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Center for Rehabilitation Technology receives \$7.5 million in federal grants

*Michael Hagearty
Institute Communications and Public Affairs*

While touring Flint, Michigan, last week, President Bill Clinton released a statement that will have a significant impact on future research and development at Georgia Tech.

In that statement, Clinton detailed a total of 15 initiatives related to the development of accessible communications and computer technology that he and his administration are advancing. The grants, courtesy of the Department of Education's National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), totaled \$16 million, a result of their own recent increase in funding. The Institute's Center for Rehabilitation Technology (CRT), a research group within the College of Architecture, will receive roughly half of that — \$7.5 million over the next five years.

Joe Koncelik, director of Research at CRT, said, "John Goldthwaite, principal investigator on this grant, and Rob Roy, associate director of the Center, drove the grant proposal preparation, helped shape this project and assembled the collaboration with other national organizations. This grant places us in a pivotal position of helping to ensure accessibility of communications technology in compliance with federal telecommunications legislation."

In referring to the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Koncelik notes that one important sections of that legislation requires what is known as "full accessibility" of all communications equipment.

"Full accessibility means it must be usable by people who have vision and hearing difficulties or disability, as well as people who are experiencing age-related changes. These things have to be accommodated in the development of off-the-shelf hardware as well as website and Internet designs. What the federal government has said is that they will not buy any com-

munications technology that isn't fully accessible. And they're the largest consumer of this technology in the country."

The essence of NIDRR's work is to help fully integrate disability research into the mainstream of our nation's policies regarding science, technology, health care and economics. Designed to promote accessible information technology through research and loan programs, the grant's primary purpose is to aid CRT as it becomes involved with universal design, or the design of products for general distribution to the public. CRT plans to work with industry to assist them in making their technologies fully accessible.

"The mission of CRT is to assist people with disabilities at any age to become fully engaged in all activities of life," Koncelik said. "The two areas of focus are the development of assistive technology and the development of accessible environments. This grant extends our mission to include universal design as well." Koncelik notes that this grant is the largest ever given to a single entity by NIDRR. Combined, with two previous grants, the cumulative endowment from NIDRR makes CRT the top-funded organization by NIDRR in the country.

Asked about his reaction to the news of the grant, President Wayne Clough said, "Georgia Tech has long been a leader in using technology to help the disabled in our society through the auspices of our Center for Rehabilitation Technology. Now Joe Koncelik and his colleagues have received confirmation for the quality of their efforts with this major grant to establish a national center, which will allow us to better serve those who need our help. I am proud of CRT and all they do in demonstrating the human dimension of technology."

That sentiment was echoed by Koncelik. "In the last three years, CRT has gone from no federal funding for R&D and other initiatives to over \$11 million in NIDRR grants — not counting three NSF (National Science Foundation) awards," he said. "The staff of CRT has been absolutely first-rate in moving the center into national prominence."

Rankings are up and down for Tech

The DuPree College of Management moved up dramatically in BusinessWeek magazine's annual ranking of business schools, while Kiplinger's Personal Finance magazine dropped Tech in its ranking of the 100 best values in public colleges.

The DuPree College rocketed from third tier in 1999 to number 30 in the first tier. It now ranks as the 11th best business master's program at a public university. "This is terrific news for the students, alumni and faculty of the DuPree College," said Nate Bennett, associate dean for Academic Programs. "Of course, we're pleased for this recognition. At the same time, the most compelling news at DuPree is what lies ahead with the forecasted growth of our College and the move to the new building on Fifth Street. As our facilities

expand and as our programs grow, we expect to be in a better position to demonstrate all that is excellent at DuPree to both the business community and the state."

While the DuPree College continues to rise, Tech's ranking of 16th best value in public colleges slipped from the number nine spot in 1998 in Kiplinger's Personal Finance magazine. Kiplinger's ranks public universities on a combination of top-quality academics and low cost. The University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, topped the list of best values for the second year in a row.

The complete details of the rankings can be found on the web at www.businessweek.com/bschools/00 and www.kiplinger.com/managing/college/.

Reminder: State of the Institute address to be delivered October 10

President Clough will make his annual address at the fall meeting of the General Faculty and the General Faculty Assembly at 3 p.m. in the Student Center Theatre. All faculty are invited to attend. To view full details of the meeting agenda, refer to www.facultysenate.gatech.edu. For more information, contact Edward Thomas, secretary of the Faculty, at 894-5249.

New Stinger routes just plain loopy

Elizabeth Campell
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

The Stinger Shuttle routes have been altered this semester to provide better and more frequent service to the campus. The most noticeable change is that the main Stinger route is now running in both directions — North Campus Loop and South Campus Loop. Also, Parking and Transportation has added another vehicle to its daytime fleet, for a total of eight shuttles during the day.

