ASK AWAY

Can my daughter’s Girl Scout Troop sell cookies at the Student Center or on Tech Walk?

People aren’t allowed to sell Girl Scout cookies at the Student Center or along Tech Walk, according to Jeslin Harrigan, assistant operations manager for the Student Center. The Student Center does not permit the sale of items that are in direct conflict with items sold in the center, including food, clothing, books, balloons, etc. The only food items that may be sold are baked goods prepared and sold by chartered student organizations.

Have a Tech-related question that you’d like answered? Email it to editor@comm.gatech.edu.

NEWS BRIEFS

State Transaction Disclosure Reports Due Jan. 31

If you or your family did business with the state in 2013, you’re required to disclose this by Jan. 31.
http://c.gatech.edu/1f5tw2a

Researchers Reveal Phrases that Pay on Kickstarter

Tech researchers have found some phrases that pay more than others.
http://c.gatech.edu/1aCKjvA

Gameday Recycling Is Tops in ACC

Tech recently ranked first in the Atlantic Coast Conference for Waste Minimization.
http://c.gatech.edu/1aCKjvA

X Degree Program Pilots Gateway Course

AMELIA PAULIK INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

Kara Yogan is a student interested in tribology (the study of lubrication, friction, and wear.) But there’s a problem: Georgia Tech doesn’t offer it as a major.

“There is a single upper-level mechanical engineering (ME) class focused on tribology. But since my interest lies in the chemical and physical properties of these lubricants, pursuing an ME track would not be right for me,” said the second-year chemical engineering student. “My interest is actually a mix of three majors — chemical engineering, ME, and materials science engineering.”

Enter the interdisciplinary X Degree program, an idea that got its start during the strategic planning process a few years ago.

“While existing majors are, and will continue to be, the core of our educational mission, some students and employers are looking for the particular skills that come from managing one’s own curriculum and designing an interdisciplinary program of study,” said Richard Barke, chair of the X Degree Committee. “Most of Tech’s peer institutions offer some version of an X Degree, although our version would be uniquely Georgia Tech.”

During fall semester, the committee took its next step toward implementation and offered a pilot version of the gateway course to introduce students to the program.

The X Degree program will allow students to create an individualized interdisciplinary curriculum that is designed to fit their particular needs and interests.

BOR Discusses Tobacco-Free Policy

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

During its January meeting, the Board of Regents (BOR) began discussions regarding a proposed tobacco and smoke-free campus policy for all University System of Georgia institutions.

The BOR may vote on the policy, which would go into effect on July 1, at its next meeting on Feb. 11-12.

In other meeting news:
• The Georgia Research Alliance Emenenti Scholar and Joseph M. Petit Chair in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering were established.
• The Charles W. Brady Chair in the Scheller College of Business was established.
• The David Sloan Lewis Professorship in the School of Aerospace Engineering was established. The BOR approved Wassim Haddad’s appointment to this position.
• Berdimus Bras was appointed to the Brook Byers Professorship in the School of Mechanical Engineering.
• Marilyn Brown was appointed to the Brook Byers Professorship in the School of Physics.

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BOR, continued on page 3

Campus Closet Seeks Suits for Job-Hunting Students

KRISTEN RAILEY INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

For some students, suit up for a job interview is tough — but not because they lack an eye for fashion.

Dressing to impress can be expensive, and many students can’t afford to purchase a new suit when they’ve yet to be hired for a job. With the success of peers in mind, a group of students has established Campus Closet and, in partnership with the Georgia Tech Center for Career Discovery and Development, is holding an inaugural Jackets for Jackets drive.

“Some companies will not even consider you for a position if they find your attire inappropriate or too casual,” said Brandie Banner, one of the student organizers. “Being underdressed for an interview adds another level of unneeded stress and insecurity to an already nerve-racking process.”

The idea for the program was conceived during conversations

CAMPUS CLOSET, continued on page 3

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THE Whistle

Georgia Tech’s Faculty/Staff Newspaper • Vol. 39, No. 2 • January 21, 2014
**OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMMUNICATIONS**

**You probably have heard that Georgia Tech has Interdisciplinary Research Institutes (IRIs) — but do you know much about them?**

This article is part of a series to introduce the IRIs and their directors. In this issue, Executive Director of the Institute for Robotics and Intelligent Machines (IRIM) Henrik Christensen answers questions about IRIM and also talks about its efforts to support Tech faculty and students.

**What is IRIM, and what are its core research areas?**

IRIM is a new IRI that integrates robotics research, education and outreach, and industry engagement across the College of Engineering, the College of Computing, the College of Sciences, and the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI). Our work often involves labs and individual researchers in other Tech colleges and centers, as well. We connect research in mechatronics, control, perception, artificial intelligence, and human-robot interaction with a particular emphasis on human-centered robotics.

