New task force charged with reviewing campus safety policies, patterns

Amelia Gambino
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

Ever have your wallet stolen? Felt a little nervous walking across campus at night? Found your car vandalized? While campus safety is an issue all faculty, staff and students are concerned about, it is the specific focus of the recently formed Campus Safety Task Force. On behalf of President Wayne Clough, Robert Thompson, senior vice president for Administration and Finance, tapped nearly 20 members of the Tech community representing both graduate and undergraduate students, campus police, and various representatives from administrative and academic offices to review and make recommendations on campus safety and security.

According to Thompson, “Campus safety is an issue about which we all have considerable concern and interest. If left unchecked, campus crime can stifle our ability to grow and thrive as a healthy, learning community.”

The Task Force has been charged with reviewing current policies and practices related to maintaining a reasonably safe campus environment; reviewing campus crime patterns; reviewing the near-term plans for the growth and development of campus and its potential impact on security issues; and finally, making recommendations on improving methods and practices for the safety and security of people and property in the campus community.

Serving as the Task Force chair, Lee Wilcox, vice president of Student Affairs, said, “Campus safety is an issue at every college, but particularly at urban institutions like Georgia Tech. We had a bit of an upswing in our crime statistics last year and President Clough decided to ask a group of us to focus on how safety can be improved. We will make recommendations by the end of this semester. One thing we know for sure: safety is an issue for everyone, so education and communication will be important.”

The group recently reviewed benchmark crime data for ten urban, residential universities that showed Georgia Tech’s property crime rate higher than the midpoint but reported violent crime at Tech was at the midpoint for those universities.

“Georgia Tech campus as a whole functions much as a small city — open, inviting and fully accessible,” said Georgia Tech Police Chief Jack Vickery. “The public safety matters we face on a day-to-day basis are fairly typical of a growing, diverse community of nearly 20,000 people. Naturally, violent crimes against people are of the greatest concern, and while those do occur on and around the campus, they tend to occur at a lower rate than in society as a whole. Preventing and reducing property crimes is the area where we, as a community, have the greatest opportunity for improvement.

The Campus Safety Task Force has broad representation from the wide-ranging constituencies that make up Georgia Tech. Their deliberations and insight should provide a road map for both near-term and long-range planning.”

Faculty governance holds first joint meeting of academic year

Michael Hagerty
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

The first joint meeting of the General Faculty Assembly and Academic Senate was dominated by the Institute’s major construction efforts and an evaluation of the role and composition of the two bodies’ standing committees.

President Clough opened the meeting with some of Tech’s signs of growing influence, welcoming a large number of new faculty who will help keep pace with surging enrollments, not only on the main campus but also among the three satellite campuses in France, Singapore and Savannah. Moving on to new facilities under development, he reported that all were in good standing, and that the concerns over the repair of the State Street Parking Deck had been amicably resolved.
Merrill appointed to Smithgall Chair in Molecular Cell Biology

Sean Selman
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

One of the world’s leading nutritional biochemists joins Tech’s School of Biology this fall as an endowed chair. He is one of 14 new faculty members in the College of Sciences for 2001.

Alfred H. Merrill is the first Smithgall Institute Chair in Molecular and Cell Biology. He is an internationally recognized biochemist whose research on a class of compounds called sphingolipids led to the discovery that these compounds inhibit the development of colon cancer. Through his research, Merrill has distinguished himself as the world’s leading authority on sphingolipid metabolism and cell regulation.

Dean Gary Schuster said, “Professor Merrill brings a powerful research program at the forefront of modern biology, and he will interact strongly with students and faculty from across the College of Sciences and Georgia Tech. I look forward to working with Professor Merrill to continue the advance of the School of Biology in the life sciences.”

This past May, the Board of Directors for the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB) chose Professor Merrill to be the organization’s next vice president for science policy, a position he will assume in July 2002. The Science Policy Committee is a FASEB think tank that examines science-policy issues and recommends courses of action for the organization.

Merrill received his Ph.D. in biochemistry from Cornell University in 1979 and, after a post-doctoral fellowship at Duke University, joined the faculty of the Department of Biochemistry at Emory University in 1981.

An outstanding educator, Merrill has received the Emory Williams Teaching Award for Natural Sciences (1985); the Outstanding Teacher Award in Biochemistry from the Emory University Medical Class of 1995; and helped found the Emory University Center and Graduate Program in Nutrition and Health Sciences, a multidisciplinary center that promotes training and research beginning with a strong focus in basic sciences. The center was identified as a “Center for Excellence” by the International Life Sciences Institute in 1996.

