents “Science, Society and Sustainability.” Nov. 4 at the Ferst Center for the Arts.

Nobel laureate speaks Nov. 4

Photograph courtesy Honeywell Science

Sir Harold “Harry” Kroto, recipient of the 1996 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, presents “Science, Society and Sustainability.” Nov. 4 at the Ferst Center for the Arts.

Photograph courtesy Honeywell Science

Nobel laureate speaks Nov. 4
The Library and Information Center has received more than $850,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to create a repository service for the participating three years institutions of the University System of Georgia (USG). IMLS funded a matching grant of $857,000 over three years for the “GALILEO Knowledge Repository: Advancing the Access and Management of Scholarly Digital Content.” The repository will provide access to scholarly works and research information from member institutions of the USG who are participating in the grant. Tyler Walters, associate director for Technology and Resource Services for Tech’s Library, is the principal investigator on the grant, and Toby Graham with the University of Georgia is co-PI. “We’re taking the SMARTech idea—a digital scholarship repository—and establishing these services in other schools in the University of Georgia system,” Walters said. “We recognized that it should be a statewide initiative from the beginning. We have been working on this for about five years now, we just lacked the funds to put the pieces together, and have money for staff members.” GALILEO is the Georgia Library Learning Online system, administered by the USG. The partnership with other schools includes UGA, Georgia State University, the Medical University of South Carolina, Valdosta State University, Albany State University, North Georgia College and State University, and the College of Coastal Georgia. The partner institutions together are contributing roughly $857,000 in matching funds. There are three layers to the project, Walters says. The project will create individual repositories for each partner institution that does not currently have one. Secondly, those working with the initiative will harvest database records and migrate it to a single site. “A user can then go to one single site and search [for information from] all member repositories at one time,” he said. Content, Walters said, will showcase the collaboration in the USG, such as Tech researchers working with UGA researchers or Medical College of Georgia faculty. “We’re hoping that if users are looking for research, they will see the similarities and partnerships throughout the campuses,” Walters said. “This will help make research increasingly available to the public.” Third, the group will offer repository-related services, including personnel to scan physical media to digital formats, to check on rights for publishing materials, assist in content submission and offer the opportunity to store research materials in the MetaArchive Cooperative, a collaborative repository service between Emory University, Georgia Tech and 13 other research institutions. The Cooperative is a member-driven organization that has been funded by the Library of Congress and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Other states that have created a state-wide repository for their higher education institutions include California, Texas, Colorado and Ohio. The main difference with this project is that each member institution will have its own repository in addition to the statewide resource. By using aSpace open source software—a tool developed by the Library for SMARTech—each institution can customize its repository. During this project’s genesis, Tyler says, Texas’ repository was under construction. "He says the group submitted the proposal a year ago, but did not receive funding. “We had good reviews and remarks, so we took their suggestions and re-worked them.” More than 30 full-time people from among the eight partner institutions are assisting with this effort. In the first year, the project will establish the main repository and other individual repositories. For the second year, project staff will ensure that content is loaded and populating the single search site. The third year, Walters said, will be for the symposium and workshop, so other institutions can establish their own consortium-based repositories. “It’s not just about the technology,” Walters said. “There is an outreach component, training people how to do this on their own.” The challenge, Walters says, is to ensure the repository will be economically viable for three years when the grant ends. Over the three years, the grant will fund two-and-a-half full-time equivalent positions. “It is incumbent on us to show the value of this in three years’ time [so it can remain funded],” Walters said. “Sustainability is the key. We’ll have each [partner] institution take on what they can, and what they cannot handle we’ll take care of centrally.” Tech, UGA and Georgia State University have an institutional repository. Shortly after the project was announced, Valdosta State University and Georgia Southern University have established their own. IMLS is an independent Federal agency in the Executive Branch U.S. government. Its largest grants consist of $1 million over three years. The funding period began Oct. 1, and continues through June 30, 2012. The Library’s proposal is one of five largest grants given from the IMLS’ National Leadership grant program this year. Nearly $18 million was awarded to 31 institutions. “There is a lot of competition for these grants, especially in these economic times,” Walters said. “It’s a real vote of confidence to receive this funding from the federal government. And we’re beginning to have a history of [success with grants] in the Library. In the past, we have been partners—now, in this case, we’re the lead institution.” Walters adds that the Library also has some proposals into the National Science Foundation.

November 9
James White, associate director of International Programs for the Center for Advanced Communications, Policy, “Outsourcing Local Government Services: Does It Work?” from noon to 1:30 p.m. in room 105 of the Ferst Center for the Arts.

