Engineering Dean Announces Plans to Retire

MICHAEL HAGEARTY
COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

Don Giddens, dean of the College of Engineering, has announced his intention to retire from Georgia Tech, stepping down from his leadership position effective July 1, 2011.

A three-time graduate of Georgia Tech, Giddens has spent most of his more than 40-year career at his alma mater, interrupted only by a five-year tenure as dean of engineering at The Johns Hopkins University from 1992-1997.

Upon his return to Tech, Giddens led the development of a new type of joint education and research model, partnering with Emory University in the creation of the Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering. The program built on each institution’s respective strengths and was one of the first of its kind in the nation.

Giddens served as the inaugural chair of the fledgling department and was subsequently named dean of the college in 2002.

In announcing Giddens’ decision, Provost Gary Schuster praised his leadership in directing a college that enrolls nearly 60 percent of the student body.

“Don and I have worked together for almost two decades, during which time I have respected his leadership within Biomedical Engineering, the College of Engineering and his alma mater,” Schuster said. “Don has played a key part in shaping Georgia Tech’s reputation and has helped build the groundwork for its continuing and expanding preeminence.”

Giddens has also been active in helping the general public gain a better understanding of both the engineering profession and the engineer’s role in society. In 2008, he chaired a National Academy of Engineering committee that explored the ways in which messaging and practical communication could help change perceptions, engage students and portray a more positive image of engineering. Earlier this year, he was selected as president-elect of the American Society for Engineering Education.

Following his retirement, Giddens will return to the faculty on a part-time basis to continue his research in cardiovascular fluid mechanics as well as his professional activities.

“The impact that Don has had on this...”

President to Introduce New Strategic Plan August 31

President G. P. “Bud” Peterson will introduce Georgia Tech’s new Strategic Plan during his Institute Address, set for Tuesday, Aug. 31, at 11 a.m. in the Robert Ferst Center for the Arts.

Peterson will share the vision and provide an overview of the Strategic Plan to take Georgia Tech to its 150th anniversary in 2035. Attendees are also invited to enjoy a light “to-go” lunch following the event. The presentation will be broadcast live to Georgia Tech Savannah, and an archived recording will be available the following day.

Following the address, Peterson will answer questions from participants as well as those sent in advance. A selected group of those questions will be posted online as a follow-up to the event.

This fall various academic and administrative units will be asked to identify the ways in which they will help achieve the goals outlined in the plan.
National Academic Rankings Hold Steady

Annual U.S. News assessment gives Georgia Tech high marks

MATT NAGEL
COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

Georgia Tech ranks 7th among public universities in the 2011 edition of America’s Best Colleges by U.S. News & World Report. Georgia Tech has ranked in the top 10 of public universities for more than a decade.

“The continued excellence and improvement in the U.S. News & World Report rankings is a testament to Georgia Tech's commitment to providing our students with a world-class education,” said Georgia Tech President G.P. “Bud” Peterson.

Georgia Tech’s College of Engineering moved up one spot in the undergraduate rankings to fourth for engineering programs at universities where the highest degree is a Ph.D.

The Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering maintained its top ranking, and Aerospace Engineering ranked second in its discipline. Mechanical Engineering moved up one spot to join Biomedical Engineering and Civil Engineering with all ranked third. Electrical and Environmental Engineering both ranked fifth among their peers.

Georgia Tech’s College of Management rose from 31st last year to 28th this year.

For the first time, U.S. News & World Report polled high school guidance counselors.

A team led by Georgia Tech has received a $10 million “Experiments in Computing” award from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to develop novel computing techniques for measuring and analyzing the behavior of children.

These technologies will be used to enable new approaches for identifying children at risk for autism and other developmental delays. The award — one of only 10 given by the NSF since 2008 — provides up to $2 million in funding each year for five years and is designed to push boundaries in computer science, catalyzing a new scientific discipline called computational behavioral science.

