Town Hall to Focus on Online Education

VICTOR ROGERS
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS


In recent weeks, these universities and others announced plans to put their web-based courses online and create new opportunities for hands-on learning in the classroom.

The movement, which has the potential to change the way education has been delivered for decades, is causing some in the higher education community to question the speed of the changes as well as the overall direction.

“It’s an exciting time for all of us, albeit a bit scary,” said Rafael L. Bras, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs. “People in positions like mine prefer to know exactly where decisions are going to take us. In this case, the uncertainty is large, but the risk of inaction is very high. It is challenging. I am confident that others in higher education around this country and the world are feeling the same way I do.”

Although there are unanswered questions, Bras wants the Institute to have a role in shaping the direction instead of playing catch-up later.

“Georgia Tech clearly must be an important player in this,” Bras said. “We have to stay on top of it to live up to our vision of being the technological research university of the 21st century.”

To continue the discussion with the Tech community, Bras will lead the Town Hall on Online Education on Sept. 13 at 11 a.m. in room 1116, Klaus Advanced Computing Building.

He will be joined by three of the Institute’s leaders in online education — Rich DeMillo, director of the Center for 21st Century Universities and chair of the Council for Educational Technology; Donna Llewellyn, associate vice provost for Learning Excellence; and Nelson Baker, dean of Professional Education — who will give an overview of the work taking place in their respective areas.

A panel of faculty will be available to answer questions about courses they are teaching via Coursera, a new online education provider partnering with Tech and other premier universities.

Those interested in attending should RSVP at http://provost.gatech.edu/townHallRSVP.

To view the webcast, visit the Office of the Provost’s website the day of the event.

http://provost.gatech.edu

McCamish Pavilion to Open to Visitors Before Home Games

President Shares Progress Report, Answers Questions

AMELIA PAVLIK
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

From questions about merit raises and dealing with rising tuition costs to sharing the successes of the past year, the annual Institute Address provided the campus community with an opportunity to hear straight from President G. P. “Bud” Peterson.

The president kicked off the address by thanking leaders of the 15 active projects that have developed out of the Institute’s 25-year strategic plan launched two years ago. (For more information about each project, visit www.gatech.edu/mission/projects.)

“Thanks to the continuing engagement of the Georgia Tech community, we have made solid progress, and I continue to be impressed by the collaboration and innovative spirit of those working on the various aspects of the plan,” Peterson said.

He also discussed some of the new facilities that will be opening on campus in the future, made possible through a combination of private philanthropy, state and industry contributions.

Register Now for Fall OPTIONS Courses

The OPTIONS program offers something for everyone. Interested in taking a non-credit enrichment class this fall? Register now:

tinyurl.com/Bw3x2oup

Institute Addresses Tailgating in Residence Halls

Tailgating — which happens when people who shouldn’t be in a building follow someone with access in — is a problem on campus. Find out how Housing is addressing it:

tinyurl.com/c66tc1c

Access eResources on Campus Without Logging In

Members of the campus community now have seamless access to the Library’s eResources. Find out more at tinyurl.com/9ig6errc

ADDRESS, continued on page 2
**EVENTS**

**ARTS & CULTURE**

**September 14**
The First Center presents WCLK Jazz Night featuring Gregory Porter at 7:30 p.m.
www.firstcenter.gatech.edu

**CONFERENCES AND LECTURES**

**September 5**
The Robotics and Intelligent Machines Center presents Robert J. Website of Vanderbilt University at noon in room 1116, Marcus Nanotechnology Building.
http://robotics.gatech.edu

The IMPACT Speaker Series presents Gailynn Ghalt, founder and CEO of Wyomn Arts, at 4:30 p.m. in the LeCraw Auditorium, College of Business.
http://its.gatech.edu/IMPACT.html

**September 6**
As part of the School of Aerospace Engineering’s lecture series, Michael Griffin, chairman and CEO of the Sierra Nevada Corporation, will speak on “Why Do We Want to Have a Space Program?” at 3:30 p.m. in room 4442, Montgomery Knight Building.
www.se.gatech.edu

**September 10**
The School of Mathematics will host the Stelson Lecture on “Robust Principal Component Analysis,” presented by Emmanuel Candés of Stanford University, at 4:25 p.m. in room 144, Oliphant Commons.
tinyurl.com/d04wfc7