For example, robotics technologies have made it possible to improve quality of life in an aging society by providing services that allow people to remain independent as long as possible. In the years to come, many students will be not only be able to study within multiple disciplines, but emerge from Tech with a particularly relevant set of skills for today’s workforce,” Woodmansee said. In addition to piloting the course, a white paper outlining the program structure and implementation process has been reviewed by faculty, students, and leadership. In the months to come, the final degree proposal will be submitted to the Institute Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and the program could be in place as early as spring 2015, Barke said.

The X Degree is a great example of the Georgia Tech strategic planning ecosystem in progress,” said David Frost, professor in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering and chair of the Strategic Planning Advisory Group. “What started in the original Institute strategic plan as the X College has evolved, under the super leadership of Richard Barke, with broad participation of individuals from various units across campus into a concept that captures the entrepreneurial spirit of Georgia Tech. It is not a degree that will necessarily be for everyone, but for some, it will be the key step on a path that leads to transformative ideas and solutions.”

Questions? Contact Barke at richard.barke@pubpolicy.gatech.edu

**Henrik Christensen is the executive director of the Institute for Robotics and Intelligent Machines.**

**Industry partners access to a broad research portfolio, as well as an abundance of beneficial services that span basic research opportunities to full product development solutions.** For broader community outreach, IRIM works closely with organizations across Georgia and the nation, such as high schools, to provide education on the impact of robotics with regard to everyday living. We do this through initiatives such as the FIRST Robotics Competition. The undergraduate robotics club, RoboJackets, with support from IRIM, organizes the annual kickoff for this competition. In 2013, more than 1,000 high school students attended the event at the Fier Center for the Arts, and quite a few Tech students and faculty members are mentors for the FIRST team.

Additionally, in an effort to stimulate general interest in STEM subjects, as well as a specific interest in robotics, IRIM organizes regular school visits across Georgia during the year. Since the launch of National Robotics Week in 2010, IRIM has participated annually by sponsoring an open house at Tech and conducting lab tours and demonstrations for middle and high school students. More than 400 students participated in Tech’s 2013 event held on April 11, with one group traveling from Tennessee to attend.

The Q&A, in its entirety, is available at http://c.gatech.edu/1j2lmp1

**Hank Christensen is the executive director of the Institute for Robotics and Intelligent Machines.**

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Course Helps ECE Transfers Achieve Success

ASHLEY GARDNER
SCHOOL OF ELECTRICAL AND COMPUTER ENGINEERING

Almost three-quarters of all freshman students take the GT 1000 course, a first-year seminar designed to support a successful transition into Tech. But by last fall, there was not a similar course available for transfer students.

Jill Auerbach, senior academic professional in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE), changed that with the creation of the ECE 2801 course, Transition Skills for ECE Transfer Students. “GT 1000 students are typically 18 and leaving home for the first time,” said Auerbach. “The obstacles they face are specific to that transition. In contrast, ECE transfer students have already taken their core courses and have dealt with those challenges. Now, they must overcome the learning curve associated with transferring to a top-tier institution in engineering.”

Auerbach crafted the ECE 2801 course in relation to a National Science Foundation grant called the Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) program. With funding from S-STEM, the Transfer Initiative for Engineering Scholars (TIES) enrichment program was launched. TIES supports community college transfer students majoring in computer engineering and electrical engineering through both enrichment programs and scholarship opportunities.

Through her work co-directing TIES with Doug Williams, senior associate chair, Auerbach learned about the unique challenges transfer students have coming into ECE. ECE 2801 uses many of the elements that make GT 1000 successful such as peer mentors and a curriculum that includes academic success strategies, team-building skills, and Tech history and traditions.

In addition to these key areas, the course focuses specifically on challenges faced by transfer students and the development of strategies early on to minimize their impact. When surveyed at the beginning of the course, most ECE transfer students indicated that difficulty of class material and quantity of coursework were among their main concerns.

As a result, ECE 2801 also aims to familiarize students with the ECE curriculum, subtopics, and course planning. Like GT 1000, some of the greatest assets offered by ECE 2801 are the student volunteers that serve as team leaders (TLs). Phillip Hughes, an electrical engineering senior, transferred in as a junior and is now a TL for the class. He acknowledges that his first year at Tech would have been very different had he been offered a course like this.

“Students who started at Tech had a leg up and knew what was expected,” Hughes said. “I spent my first year trying to catch up.” Even as a TL, Hughes is benefiting from the course. In addition to providing new students with advice, he is learning a few things himself.