The bi-directional routes of the North Campus Loop and South Campus Loop are designed to be more convenient for those traveling a shorter distance, who previously had to ride the entire one-way route to get to their destination.

“The Stinger shuttle service is in a pilot stage this semester,” said Sandra Nelson, alternative transportation coordinator. “We are monitoring usage patterns and tweaking the schedule and routes in response to feedback from riders. I recommend that people check our website on a regular basis to find the latest information for the routes and schedules.”

The latest Stinger and Stingerette schedule and maps of each route can be found at www.parking.gatech.edu; select the “Stinger and Stingerette” menu, then select the Campus Loops icon.

In preparation for the new routes, Stinger stop signs have been posted at every stop on campus, eliminating the confusion of unmarked stops in the past. Also, for safety reasons stops have been moved to the other side of intersections, creating “far-side stops.” Previously, many stops were located just prior to an intersection, increasing the chances of riders being injured while crossing in front of buses when impatient drivers passing the Stinger did not see them. Stops on the far side of intersections enable riders getting off to walk behind the shuttle with greater



Photo by Stanley Leary, Institute Communications and Public Affairs

While Parking and Transportation continues to tweak the new routes, riders are encouraged to check www.parking.gatech.edu frequently for changes.

visibility and safety.

Parking and Transportation Services has been collecting data this semester on ridership and the accuracy and efficiency of their new internal bus schedules. This data along with comments from the campus will be used to determine future adjustments. Nelson says that she expects all routes and schedules to be finalized well before the end of fall semester.

“Also, faculty and staff should be aware that if they are working late after most buses have stopped running, they can call the Stingerette van escort service to give them a ride to a MARTA station or a remote parking lot,” she said.

Parking and Transportation encourages you to e-mail your suggestions, comments and concerns regarding Stinger changes to sandra.nelson@parking.gatech.edu.

People

Associate professor of Architecture **James Oliverio** was chosen by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) as this year’s ASCAPLUS Standard Award recipient. The cash grants are designed to help encourage the growth and development of future works by writers of serious music.

Professor emeritus **Charles E. Weaver** has recently had his latest work of fiction published. His adventure novel “Global Bogeyman” touches on some of the same themes he taught during his years at Tech, such as global warming and nuclear waste. Weaver founded and was the director of the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences. He retired in 1992.

Last year’s recipient of the Georgia Tech Faculty Research Commercialization Program (FRCP) award, **Ashwin Ram**, has created a startup company (Enkia Corporation) and commercialized some of the research conducted by him and his Ph.D. students in the College of Computing. In August, Enkia Corporation launched its first product, an enhanced web search site that uses technology to sense what the user is looking for and automatically provide recommendations without having to sift through hundreds of search results. For more information, see www.enkia.com.

Hey, who’s the new guy?

Thanks for asking. My name is Michael Hagearty and I have been assigned the daunting task of stepping in behind Denise Noble, who steered this ship for the past 2 1/2 years. Many thanks to the people who have made my transition go so smoothly. As the new editor, I hope to bring the same enthusiasm to the Whistle that she displayed, while covering the university in an open and objective way. If you have any questions, comments or ideas — no matter how wacky — do not hesitate to contact me at 894-8324.

Did you know

Grants Totaling \$900,000 Support SECME K-12 Education Initiatives

Grants of more than \$900,000 to SECME, Inc., a Georgia Tech-based alliance of 109 school systems and 41 engineering universities, will support K-12 teacher professional development and enrichment of student learning in math, science and technology. The one-year awards, from two federal and two corporate sources, are:

- \$400,000, National Aeronautics and Space Administration — for professional and leadership development workshops for teachers and school administrators across a 17-state network, mini-grants to introduce inquiry-based classroom strategies, math/science initiatives in Little Rock, Ark. and SECME’s annual Leadership Academy/Principals Forum;
- \$300,000, ExxonMobil Education Foundation — to strengthen and expand SECME’s school-university-industry partnership “model,” implement new programs in the Southwestern United States, address issues in school change and systemic reform, and support national design competitions for middle and high school students;
- \$105,000, U.S. Department of Energy — targeted toward curriculum development, teacher in-service training, “hands-on” learning opportunities, and improved student outcomes in the Washington, D.C., and Prince George’s County, Maryland, public schools; and
- \$100,000, Semiconductor Industry Association — to support SECME’s premier event, the annual Summer Institute on the campus of a member engineering university, which brings together up to 400 educators and 200 student scholars and national competition finalists.

Last year SECME enrolled 19,199 students, including 3,657 seniors, bringing the number of graduates since 1980 to 60,364.