**September 13**
The 2012 Petit Institute Distinguished Lecture will feature David Moorey of Harvard University. Moorey will give a talk on “Biomaterials to Program Cells In Situ” at 11 a.m. in the Petit Institute Auditorium.
www.ipb.gatech.edu

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**September 6**
The Office of the Vice President for Institute Diversity invites you to attend a networking social and reception for faculty, staff and student leaders at Georgia Tech. The event will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Academy of Medicine.
RSVP to najlah.hofman@vpid.gatech.edu.
www.diversity.gatech.edu

**September 10**
Join the Georgia Tech GIS Community of Interest, led by the GIS/GTRI Program, at 11:30 a.m. at Georgia Tech Research Institute. Bring a lunch. Parking is free. Space is limited; RSVP to danielle.ayan@ghtri.gatech.edu.

Events continue on page 3

**Campus News**

**Learn How Decision Support Impacts You**

**AMELIA PAYLIK**

INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

It doesn’t matter if your job requires you to design a new curriculum for your school or create a budget for your department — the strongest decisions are usually made after taking a look at relevant data.

That’s where the Decision Support Group (DSG) at Georgia Tech comes in handy. Its mission is to help the Institute’s executive leadership, academic and administrative departments make informed decisions.

As part of this mission, the Office of the Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance, which oversees the DSG, is sponsoring a conference on Sept. 12 to help educate the campus community and beyond about how decision support, or using data to support decision making, is being used at Tech and other universities.

“Attending this conference is a great opportunity for faculty and staff to understand their roles at a data-driven institution like Tech and to learn what our peers are doing to improve institutional effectiveness,” said Amir Rahamay-Azar, senior vice president of Administration and Finance. “This conference is also an opportunity for faculty and staff to tell us what we are doing right regarding decision support and what needs improvement.

**ADDRESS**

continued from page 1

support. The McCamish Pavilion will open to the public in September, and the Ken Byers Tennis Complex will open in January. Tech will undertake a $10.5 million renovation of the Mason Building for Civil and Environmental Engineering and continue the phased renovation of residence halls and dining facilities.

In addition to other renovation and construction projects, Peterson spoke of the new Enginnered Biosystems Building that is under construction on Tenth Street.

“This facility will allow us to continue to expand our world-class activities in the biotechnology arena and will provide an economic boost to the state by fueling Georgia’s growing biotechnology industry,” he added.

Peterson mentioned the innovation ecosystem that Tech is creating, partnering with the City of Atlanta, the state and industry.

“We are actively and aggressively working to commercialize the technologies developed at Tech, moving the discoveries made in our laboratories to the marketplace, and building the companies that will create jobs, drive our economy and stimulate growth,” he said. Peterson also touched on topics including safety and research initiatives.

Following the address, Peterson responded to questions that had been submitted prior to the event and to those asked by members of the audience, online and through Twitter.

One faculty member submitted a question regarding the lack of merit raises for faculty and staff. Peterson acknowledged the challenging economic environment that has resulted in no across-the-board merit increases for state employees.

“One of the greatest challenges facing every one, from administrative staff to senior leaders, is getting the right data and information, in the right format, into the right hands,” said Sandy Bramblett, executive director of Institutional Research and Planning and Decision Support Services. “A decision support system that provides the right information to the right people when needed reduces operating costs, increases staff productivity and improves the quality and timeliness of decisions.”

The keynote address will be delivered by Rich DeMillo, director of the Center for 21st Century Universities, and will focus on “The Evolving University: Disruptive Change and Institutional Innovation.” Conference sessions will showcase new and emerging trends and ideas from the University of Michigan, the University of Illinois and Georgia Regents University.

“Our experts have not only studied decision support but have designed and implemented a culture of decision support at their institutions,” Bramblett added.

Some of the scheduled sessions include “Decision Support @ Georgia Tech (A Presentation of Progress to Date),” “Best Practice Perspectives: Development and Evaluation of Decision Support” and “The Art and Science of Communicating Data: Information Design + Data Visualization Trends and Practices.”

Attendees will also have a chance to participate in a series of discussions where they can contribute their ideas to designing a new and improved decision support concept for their own unit and for Georgia Tech.

For more information about the upcoming Decision Support Conference or to register for the event, visit tinyurl.com/c9edcux

**Dean Houston to Step Down**

**COLLEGE OF SCIENCES**

Paul Houston, dean of Georgia Tech’s College of Sciences, will step down from his post on June 30, 2013.

