Tech Named ‘Great College to Work For’

COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

For the third consecutive year, Georgia Tech has been recognized on The Chronicle of Higher Education’s “Great Colleges To Work For” Honor Roll. Tech was the only four-year public institution in Georgia to receive the recognition.

“At Georgia Tech, we recognize that all accomplishments come through people,” said Scott Morris, associate vice president of Human Resources. “We are so pleased to be recognized for our efforts to support and develop an outstanding workforce.”

Georgia Tech was recognized in four out of twelve categories: confidence in senior leadership, job satisfaction; facilities, workspace and security; and work/life balance.

The results, released in The Chronicle’s fourth annual report on the academic workplace, are based on a survey of approximately 44,000 people at 310 institutions, including 245 four-year colleges. Honor Roll recognition for four-year colleges was given to the 10 institutions in each size division that were cited most often across all of the recognition categories.

For example, relating to the facilities, workplaces and security category, during the past 15 years, Georgia Tech has constructed and renovated many campus facilities that serve as a vital backdrop for providing an innovative live, learn and work environment, including a significant investment in the human and ecological landscape.

The campus has also increased its focus on sustainability, establishing building standards for environmental stewardship, sustainable design and energy management and requiring that all building and renovation projects be designed and built to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold standards.

“We are absolutely honored to have been selected for this recognition, but we are not content to rest on our laurels,” Morris said.

“Our goal is to be recognized in each of the 12 dimensions outlined in the survey.”

Two other Georgia colleges were included on the 2011 Honor Roll. Brenau University in Gainesville was recognized in the small, four-year category, while East Georgia College in Swansboro was recognized in the small, two-year category.

According to The Chronicle, the assessment process had two components: a questionnaire about institutional characteristics and a faculty/staff questionnaire about individuals’ evaluations of their institutions.

The assessment also included an analysis of demographic data and workplace policies at each participating college or university. The questionnaires were administered online in March and April of this year.

http://tinyurl.com/gctwft

Zimride Lets Techies Share Commutes

KRISTEN SHAW
COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

As heat waves burn on, gas prices hold steady and carpool lanes prepare to open along I-85, campus commuters may be looking for a way to improve the ride to Tech each day. New to Georgia Tech, Zimride offers a matching system for members of the campus community seeking a partner with whom to share the ride.

While public carpool matching sites exist for the metro area, Zimride’s exclusivity allows students, faculty and staff to find fellow riders or drivers who they know are affiliated with campus.

“Other services are good for the region but don’t really fit the needs of the Institute or many users’ safety concerns,” said Aaron Fowler, alternative transportation coordinator for Parking and Transportation. Zimride incorporates social media to help users get from their origin to their destination.

With Zimride, users create an online profile with their start and end points and are provided with matches, similar to the workings of an online dating service.

“The number one thing to do when you sign up is to put up a photo — it increases the likelihood of finding a ride and exemplifies to other users that you’re a real person,” said Paul Thompson with Zimride. Because Zimride is created for either recurring rides, such as a daily commute, or one-time rides,
School of Building Construction Appoints Chair

Daniel Castro, associate professor, is the new chair of the School of Building Construction in the College of Architecture.

An expert in material procurement, automation protocols and sustainable energy alternatives for buildings, he is tasked with advancing the school’s education and research and with expanding its international outreach.

Castro was a finalist selected by a 12-member search committee, a mix of academics and senior figures in the construction industry.

“I am certain that Daniel’s leadership will strengthen and redefine the character of the School of Building Construction in response to transforming industry — an industry in which Georgia Tech graduates have played a strong role, and which will continue to be a major contributor to the nation’s economy,” said Alan Ballou, dean of the College of Architecture. “He will bring a broad and distinct international perspective to the ambitions of the school.”

As interim chair in 2011, Castro prepared the proposal for a new PhD degree with a major in building construction (final approval is expected in fall 2011) and also led the winning bid to host the American Society of Civil Engineers Construction Research Congress at Georgia Tech in 2014.

Castro joined the Georgia Tech faculty in 2006 after teaching at Ohio University. He holds a PhD in civil engineering from Purdue University, a master’s in construction management from University of Reading (United Kingdom) and a bachelor’s in civil engineering from the Universidad de Los Andes (Colombia).

Strategic Planning News

Faculty Invited to Participate in First Day Initiative

TAKING 10 minutes on the first day of class to introduce yourself to students can go a long way in building relationships in the classroom.

This is the logic behind the new First Day Lecture initiative being launched the week of Aug. 22. The initiative is part of several projects that the Student Government Association (SGA) has in the works to improve student-faculty relationships, including the new Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement.

“We were trying to find a way to foster a conversation in the classroom among faculty and students,” said Undergraduate Student Body Vice President Austin Edwards, who helped develop the initiative. “And doing this can really help build the classroom culture.”

There are no instructions on what to say and the initiative is not mandatory — faculty members are simply encouraged to take time on the first day of class to share a bit about their research, experience and anything else they feel inclined to tell students.