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Tennenbaum weathers storm to lecture on 'Politics, Economics and Investing'

Victor Rogers
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A determined audience of students, faculty, staff and guests waded through heavy rain to hear Georgia Tech alumnus Michael E. Tennenbaum lecture on "Politics, Economics and Investing." A few minutes after Tennenbaum began speaking, rain poured through a hole in the ceiling of the auditorium that bears his name.

"I guess y'all need more gifts," he joked, then switched to a stronger microphone in an attempt to drown out the sound of rainwater splashing into a garbage can.

Tennenbaum, managing member of the Los Angeles investment firm Tennenbaum and Co., drew from his longtime interest in public policy and 40 years of experience in the investment business. He pointed out differences between leading presidential candidates George W. Bush and Al Gore regarding their views on the Social Security system, taxes and surplus spending.

"Gore wants to subsidize the Social Security system and put in more money from the federal government..." Tennenbaum said. "Bush wants to privatize some of it, so that about 15 percent of what's paid in Social Security taxes can be adjusted for things like the stock market."

There are some legitimate concerns about both plans, Tennenbaum said, but if you look at history in terms of returns, you'll understand why there's a temptation to put money in stocks.

"The stock market is like the fashion business," he said. "Some months everybody likes it. Some months they don't."

Regarding taxes, the presidential candidates stick close to the traditional roles of their respective parties, Tennenbaum said.

"Over a 10-year period, Gore wants to cut taxes by half a trillion dollars. Bush wants to cut taxes by \$1.3 trillion. That's the usual thing — Republicans want less government and less taxes; Democrats are going the other way," said Tennenbaum.

The government is estimating a budget surplus of \$2.2 trillion over the next 10 years, he said. When it comes to spending the surplus, the candidates' plans again differ widely.

"Gore wants to use a lot of the surplus to pay down the government debt. If you do that, the economy will grow less rapidly..." Tennenbaum said. "In Bush's case, he wants to hand most of [the surplus] out in tax deductions. So, he'll tend to get more spending... on food, clothes, rent and so on."

Tennenbaum, chairman of the California High-Speed Rail Authority, momentarily switched gears from politics to plug one of his favorite topics: the need for a high-speed rail system. He said the United States has a great highway system, but lags behind Europe in the use of rail.

"Go to France and ride the high-speed rail system and you see how nice it can be," he said.

Tennenbaum is a member of the class of 1958, with a degree from the School of Industrial and Systems Engineering. In 1977 he established an endowment for the Tennenbaum Lecture, and this year was the first time he delivered the lecture.



Alumnus Michael Tennenbaum talks politics and policy at the ISyE lecture series named in his honor.

A tradition continues — the 2000-01 Charitable Campaign

Michael Hagearty
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

In many respects, last year's Charitable Campaign was the Institute's most successful in its 19 years of participation. Among Georgia universities, Georgia Tech ranked second behind the University of Georgia, donating more than \$266,000 to hundreds of local non-profit organizations. In helping the state of Georgia set a record for funds raised, Georgia Tech was further recognized for having the largest increase in contributions. Add to that the more than \$2.1 million raised during the 1990s and this year's slogan, "Helping Others: A Tech Tradition," seems completely appropriate.

Over the past five years, giving on the part of Tech employees has risen more than 56 percent. On the flip side, the percentage of university employees making contributions has been sliding — down to 35 percent, the lowest for the decade. To reverse this trend, campaign chair Paul Ohme and his planning committee have several ideas, starting with selecting the right people.

Ohme, director of the Center for Education Integrating Mathematics, Science and Computing, said "We met with most of the campus administrators asking them to hand-pick their unit coordinator carefully. We believe that the unit coordinator is the key to the success of the drive."

Teressa Warfield-Francis has been a part of the planning committee for the past seven years. She indicated that a change in the way coordinators are trained — in

smaller groups stressing their grassroots role — "seems to have motivated the coordinators, as they are the link to reaching each employee in their departments."

Such planning will no doubt be the difference should the Institute reach the goals that have been set: \$290,000 with 50 percent overall employee participation.

"Of course," admitted Warfield-Francis, "100 percent would be ideal."

The Institute's annual Charitable Campaign is part of the larger State Charitable Contributions Program, created by the Georgia General Assembly in 1982, whereby state employees may either make a one-time gift or opt to make their donation by way of a pre-tax payroll deduction to the charity of their choice. Accompanying the pledge card is a list of more than 900 charities, which allows individuals to designate where their monies go.

The Institute has another reason to maintain its reputation for giving — President Wayne Clough is the state chair for the 2000-01 season.

The campaign will run through the end of October.

