An Innovative Venture
For more than 40 years, Georgia Tech has been an innovation powerhouse fueling development of new products and formation of technology-driven companies. To expand the amount of commercialization activity arising from its $300 million a year research program, Georgia Tech has established a new initiative known as VentureLab.

As a one-stop center for technology commercialization, VentureLab provides faculty a clear pathway from laboratory innovation to commercial market. It offers assistance throughout the process, including help in evaluating the commercial value of an innovation and guidance from entrepreneurs with experience in forming new companies.

As part of the Office of Economic Development and Technology Ventures, VentureLab builds on 20 years of experience at the Advanced Technology Development Center (ATDC), one of the nation’s most prestigious business incubators. Since 1992, ATDC has operated the Faculty Research Commercialization Program (FRCP), which provides small grants to help faculty move innovations from the laboratory to the commercial marketplace.

VentureLab has four specific components:
• Technology assessment to help faculty determine the appropriate commercialization route – licensing to an existing company or formation of a start-up company.
• Commercialization workshops and seminars to explain such topics as intellectual property protection, the licensing procedure and the company start-up process.
• VentureLab fellows, experienced entrepreneurs who will use their market knowledge to build new companies on innovations that meet a demonstrated commercial need.
• VentureLab pre-seed awards to generate a prototype or proof-of-concept needed to show the commercial potential of an innovation.

Looks Good on Paper
Georgia Tech and the Atlanta-based Institute for Paper Science and Technology (IPST) have joined forces with the paper industry to create a new research center funded by a $2 million grant from the Sloan Foundation.

The Center for Paper Business and Industry Studies (CPBIS) will focus on the business fundamentals affecting the huge U.S. paper industry, which has suffered setbacks in recent years, while generating research and producing future experts for the industry.

Initially, CPBIS will address five areas—globalization, commercialization, community interactions, workplace transformations and enterprise effectiveness.

Researchers from IPST and faculty from Georgia Tech will conduct the work of the center. Plans are under way to offer classes through CPBIS, and funding for seven projects will begin soon. Seminars, additional projects and an internship program are on the horizon. 404/894-9592

Academic Firepower
The annual ranking of American universities by U.S. News & World Report placed Georgia Tech in the top 10 public universities and 41st overall. Its graduate and undergraduate engineering programs ranked 5th and 6th, respectively.

Regarding Georgia schools’ presence in the rankings, Tech President Wayne Clough remarked, “To see Emory in the top 20 among all universities, Georgia Tech in the top 10 among publics and Georgia in the top 20 among publics is a real accomplishment. Not many areas in the nation have that kind of academic firepower. Those that do—such as San Francisco, Boston and New York—have a noticeable advantage in economic development and quality of life. That’s a real benefit to the entire state of Georgia.”
Boosting Small Business

Georgia Tech’s Electronic Commerce Research Center (ECRC) recently received two federal grants for one-year pilot programs to help small businesses statewide, ranging from small manufacturers and agribusinesses to minority and women-owned firms.

The Economic Development Administration is providing $100,000 to help ECRC assess e-commerce capabilities of the state’s existing small and minority vendors and devise appropriate training and support. The Small Business Administration grant, totaling $145,000, will help identify the needs of government-sponsored service providers and build their e-business capabilities.

www.ecrc.gatech.edu

A Bone to Pick

Researchers with the Georgia Tech Research Institute, in cooperation with Cagle’s Inc., Sylvest Farms and Spectral Fusion Technologies, have developed a novel fused imaging and x-ray system to find missed fan bones in deboned poultry products.

Spectral Fusion makes an advanced x-ray screening system capable of detecting missed bone fragments, but the accuracy of detecting fan bones is under 30 percent. The new fused system is more than 90 percent effective and enables Spectral Fusion to tune its x-ray system for more effective detection of other bone fragments. It also will give the firm improved food-safety screening ability and enhance the company’s ability to meet the rigorous bone-free product standards of fast-food giants such as McDonald’s, Burger King and Wendy’s.

Cagle’s and Sylvest provided their expertise and poultry processing plants to test the system, and await access to the first commercial units. Spectral Fusion donated the x-ray unit to Georgia Tech, while the image screening system is funded with research dollars from Georgia’s Traditional Industries Program for Food Processing. The fused system is the subject of a patent by Georgia Tech, which Spectral Fusion is in the process of licensing.

www.foodpac.gatech.edu

Southern Hospitality

A first-ever Georgia visitors survey of more than 1,700 travelers, commissioned by Georgia Tech’s Economic Development Institute (EDI) showed that direct expenditures for overnight trips in Georgia last year totaled $11.5 billion and that tourism in Georgia relies more on autos than airplanes, an advantage in today’s travel environment.

The research, conducted by Toronto-based Longwoods International, also found that most out-of-state “marketable leisure” tourists—that is, not on business and not visiting friends and relatives—came from neighboring states, but the largest share came from Georgia itself. That bodes well for the state’s new “Georgia for Georgians” promotional campaign designed to bolster in-state travel.

The research results were presented at an EDI-hosted conference in Macon in late September that drew attendees from all areas of Georgia’s tourism industry.

www.ceds.gatech.edu

Around the State

• Georgia Tech helped a Dawsonville metal fabrication company that had outgrown its facility and was considering a move out of state. Staff provided a new plant layout and pollution prevention assistance to Impulse Manufacturing. Since moving to its new facility, the firm has increased employment from 50 to 80, boosted sales by 50 percent and expanded production by 42 percent.

• In Savannah, Georgia Tech staff designed a plant layout for Savannah Forestry Equipment, which was relocating to a larger building. The new layout allowed smoother flow of raw materials and operations, cutting production time by five days, reducing assembly bottlenecks by 33 percent and yielding increases in worker morale and decreases in employee turnover.

• Soperton launched a Web site that promotes events, lists businesses, offers virtual tours of the community and courts new industry by spotlighting city and county spec buildings. A Georgia Tech community technology specialist assisted the project, suggesting 30 ideas for the site and seeing 29 implemented over an 11-week span.

For more information on the topics in this newsletter, call toll-free 888/272-2104.
Past issues of Georgia Tech Impact may be found on the Web at www.edtv.gatech.edu/impact/
Also, visit these Web sites: www.gatech.edu • www.edtv.gatech.edu • www.gtri.gatech.edu •