After leaving the dean’s position, Houston plans to stay at Tech for a short period to continue his research in physical chemistry and to oversee his graduate students. He plans to retire in 2014.

Houston came to Tech in 2007 to assume the dean position after being a professor of chemistry at Cornell University for 32 years.

“He has been an effective leader who leverages our strengths in the sciences and engineering via strategic partnerships and collaborations,” said Rafael L. Bras, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs.

www.cos.gatech.edu

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Archived issues of The Whistle can be accessed at www.whistle.gatech.edu.

Georgia Tech is a unit of the University System of Georgia.
It's usually not a challenge to get someone to share the name of a person who mentored them in school or professionally. But how do you become the kind of mentor that people fondly remember as someone who made a difference in their lives?

This was a topic of conversation at a Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL) seminar on mentoring graduate students, which was held as part of the center's teaching kickoff event in mid-August. It featured a panel of Georgia Tech faculty and staff members who shared some of the challenges they face in mentoring graduate students, as well as advice on how to be a successful mentor. Read on for thoughts from some of the panelists.

Dennis Hess
Professor
School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering

YEARS TEACHING: 35
CHALLENGE: Since graduate school can be frustrating at times, it can be difficult for students to establish and maintain motivation over a four- to five-year period. So I involve them in decision making on project directions and approaches from the beginning. I also send them to conferences and have them meet with visitors to Tech. This allows them to hear views distinct from mine on the work that they are doing. Often students feel their work is significant only to their thesis director; after they realize this is not the case, their motivation increases.

ADVICE: Listen to students and offer encouragement and constructive feedback on their concerns and performance. This includes showing respect for their opinions and concerns. This offers an opportunity to show professionalism and demonstrate how to deal with disagreement and conflict. Remind them that all of us make mistakes in judgment — both personally and professionally.

Laura Hollegren
Associate Professor
School of Architecture

YEARS TEACHING: 17
CHALLENGE: It would be working with students who don’t begin as particularly critical thinkers or articulate writers. I address this head-on in the kinds of comments, directions and framework I provide for their work, nudging them in the direction I want them to go, regardless of their point of departure.

ADVICE: Meet your students. The time you invest up front can be significant but the long-term benefits are substantial. Students who’ve gotten to know you a bit will feel more confident approaching you for help when they need it. Consider how you want students to grow over the trajectory of whole courses and design your assignments to facilitate and reward that growth, while minimizing the penalties for early mistakes.

John Krige
Professor and Director of Graduate Studies
School of History, Technology, and Society

YEARS TEACHING: 15
CHALLENGE: It would have to be dealing with bad writing, disorganized arguments when students have no understanding of the professional norms that go with being a researcher. To remedy this, I insist that students take all the relevant CETL classes they can.

ADVICE: Get the student to plan his or her intellectual trajectory through the program from the get-go. Define milestones and deliverables with the student, and ensure that they are kept. If there is slippage — there always is — try to understand why, and redefine more realistic milestones and deliverables with the student.

Carrie Sheppler, Director of Freshman Chemistry, School of Chemistry and Biochemistry

YEARS TEACHING: 7
CHALLENGE: When I first started working with graduate students, I avoided conflict if at all possible. Now, I make a conscious effort to provide feedback early and in smaller doses. I approach it from the perspective of making things better for all parties involved, and I try to help students embrace evaluation as a positive thing.

ADVICE: Make your expectations as clear as possible, and don’t be afraid to give constructive feedback when those expectations aren’t being met. Share your passion and excitement for the discipline with your students. If they understand what makes you tick, then your decisions and perspectives make more sense. This makes creating a teamwork environment easier.

www.ceti.gatech.edu
A Summer of Monks, Neuroscience

Some spend their summers doing research abroad or enjoying family time at the beach — Lena Ting spends hers debating basic principles of neuroscience with Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns in India.

Since 2008, Ting has participated in the Emory University Tibet Science Initiative that aims to educate a cohort of monks and nuns on the basics of math, biology, neuroscience and physics. “Many of the participants enter the monastery at age nine and only learn Buddhist philosophy,” said Ting, an associate professor in the Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering. “But in neuroscience, my area, we challenge a lot of that philosophy.”

Ting became involved with the program in fall of 2008. Since then, she has volunteered to spend much of her academic years planning lectures for the 60 hours the team spends teaching program participants over two weeks each summer.