Autism affects one of every 110 children in the United States, and the long-term outcomes for a child who is at risk for autism can be significantly improved if the child is treated at an early age. As a result, it is widely accepted that all children should be screened for developmental delays as early in life as possible.

For this project, researchers will design vision, speech and wearable sensor technologies to analyze child behavior. Data will be collected from interactions between caregivers and children, children playing and socializing in a daycare environment, and clinicians interacting with children during individual therapy sessions. Multiple sensing technologies are necessary to obtain a comprehensive and integrated portrait of expressed behavior.

Cameras and microphones will provide an inexpensive and noninvasive way to measure eye gaze and facial and body expressions, along with speech and non-speech utterances. Wearable sensors will measure physiological variables such as heart rate and skin conductivity, which contain important clues about levels of internal stress and arousal that are linked to behavior.

The research team will also develop capabilities for synchronizing the signals from the microphones, cameras and on-body sensors. By developing and using models of social interactions, the researchers will analyze the sensor data to quantify engagement.

In the future, the researchers hope to expand their work beyond autism to other developmental disorders and the general study of child behavior.

NSF award Focuses on Early Detection of Developmental Disorders

Next generation media to be explored during FutureMedia Fest 2010

From October 4-7, 2010, Georgia Tech will host the first FutureMedia Fest, an interactive “mash-up” to explore and enable new paradigms in how content is created, distributed and consumed in a converging media world. Attendees at FutureMedia Fest 2010 will discuss the transformational impact of next generation digital, social and mobile media across industries, societies and our daily lives.

“Digital, social, mobile and multimedia are fundamentally changing business models and transforming how we communicate,” said Renu Kulkarni, executive director of FutureMedia. “We are in the middle of a revolution — some will fail, some will survive, and some will thrive. FutureMedia Fest is an incredible opportunity to challenge the norm, experience future possibilities and understand how new media platforms will affect organizational change and growth.”

www.futuremediaglobal.com

GIDDENS, continued from page 1

institution is immense, and we thank him for his tireless service on behalf of Georgia Tech,” President G. P. “Bud” Peterson said. “His enthusiasm for engineering cannot be overstated, and we will continue to look to him as a resource in assessing the future of engineering education in the United States.”

“Georgia Tech has changed dramatically since I arrived as a fresh student in 1958, and I could never have dreamed then that I would one day be dean of the largest, and I would argue the best, engineering college in the country,” Giddens said. “This institutional ascendancy in such a relatively short time is truly remarkable. But upon reflection, I’m not surprised. We have the best people — faculty, students, staff and alumni — one can imagine, and it is the people who make Georgia Tech great. I’m happy to have been fortunate enough to spend almost an entire career here.”

The Institute will form a search committee and initiate a search for a successor in the coming weeks.

www.coe.gatech.edu

Caption here
knowing the ultimate enormity of the assignment he was accepting.

Eighteen months later, Schuster’s term as provost, Clough announced his plans to retire from the presidency and accept the position of secretary of The Smithsonian Institution. Soon afterward, University System of Georgia Chancellor Erroll Davis asked Schuster to serve as interim president while the search for a permanent successor was being conducted. Schuster agreed and began serving as interim president on July 1, 2008. Service was offered as both interim president and provost would be a highly challenging task in the best of times. The 2008-09 academic year, however, turned out to be anything but routine for Schuster and the rest of the Institute’s leadership. A rapidly deteriorating economy led to state revenue decreases that required significant budget reductions.

“Georgia Tech is a strong institution with deep roots and a bright future,” Schuster said. “These have been a challenging four or five years, and Georgia Tech has come through it pretty strong. It’s a challenge for any organization to manage during times of contraction. This was especially true at Georgia Tech because we’d been on a continuous growth curve for a decade or more. When the economic crisis hit, we had to pull back and slow down. There’s a story that says it’s not the fall that hurts, it’s the sudden stop at the end. So I think the objective was to try and avoid that sudden stop. Tech was successful in managing that crisis—and that includes administrators, faculty, staff and students—and we’ll be successful into the future.”