The idea, which goes hand-in-hand with strategic plan Goal 1 relating to increasing faculty-student interaction, originated from conversations among the Student Advisory Board for Undergraduate Research, the SGA Academic Affairs Team and the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts Student Advisory Board about ways to facilitate student-faculty interaction.

John Tone, associate dean of Ivan Allen College, was approached by the college’s student advisory board, which wanted to pilot the idea at the college last spring.

“The students knew that faculty members were doing research, but they didn’t always know what it was,” he said. “They thought it would be beneficial for the faculty members to tell a little bit about themselves when classes started, which might lead to opportunities to work with faculty on research projects.”

Since the pilot, Tone has heard from students whose professors took the time to share a little about themselves on the first day of spring classes.

Several students said that this introduction actually led to them feeling more connected in class,” Tone added.

Email Tone your questions at john.tone@isye.gatech.edu.

Technology and Law Task Force Makes Progress

A collaboration between Georgia Tech and Emory University in the areas of law and technology is on its way to becoming a reality.

The partnership stems from one of the 10 institutional strategic initiatives, set forth last year, that grew out of Tech’s new strategic plan.

“During the strategic planning process, one issue that kept coming to the forefront was the connection between technology and law,” said Marie Thursby, co-chair of the initiative’s task force. “Law is not part of Tech’s core mission, but it plays a large role in the development and commercialization of technology. We have already built a strong relationship with Emory, so exploring the expansion of our partnership in these areas became a priority.”

A task force that includes four Tech members and four Emory members was formed to research a potential law/technology degree program. Tech team members include Thursby, professor in the College of Management; Mark Allen, Regents’ Professor and executive director for the Institute for Electronics and Nanotechnology; Ty Herrington, professor in the School of Literature, Communication and Culture; and Bruce Stifel, chair of the School of City and Regional Planning.

The group met several times last spring to discuss potential degree programs and hopes to provide a formal proposal to senior leadership at both institutions by the end of fall semester.

“We have focused on programs at the graduate level but will continue to investigate the possibility of some joint bachelor of science/juris master or juris doctor programs,” Thursby said.

For more information, contact Lynn Durham, assistant vice president, at lynn.durham@emory.gatech.edu.
‘Robots for Humanity’ Helps Quadriplegic

Since his stroke 10 years ago, Henry Evans has been unable to scratch an itch or shave his own face. But now, even though he is mute and quadriplegic, he can scratch himself and shave his cheek with the aid of a Personal Robot 2 (PR2) in a laboratory setting.

These successes come out of a new project called “Robots for Humanity,” a collaboration of Georgia Tech, Willow Garage, and Henry and Jane Evans of Palo Alto, Calif.

The initial steps show great potential for the role of personal robots in assisting individuals with disabilities. “This is just the beginning,” said Charlie Kemp, director of the Healthcare Robotics Lab at Georgia Tech and assistant professor of biomechatronic engineering. “We hope to really push on these technologies so robots like this can actually help people every day.”

The Robots for Humanity project started somewhat serendipitously. Last year, Henry Evans saw Kemp on CNN demonstrating his research with the PR2, a robot built by private research lab Willow Garage. Evans was excited about the robot’s potential to help him, so he contacted Willow Garage and Kemp to see if they would be willing to work with him. Since January, the team has been crafting various interfaces, tools and control software to help Evans perform more tasks on his own. In March, Kemp and members from his research team — Georgia Tech graduate students Tiffany Chen, Philip Grice and Hai Nguyen — flew to California to work with Willow Garage researchers and Henry and Jane Evans. At this meeting, Evans controlled the robot to scratch his own face for the first time in 10 years. Researchers also went to the Evans’ home to learn more about Henry and his needs.

A poster showing the PR2 with the razor apparatus developed by the research team at Georgia Tech's Healthcare Robotics Group, in collaboration with Willow Garage.

Evans used PowerPoint to design a layout for an interface, which guided the first implementation. “Using new web technologies, we’ve set up all the controls so they are entirely in the web browser,” said Georgia Tech graduate student Philip Grice. “Henry can use the interface from his home in California and control the robot here in Atlanta. There is nothing he has to download.”

Kemp, and team members Chen, Grice and Keby Hawkins, returned to California in June to work with Willow Garage and Evans, testing methods for shaving and scratching. It was then that Evans was able shave his cheek. Back in Atlanta, Kemp’s postdoctoral fellow Chih-Hung Aaron King has been a key part of the project, too. “We think it’s an incredibly compelling use of a general-purpose robot,” said Steve Cousins, CEO of Willow Garage, a company that develops hardware and open source software for personal robotics applications.

Energy Improvements Move Full Steam Ahead

You probably know that the center of campus has been a hotbed of construction since winter. But you may not be aware that one of these projects is meant to improve energy efficiency on campus.

Georgia Tech Facilities is replacing steam and condense lines — some of which are more than 50 years old — under Bobby Dodd Way and under sidewalks and steps from the library’s main entrance down the steps between the two libraries to Architecture East.