“Most of these students are in their late 20s and 30s and have completed at least 10 years of Buddhist study — similar to being a PhD track,” Ting said. “They have a tradition of lively debate in the monasteries, which leads to some of the most engaged in-class discussions I’ve ever been a part of.”

One of the challenges Ting has faced is that these students have centuries-old explanations for things such as pain and negative emotions — explanations that don’t necessarily agree with the explanations that modern scientists, such as Ting, have to offer. “This leads to the most interesting interactions, because who is to say who is right and who is wrong,” she added. “Both sides offer valid points.”

The program includes two five-year cohorts, one of which graduated this year and the other will next year. Members of the cohorts will go on to start science programs in monasteries.

Recently, The Whistle had an opportunity to learn more about Ting.

What did you want to be when you were a child, and how did you end up at Tech?

I initially wanted to be an astronaut. In college, I studied mechanical engineering, and gradually I became interested in robotics and animal movement, which translated into an interest in how humans walk and the role the nervous system plays in this process. When it was time to look for a job, Georgia Tech and Emory were two of the places I wanted to work, based on the neuroscience and engineering programs offered. I’ve been at Tech for 10 years now.

Explain your research in a few sentences. I study how your brain controls your body, especially when it comes to standing and walking. So a lot of my research focuses on working with people who have Parkinson’s disease or have had a spinal injury or stroke.

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

I took standing and managing to balance for granted — and used to think “this isn’t even a movement!” But this process is actually a lot harder than a lot of us realize. Also, I find inspiration in what animals are doing. For example, you can learn from how a flamingo or an elephant moves.

What is the best advice you’ve ever received?

In graduate school, a peer told me to never use an alarm clock. That way, you sleep as much as your body needs to. To this day, I still try to follow this advice as often as possible, and I often share it with my students.

What is your favorite spot on campus?

I don’t leave the office much. But I really like how the green space between Clough Commons and the Student Center has developed. It’s much more open and enjoyable now.

Where is your favorite place to have lunch, and what do you order?

Rib’s N Blues, and I order the rib sandwich.

Tell us something unique about yourself that others might not be aware of.

I play ultimate Frisbee, and my team in graduate school was national championship.

I try to be a good citizen. I vote and I make sure that both parties have a chance to be heard.

Lena Ting crossing a river in the Himalayas during a trip this summer.

Faculty to Vote on Open Access Policy

Open Access FAQ

Why is this policy necessary now?

Open access is already required by a growing number of funding agencies, and a number of institutions such as Duke and Princeton have created open access policies. In addition, creating a policy on this issue provides Tech with an opportunity to help frame the debate on a state level. At this point, no other state institutions have such a policy.

Can I opt out?

Yes. There will be a simple, opt-out procedure. No questions will be asked if you choose not to participate.

Do academic journals support these policies?

Many academic journals are moving in the direction of support for open access publishing. There is variability across fields, but in general, journals recognize that the publishing landscape is changing rapidly and that journals will need to make changes to maintain viability and value.

INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

Whether it’s deciding what type of cancer treatment is most effective or formulating an argument to support a scientific theory, being aware of the latest research is essential to how people make decisions. But getting your hands on these studies can be an expensive challenge for people who don’t have access to scholarly journals.

To remedy this problem, Georgia Tech wants to adopt an open access policy that would make much of the research conducted at the Institute free and accessible to all. An open access policy would allow faculty members to retain some copyrights to their research publications and have the option to place them in the SMARTech (http://smartech.gatech.edu) repository — which is accessible to anyone in the world,” said Ellen Zegura, co-chair of the subcommittee on open access and a professor in the School of Computer Science. “And faculty members could opt out if they weren’t interested in participating.”

Zegura and fellow co-chair Steve McLaughlin have worked with a team of representatives from across all campuses and Georgia Tech Research Institute to draft a policy that suits the needs of Georgia Tech faculty.

Over the next few months, a series of town halls will be held to provide faculty members the opportunity to share feedback regarding the policy, and in November, the faculty will vote on whether to adopt it. The town halls will be held from 4 to 5:30 p.m. on the following dates:

Wednesday, Sept. 12, Room 117, Student Services Buildings

Monday, Sept. 24, Room 144, Clough Commons

Wednesday, Oct. 10, Room 175, Tech Square Research Building

For more information, contact Zegura at ew@cc.gatech.edu or McLaughlin at wsm@cc.gatech.edu.