The most difficult decision he made as interim president, Schuster said, was to implement a hiring freeze. “The lifeblood of any organization, especially a research university, is the influx of new ideas, new concepts, and new techniques,” he explained. “Universities are future focused. We are educating future leaders and we’re trying to discover the technology of the future and make a difference, and that requires a constant stream of new ideas. So cutting back on bringing in new people was the most painful decision for me.”

“I want to thank Gary Schuster for his tireless and superb service to Georgia Tech as provost and interim president,” said President Bud Peterson. “Thanks to Gary’s steady hand and cool head, the Institute has been able to preserve its core mission in the face of a severe economic crisis. The entire Tech community owes him a tremendous debt of gratitude for helping to position us for even greater preeminence in the years to come.”

When Schuster concludes his term as provost on Aug. 31, he will return to full-time teaching and research. At this time of transition, Schuster’s colleagues are offering high praise for his leadership in advancing the Institute’s academic agenda and reputation.

“Since his term as provost began four years ago, Schuster has led the expansion of Georgia Tech’s global initiatives and aspirations to become a worldwide leader of strategic globalization in higher education. He has also focused on improving the undergraduate experience through a curriculum that offers the breadth and depth necessary to prepare the next generation of innovators and leaders,” said Executive Vice President and Provost Steve Cross. “Gary hired three of the Institute’s six current deans and he navigated Tech through one of its most challenging and uncertain financial periods with minimal impact and consistent grace and honor. And he did all of this while conducting an impressive research program that continues to receive international acclaim.”

“Gary has played a critical and substantial role in the successes of the College of Management as provost and interim president,” said Management Dean Steve Salbu. “I couldn’t have asked for greater support, or for more help in finding ways for the College to get things done, than we received from Gary. Without his support, guidance and creative ideas for pursuing opportunities, the College of Management’s recent progress would not have been possible.”

Prior to being named provost, Schuster served for a dozen years as dean of the College of Sciences, a period of robust growth in the size and quality of the faculty and increasing recognition within academia.

“The most impressive result of Gary’s term as dean of the College of Sciences is the large number of very highly qualified young professors who were hired, promoted and tenured,” said current Dean Paul Houston.

“Many of them, and an increasing percentage over the years, won National Science Foundation CAREER awards. Research directed at the College increased as well, no doubt due to the hiring of more and more research-active faculty. From the outside, particularly from those of us in chemistry, his biggest coup was bringing a team of four (Center for Organic Photonics and Electronics) to Tech from the University of Arizona. That got attention.”

“Gary was very active in research during his tenure as dean, provost and interim president,” said Kent Barford, a recently retired associate dean of the College of Sciences.

“By my count he has published more than 90 journal articles since his arrival at Tech in 1994, including three already in 2010. He was actively involved in teaching and training graduate students, and a significant fraction of them were underrepresented minorities and/or females. I think it is also worth pointing out that Gary was one of the voted faculty sides behind the concept of creating the Life Sciences complex of buildings.”

“As impressive and extensive as his list of academic and administrative accomplishments is, what stands out in the minds of Schuster’s closest colleagues is his exceptionally strong sense of duty.”

“I often sensed and was sometimes told by Gary that he enjoyed being dean more than he enjoyed his subsequent jobs at Tech,” Houston recalled. “But he was willing both to step in as interim president when needed. Having done more than he bargained for, I’m sure that he will enjoy this last phase of his career.”

One of the things Schuster anticipates most about this next phase is teaching Introduction to Organic Chemistry, the first course he taught 35 years ago when he began his faculty career. He also looks forward to devoting more time to his research program, which focuses on oxidative damage to DNA and learning how to more skillfully control and manipulate the structure of DNA.

That said, Schuster is keenly aware of how much he will miss his friends and colleagues in Carnegie come September 1.

“I’ve told them that I’m not going all that far and they’ll have to come and visit me,” he said, “and I’ve got a lab bench waiting for them.”