“Most people realize that steam is important for heating buildings in the winter, but it is also a critical part of controlling humidity and keeping occupants cool during the summer,” said Michael Leasure, assistant director of energy conservation. “That’s why these improvements are so important.”

Tech started replacing pipes about eight years ago, with the current effort being the largest to date. Leasure added this project is one of three energy efficiency projects that are being funded with $1.4 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Once the current improvements are completed, the projected savings is about $347,000 per year over the course of four years — money that Facilities hopes to reinvest into other energy efficiency projects.

When possible, new pipes are being installed next to old pipes and connected to the existing system during one of two scheduled outages, one of which occurred during spring break and the other from Aug. 5 to 20. Most buildings on campus will be affected by the outage. People in these buildings can expect to experience colder than normal building temperatures and lack of hot water and steam for research equipment such as autoclaves, Leasure said.

The current project should be completed by the end of May 2012. However, it will probably take another five to seven years to complete all campus replacement work.

For more information, contact Leasure at michael.leasure@facilities.gatech.edu.

ww.hsi.gatech.edu/cckemp

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**Community**

**Dreger’s Love for Gardens Grew into Business**

AMELIA PAVLIK
COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

It’s always nice when you can find a way to make something you love.

Cathy Dreger, secretary to the vice president for Student Affairs, and her husband are avid gardeners who grow a laundry list of produce including tomatoes, kale, lettuce, Swiss chard, kohlrabi and figs.

“When living in Chattanooga, my son worked in several restaurants, and we connected with local chefs who were eager to get local produce,” she said. “At the time, no one else in the area was growing produce to get local produce,” she said. “At the time, no one else in the area was growing produce to

Tell us a few things about your job that others might not be aware of.

“My job is to do whatever I can to help Dr. Schafer accomplish what needs to get done. That means arranging travel, setting up meetings, processing incoming and outgoing mail, inputting employee timesheets and sick/vacation time, and managing his calendar. This year, it will also be my responsibility to update the flags hanging in the atrium of the Student Services building.

What are a few work-related accomplishments you are proud of?

“In a previous job, I was part of a team that planned and executed a two-week institute, which was attended by a number of delegates from overseas. It was my responsibility to see that they had all the information they needed to make their travel arrangements. To see them arrive on campus from Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia and get to know them was very satisfying.

What do you enjoy most and least about your job?

“By far, the best part of working in higher education is being around students. I really enjoy their energy and optimism. If I did the same work in a corporate setting, it wouldn’t be much fun. My least favorite aspect is having a long commute. I take MARTA, so I can read or take a nap.

What piece of technology could you not live without?

“I’m not hooked on much — I just need my computer.

What are three things that everyone should do while working at Tech?

“Attend a football game, visit the G. Wayne Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons and ride the trolley.

Where is the best place to grab lunch, and what do you order?

“I usually bring lunch, which includes ingredients from my garden. But when I buy lunch, a chicken sandwich from Chick-fil-A is usually at the top of my list.

**MaRC Staff Member Dies**

Harriet Arlisa “Lisa” Teasley died on July 14 in Atlanta. Teasley was administrative manager in the Manufacturing Research Center (MaRC).

She began her career at Georgia Tech in 1997, working for MaRC Director Steven Danyluk and Interim Director Shreyes Melkote.

Speaking at her celebration of life held at Salem Bible Church on July 23, Danyluk said that he “thought of Lisa as if she were one of my daughters. She always had a smile on her face.”

Recently, The Whistle had an opportunity to talk with Lisa’s former colleagues who worked in several restaurants, and we connected with local chefs who were eager to get local produce. At the time, no one else in the area was growing produce to get local produce,” she said. “At the time, no one else in the area was growing produce.

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**Find the Toaster in DramaTech Productions**

In honor of Tech’s 125th birthday year, we’re partnering with the Georgia Tech Alumni Magazine to highlight a piece of Tech history.

The following excerpt is number 73 on the list “125 Pieces of Tech History,” featured in the September/October 2010 issue of Georgia Tech Alumni Magazine:

The toaster has a bit part in every DramaTech production. Look for it on a table, in a painting or in the arms of a cast member in “Arsenic and Old Lace.”

Zimride starts by asking the origin and destination of the users.

Thompson said students in areas with other universities in close proximity have also used the service to travel between campuses. In the Atlanta area, Zimride has already set up shop at Emory and Kennesaw State universities and is in progress with the University of Georgia.

“We’ve always had a pretty strong carpooling program, but ran into a limitation when people called wanting to find someone to ride share with — we didn’t have that capability,” said David Williamson, associate director for transportation in Parking and Transportation. “We want to provide alternatives and good choices for people, and Zimride makes it a little more convenient for those looking for an alternative.”

Zimride’s Georgia Tech website is live and will soon enable signup using the Georgia Tech Central Authentication System (CAS). Those who find matches and wish to change from an individual to carpool permit for 2011-12 may switch and receive a prorated refund from Parking and Transportation at any time.

www.zimride.gatech.edu