“Last week we covered concept mapping — a method to better understand how topics in a course interconnect,” he said. “This would have been useful to me during my first year at Tech, but I’m learning it now.”

While there are GT 1000 classes designed for different subpopulations at Tech, no GT 1000 equivalent for transfer students is offered through the Center for Academic Enrichment. Nirmal Trivedi, director of the Academic Transitions Program, plans to use ECE 2801 as a model as he explores developing a transfer student seminar course.

“With around 23 percent of our new undergraduate students coming in as transfer students each year, I think a course that speaks specifically to their concerns is a great idea.” Trivedi said. “Learning from ECE’s experience will help us shape appropriate curriculum and test assumptions we make about the transfer student population.”

Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to donate professional clothing in good condition to Campus Closet. With the annual Internship and Co-Op Fair approaching at the end of January, the Center for Career Discovery and Development hopes to compile a sizeable suit collection.

Specifically, Campus Closet seeks both men’s and women’s suits of all sizes, preferably in navy blue, dark gray, or black. Donors are also invited to include a note of encouragement or any job search advice, which will be shared with the students who borrow that suit. Student organizers plan to track who uses which suits and potentially let students share success stories of the suits with donors.

Suits can be donated at the Center for Career Discovery and Development, the newly formed joint office of Career Services and the Division of Professional Practice, on the second floor of the Bill Moore Student Success Center, or in Suite 322 of the Scheller College of Business.

http://career.gatech.edu
Jackson Got Fulbright, Took Trip of Lifetime

AMELIA PAVLIK
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

Stephanie Jackson never thought she could even be considered for a Fulbright Scholarship — until she earned one in 2013.

“I always thought that Fulbright Awards were only for students and faculty members — but I was wrong!” said the assistant director of Undergraduate Advising and Professional Development in the School of International Affairs.

Fulbright programs are offered to U.S. institution staff members in some Asian countries, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. For two to three weeks, participants travel to one of these countries to learn about best practices in higher education and share their own.

Jackson first learned about the program while attending a conference early in her advising career but wasn’t ready to apply until a few years ago. When she did, she was accepted into the UK’s pilot program.

For three weeks in August 2013, Jackson got to know 20 people from across the United States from a range of higher education roles including deans of students, provosts, advisors, and those in charge of assessment. They traveled to 11 institutions in 10 cities in England and Scotland.

“Three weeks is a long time to be traveling — but it was great,” she said. “We even visited institutions where Tech currently has education agreements. I really liked having a chance to see what our students see.”

If you’re interested in applying for one of the Fulbright programs, Jackson recommends that you start volunteering with international education opportunities offered at Tech right away.

“The Fulbright programs are looking for people who are interested in international perspectives,” Jackson said. “So reach out to international student groups on campus and the Office of International Education and figure out ways to get involved.”

Read on to learn more about Jackson and her time at Tech Georiga.

How did you arrive in your current position?

When I was a kid, I wanted to be an ambassador — I think I’d say that because I wanted to have a different answer from the other kids. But I was always interested in global events. In college, I majored in political science with an emphasis in international relations. After graduating and working in federal government and nonprofit management for six years, I decided to leave Washington, D.C., to move to Atlanta to be near family. I’d heard of international education at universities but became more familiar with the concept through a national organization for student affairs professionals.

I decided this sounded like a profession I’d do well in. A year after moving to Georgia, I was hired at Tech and have been here for eight years.

What is an average day like?

I’ll meet with students and discuss goals, and work with faculty members on things such as course scheduling and curriculum changes. I also spend time on career development opportunities such as fellowships with the Partnership for Public Service or internships with the Center for both students and alumni. And every fall, I teach GT 1000 for International Education majors.

What is the most satisfying part of your job?

Watching the evolution of students’ goals. When they arrive at Tech, most want to be diplomats, but I really enjoy teaching them about other options — for example, working for a nongovernmental organization or establishing a career in the intelligence community. And it’s the best when they go on to one of these routes and get in touch with me after graduation to share their stories.

What piece of technology could you not live without?

The music app Spotify!

What is the greatest risk you’ve ever taken — and did it pay off?

It was moving to Atlanta without a job — and it absolutely paid off!

Where is your favorite spot on campus?

The view from the Frist Room on the seventh floor of the Library is gorgeous.

Where is your favorite place to have lunch?

It’s La Parrilla, and I always order the Enchiladas del Mar (seafood enchiladas).

Tell us something unique about yourself.

Most people don’t know that I lived in Costa Rica twice (before the start of my career in D.C.).

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