For a more comprehensive listing of events updated daily, visit www.gatech.edu/calendar.

REAL ESTATE/ROOMMATES

Seeking roommates to share large 3BR/2.5BA in Raynoldston/Cabbagetown. Porches, balcony, washer/dryer. Short walk to Carrol St. cafes, shops. 4 miles SE of Tech. House occupied by Tech instructor. Rent: $650/month plus half utilities. Please contact jenniferbronner@mac.com.

For sale: 40BR/3BA home in East Cobb. 5 min. from freeway, 16 mi. from Tech. Classifieds continue on page 4
**Community**

**Bend, Don’t Break: Mastering the Art of Guitar Building**

**DAVID ARNOLD**

**COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING**

It’s hard to say whether Glenda Skinner wanted to keep her husband Sam from being lonely or keep him out of trouble when she gave him a guitar building kit five years ago. Sam Skinner was just setting a position at Georgia Tech Savannah, which included a 300-mile commute back and forth to Acworth, Georgia, every two weeks or so. Little did either one of them know how this do-it-yourself venture would change their lives.

When he started building his first guitar, Skinner was extremely apprehensive about how to bend wood without breaking it. Since the kit was for a Martin guitar—one of the finest and most famous names in acoustic guitar manufacturing—he sought out a certified Martin dealer. He happened upon one near Savannah in Pooler, Georgia.

Skinner walked into the guitar shop with his kit in hand and met owner Randy Wood, a master luthier, who looked at the kit and told Skinner he wouldn’t build his guitar for him. When Skinner replied he just wanted to ask a few questions, Wood changed his tune. “Great,” he said. “What can I do for you?”

So began a five-year friendship that grew until Wood invited Skinner to bring his kit to the guitar shop to work on it. As their relationship grew, Skinner began helping around the shop to “pay” for his tutoring, doing everything from painting the shop to computer repairs. Along the way Skinner found out that Wood learned to be a luthier from Tut Taylor, the Georgia Tech guitar building program’s founder, and that Tut Taylor was a talented bluegrass musician. The Tut Taylor connection led to Wood working for such renowned guitar makers as Johnny Cash, Eric Clapton and Keith Richards. As Skinner continued his guitar building, he learned from Wood’s own instruction.

Overall, Skinner says that in some ways guitar building is harder than working with electronics. It is a labor of prep work—building molds, patterns and jigs with close tolerances and no margin for error—all before he even touches a piece of the wood for the guitar.

So has Skinner overcome his fear of bending wood? Pretty much, though he does admit, “When you pay $1,300 for a piece of Koa or Rosewood, you are a little more antsy.” Among those guitars he has completed, Skinner has sold a few and donated a few more. He recently built a guitar that was a Georgia Tech special: featuring all of his unique touches and attention to detail, including mother-of-pearl inlaid interlocking GT and Buzz on the pick guard and headstock: (As he does with all his creations, he gave the Tech guitar a name: George.) He donated the instrument to the Alumni Association for its silent auction in June, selling for more than $2,000.

Glenda Skinner no longer worries about her husband being lonely. Maybe some day Skimmers’ home will become a destination for famous musicians searching for that perfect sound. No doubt Sam has enough in the works to keep him around the house for a long time.

Sam Skinner, who works as a systems support specialist within the School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, displays some of his finished work.

Skinner, who has been building guitars for about five years, works on his hobby in his Acworth home. Here, several new models are suspended in various phases of construction.

**New Program Offers Faculty an Alternative to Cancelling Class**

Professors negotiating a scheduling conflict now have another option: a new program developed by the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) offers professors an educational alternative to canceling class.

The program, “Don’t Cancel That Class: A Lecture Alternative Program,” dispatches qualified staff to the classroom when the instructor has a professional or personal conflict. ODOS staff can cover a class by presenting workshops on myriad topics relevant to all students—leadership, communication, social justice/diversity, conflict resolution, professional/personal development, ethical decision making, global citizenship, legal issues, and student integrity.