November 12
University of Virginia Assistant Professor Edward Butcher presents “Sphingosine 1-Phosphate (S1P) Signaling Selective Activation Regulates Microvascular Remodeling, Osteoimmunology and Bone Repair,” from noon to 1:30 p.m. in room 1105 of the Whitaker building.

November 19
Robert Nerem in the role of director. Nerem had served in this leadership role at IBB since its inception. Nerem will continue contributions to promising research goals, along with fostering Georgia Tech’s evolving relationship and partnership with Emory University. The goal of bioengineering is to help build further bridges between Georgia Tech and Emory University. "I believe Bob [Guldberg] has the right set of skills to take the Petit Institute to the next level," said Nerem. "He certainly will have my full support." "As for me, I will turn my attention and energies to continuing to build our regenerative medicine research program through our joint Georgia Tech/Emory Center (GTEC). This includes expanding our efforts in stem cell technology," he adds. "I also hope to be involved in building this new initiative.

The vision and dedicated efforts of IBB’s founding director, Bob Nerem, and other leaders on campus.

When first launched in 1995, the mission of IBB was to create an awareness of bioengineering and bioscience on the Georgia Tech campus. With the Institute now fully established, Guldberg said IBB is “positioned to have an even greater impact by serving as the heart of the broader Georgia Tech bioengineering and bioengineering community and an international model for interdisciplinary research and education.”

Guldberg succeeds Mechanical Engineering Professor Robert Nerem in the role of director.

November 3
Yaron Broock, executive director of the Ayn Rand Center for Individual Rights, presents “The Future of Capitalism,” from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in room 105 of the Instructional Center.

School of Industrial and Systems Engineering Professor Bill Rouse speaks at the Engineering Psychology Colloquium, at 4:30 p.m. in room 217 of the J.S. Coon building.

November 4
Rob Kolodner, former Health and Human Services National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, presents "Sure in U.S. Health IT Spending," from 4 to 5:30 p.m. in suite 1116 in the Klaus Advanced Computing building.

www.shsi.gatech.edu/events/

The IMPACT Speaker Series presents Emily Layns, Global Program officer, Girls Education Program, for Room to Read, at 4:30 p.m. in the LeCraw Auditorium of the College of Management. Jerry S. Wilson, Coca-Cola Co. senior vice president, speaks Nov. 11. www.ile.gatech.edu

November 5
School of Mechanical Engineering alumnus David Phelps presents “No Experience Required,” at the 2010 Annual Harold W. Gegenheimer Lecture Series on Innovation, at 11 a.m. in the Fert Center for the Arts.

www.me.gatech.edu

Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry, Moscow, Professor Konstantin Lukyanov presents “Fluorescent Proteins: Selfish Catalytic Reactors or Photocleavable Partners,” at 3 p.m. in room G01 of the Molecular Science and Engineering building.

www.chemistry.gatech.edu

Stanford University Professor Russell Mondes presents “Evolution of the E. coli LacTose Utilization Network,” from 11 a.m. to noon, in room 320 of the Cherry Emerson building.

www.biology.gatech.edu

NOVEMBER 2, 2009 PAGE 2

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a tailgating party on Oct. 17, and then Tech’s Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority held a 30th anniversary party.

Moore says the office’s 25th anniversary was an overall look at the changes instituted since the mid-1990s. For the 30th, the focus is centered more on the future. “This milestone isn’t about what we’ve done,” Moore said. “It’s about establishing a checkpoint, looking at what we’re doing and where we are going.”

OMED started under Tech President Joseph M. Petit, and Moore says that Tech’s presidents have done a great deal to support OMED. He recalls others who helped start and keep the organization going: William Stanley, the first African-American graduate from the College of Architecture; Dorothy Yancey, one of the first African-American faculty members at Tech; Thomas Parker, former director of the Counseling Center; William Gamble, former OMED director; Norman Johnson, director of the Counseling Center; William Gamble, former OMED director; William Gamble, former OMED director; William Gamble, former OMED director; and Gary S. May, chair of the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering. “The faculty who have helped us have been instrumental, and this office would not have been created without student and alumni efforts,” Moore said.

OMED’s success, he says, is based upon a continuous institutional effort, from the top down. “You don’t have something like this, and not have people in administration help to keep it around,” he said. “Crecine added the resources, and [President G. Wayne] Clough reached out to diversity groups and [helped us] continue the story through the Proposition 209 fervor.

“Tech has had a lot of success with minority students. The question is whether the Institute wants to continue that success—and I believe we do, based upon comments from President [But] Peterson and the establishment of the vice provost for Academic Diversity,” he said. “[Peterson] has done his homework. He understands we have experienced growth in [the number] of Hispanic students, but we have fallen behind in the percentage of African-American students. It’s good to hear the president is concerned the percentages are down. When we look at [underrepresented students] in the STEM fields, we’re still far behind.”