Don’t Cancel That Class is a concept that is utilized successfully by several leading universities including the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Rutgers University, and is in line with an ODOS goal to enhance faculty interaction in the spirit of collaboration.

“I am very excited about this new initiative,” said Dean of Students John Stein. “Our hope is that faculty will collaborate with us by offering students the opportunity to explore some interesting and relevant topics to both their Tech experience and beyond.”

In addition to students receiving an educational and thorough-provoking lecture, ODOS staff will take attendance and provide faculty with a copy of the attendance record and all handouts. The program also offers faculty the flexibility to create a presentation that will fit specific needs.

More information is available on the ODOS website:

www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu

---

**CLASSIFIEDS**

Hardwood floors downstairs, new carpeting upstairs, granite counter, finished basement, sun room, bonus room and deck. $350,000. Call 404-626-8181.

3BR/2 SBA home for sale in Marietta. Easy access to I-75 and I-285, 20 minutes to Tech. Spacious master suite with huge walk-in closet and spa-like master bath. Large patio in level, private backyard. $325,000. Visit web.me.com/bosbournecourtyard2541.

Brick ranch style 3BR/2BA in East Point. More than 2,000 sq. ft. for rent. Eat-in kitchen, pantry, and hookups up and down, formal DR w/ bay window seat, large living room w/ gas fireplace, closest space, screened porch, fenced backyard, 2-car carport. $1,100/month. Dogs and cats OK. E-mail Denia at deniwhy@aol.com.

1BR fully furnished Midtown condo, $1,700/month. Balcony over Piedmont Park, fitness center, pool, home entertainment system, 24-hour concierge, covered parking, one block to MARTA or Tech Trolley. Call 708-373-7943.

Tech employee interested in renting a 4BR/SBA home for 2 years in Marietta. Call 678-717-9251.

2BR/2SBA townhouse, end unit, hardwood floors, new appliances, granite countertops. Great roommate plan. Over 1,000 square feet. Courtyard view, very private. Great area. near everything! $1,300/month. Call 678-637-5527.

**FURNITURE/APPLIANCES**

Large solid pine entertainment center for sale, $300. Pics available upon request. E-mail ronmoro@gatech.edu.

Beige leather couch w/pull-out bed, $200 or best offer. Pick up in Midtown. Email liz.hanton@gatech.edu for pictures.

Cherry wood dining room table and matching china cabinet for sale, $250. Trivial water tank, 250-galloncapacity, $125. Must pick up. Email Kim at lispad@print.blackenberg.net.

Queen mattress + box spring made by Sealy Mattress Company (a Sealy Posturepedic Plus Signature), Date of manufacturer: 2008; Model: 504422; Price: $350 (less than $1,000); Pics available. E-mail parvaneh.t1.ml@gmail.com.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

Our nanny has been with our family for six years. She is kind, loving, conscientious, and reliable. We would like to arrange her stay with another family. Preference would be a GT employee or someone who works and/or lives in the Midtown area. Please contact KimWilsonMNA@aol.com.

Dell Alienware M17x-R2, Intel Core i7-620M Processor, Dual 500GB drives, 4GB RAM, 1GB ATI Radeon Mobility HD 5870, 17-inch Wide UXGA. Delivered June 2010. $2,700 value, sell for $2,000. Call 404-610-9090 or e-mail chuck@myloopyfamily.com.

• 500GB, $350, 17-inch WUXGA, 4GB RAM, 1GB ATI Radeon Mobility HD 5870, 17-inch Wide UXGA. Delivered June 2010. $2,700 value, sell for $2,000. Call 404-610-9090 or e-mail chuck@myloopyfamily.com.

E-mail submissions to E-mail submissions to E-mail submissions to E-mail submissions to E-mail submissions to

Ads appear and run for three weeks in the order in which they are received. E-mail submissions to editor@comm.gatech.edu.