But Moore is also quick to tout the organization’s successes. In 2004, OMED’s Challenge retention program received one of four Lee Noel and Randi Levy Retention Excellence awards, and in 2007 the organization received an NSBE (National Society of Black Engineers) Golden Torch Award.

In recent years, OMED has worked to connect with the Georgia Tech Hispanic Alumni Network and the Georgia Tech Black Alumni Organization, as well as established the Student Advisory Council to OMED (SACO). “When you’re 30 years in, you have a good range of alumni and students to re-establish,” Moore said. “We’re reconnecting with alumni and we’re looking ahead.”

Tech currently has its largest population of Hispanic students. “The Hispanic faculty growth and retention just shows what happens when you put resources into an initiative,” Moore said. “Our predecessors have positioned us very well.”

Moore credits the OMED staff with the organization’s success. “We have five Tech graduates, and a good mix of age ranges, experience and ethnicities.” He also credits the Institute’s collaborative nature, adding that OMED has been able to work easily with different departments and academic units.

For Moore, these awards are not the complete measure of OMED’s success. “A good indication we’re doing something right is the amount of institutions that call on us,” he said, adding that the University of Michigan, Rice University and Purdue University all have approached Georgia Tech to get more information on the programs across campus.

“I think Tech can be the model for academic excellence and inclusion among minority students,” Moore said. “The argument of ‘equity versus excellence’ doesn’t work here at Georgia Tech. You have to be excellent to even come here.” He also points out that most of Tech’s minority alumni have graduated in the last 15 years. “Critics talking about that or thinking that imbalance [between equity and excellence] exists at Tech really don’t know our students.”

For now, Moore and the OMED staff will look ahead to helping students achieve their success every day. “I just love what I do,” he said. “That’s the greatest thing about being in education. Every day I get to see the product. Every day some student will remind you of why you do this. Every day I see the results. I understand the importance of this. It’s important to produce those who can produce for themselves.”

For more information

www.omed.gatech.edu
A conversation with ...  
Chemistry researcher sets sights on Atlanta City Council seat

The Whistle had a chance to talk with Bahareh Azizi, a researcher and research support manager in the School of Chemistry and Biochemistry, who has thrown her hat in the ring for the District 6 Atlanta City Council race.

It’s a crowded field with six candidates, but Azizi stays optimistic about her chances. Her campaign is centered on the idea of bringing new people with new ideas to the council, and on increasing Atlanta’s stature as an international city. Born in Houston, Azizi was raised in Kuwait.

She earned her bachelor’s degree from Michigan State University and her doctorate in chemistry and biochemistry from Georgia Tech. District 6 is comprised of Midtown, Candler Park, Virginia Highlands, Morningside and Lindbergh Martinez Manor.

What are your duties at Tech?
I advise graduate students and I run a research lab with six students. I teach occasionally; it depends on the semester. I also run the research facilities and the safety department in the School of Chemistry and Biochemistry. I decided on a tenure-track role because I really enjoy the administrative aspect. I love working with students—there is nothing more rewarding that being an educator.

When did you decide to run for the open Atlanta City Council position in District 6?
The incumbent [Anne Fauver] decided not to run again at the end of April, and I seriously started considering running at the end of May. I took the month of June to put a campaign team together, and we launched the campaign July 4.

How do you think your campaign is going?
Candidates are required to file their disclosures on the first of June to put a campaign team together, and we launched the campaign July 4. It’s almost overnight. While driving through Kuwait through Iraq and into Iran, for several days we were sleeping in some parks.

I realize that some homeless persons are not mentally capable of pulling themselves out of that condition. But we can help some achieve more than that, we have a responsibility to do so. My parents told me as a child ‘It’s best to wear your shoes. But every now and then, just to appreciate what you have, it’s a good idea to wear someone else’s, even if just for a while.’ That has always stuck with me.

How did you decide on becoming a chemist?
I never wanted to be a scientist when I was filling out my application for college. My parents told me that if I wanted to go to school overseas [America], I could either study science, math, pre- med, engineering or law. I wanted to study journalism, but my parents said if I wanted to do that, I could just stay [in Kuwait].

While looking at my application, I noticed the ‘Undecided’ box, so I checked that, thinking I would change something to chemistry later. I received my acceptance letter and noticed I had been accepted in Michigan State’s College of Natural Science under chemistry. My mother, told me ‘See, they look at your grades and thought that you would be well-suited to be a scientist.’

When I finally got to school and met with my adviser, I was in his office and saw my application. My mother had used White Out on ‘Undecided’ and had selected ‘Chemistry’. Even today, she takes credit for my career.

For more with Azizi, visit the Georgia Tech News Room at www.gatech.edu/newsroom.

The Whistle