The Smithgall Institute Chair in Molecular and Cell Biology is the second of two Institute chairs in the College of Sciences supported by alumnus Charles Smithgall Jr. and his wife, Lessie. The Smithgall Institute Chair in Atmospheric Sciences is held by William Chameides, Regents Professor in the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences and acting chair of EAS.

The Smithgall endowment to the Institute also provides a faculty chair in addition to the two Institute chairs. Professor Terry Maple occupies the Elizabeth Smithgall-Watts Faculty Chair in Behavior and Conservation within the School of Psychology.
For East at the Eirst
Above, the Tamsui Line of Taipei City's Mass Rapid Transit System runs alongside the Tamsui River and passes by Kuanyin Hill in one of the 56 photographs to be on display in the River Gallery and the Westbrook Gallery of the Robert Furst Center. Running through the end of November, "The Many Splendours of Taiwan" features the work of 12 Taiwanese photographers documenting six areas of island life from natural scenery to social evils, in observance of Taiwan's National Day on October 10.

Sponsored by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Atlanta and the Office of International Education, there will also be four films shown on the people and culture of Taiwan in the Student Center Theater:

• "Taipei's Golden Treasure (documentary)" screens on October 1 at 5:30 p.m.  
• "Tempted Nobody Goes Home (feature)" screens on October 1 at 6 p.m.  
• "West Meets East (documentary)" screens on October 12 at 7 p.m.  
• "The Personal (feature)" screens on October 12 at 7:30 p.m.

Capital Campaign 2001 — building on success
Michael Hagearty  
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

With more than $309,000 and two awards to show for Tech's efforts in last year's Statewide Charitable Campaign, this year's theme, "Georgia Still Needs Us. Let's Do It Again," is as much about looking back as it is about looking forward. Contribution packets go out this week, and building upon past success is important to achieving new goals.

"We were overwhelmed by last year's totals," said Teresa Warfield-Francis, who has served on the planning committee for the previous nine campaigns. "Despite some of the financial pinch-es many of our employees felt, the people of Georgia Tech still gave generously from their hearts."

As this year's campaign gets underway, the September 27 kick-off breakfast will be an opportunity for the unit coordinator, recruited by the planning committee, to meet, share experiences and hear about the fruits of their labor. Several charities that benefit from the campaign will be present to speak on the nature of their work and how the campaign impacts their operations and the people they serve.

Paul Ohms of CEEMRC has departed as chair of the campaign, making room for the success-ion of the newly appointed Executive Assistant to the President April Brown and last year's co-chair to put a face on this year's drive. The goal has been set at $310,000, an increase of $20,000 from the mark a year ago. If met, it would mean a new Institute record.

"We wouldn't set such a goal if we thought it was unattainable," Brown said. "Our community has always thrived on the challenges put to them."

The Institute's annual Charitable Campaign is part of the larger State Charitable Contributions Program, created by the Georgia General Assembly in 1982. State employees who partici-pate make either a one-time gift or a pre-tax pay-roll deduction, choosing from among the 900 charities accompanying the pledge card.

The campaign will run through the end of October.

IN BRIEF:

Critical Incidents Response
After some confusion with regards to Georgia Tech's procedures for handling crises on cam-pus, many have felt it is important to reintro-duce them to the campus community. The fol-low ing is a summary of the plan currently in place:

1. Georgia Tech Police dispatch receives a call about an incident.
2. The Police Department determines whether or not the incident merits implementation of the plan. If yes, then:
   - GTPD contacts a pager numbers for the office of the dean of students, the Georgia Tech chief of police, and the office of Institute Communications and Public Affairs. The dean, the chief of police and the executive director of ICFA constitute the Evaluation Team.
   - The Evaluation Team conducts an immediate assessment and determines what campus and/or community resources need to be deployed. This could include anyone from the State Division of Emergency Management in the case of inclement weather, to the family of an ill student.
   - Once the immediate needs of the situation are addressed, the Evaluation Team decides whether or not to call a meeting of a larger group — the Critical Incident Management Team. This group is convened for larger scale incidents and consists of representatives from the office of the president, legal affairs, student health center, student counseling, residence life, and the registrar's office. The group may include other representatives depending on the nature of the incident.
   - This group assesses the scope of the incident and mobilizes resources to address the relevant issues, ranging from physical plant, to police assistance, to academic coordination and grief counseling, to internal and external communica-tions issues.

Gridiron scheduling change
When Georgia Tech takes the field on September 20 against Clemson, many will notice a slight change to the uniforms. As with other professional and collegiate athletic organi-zations, the Atlantic Coast Conference has issued American flags to all of its schools to wear on the back of their helmets for the dura-tion of the season, in memory of the victims of the terrorist attacks.

Additionally, Tech has announced that its game against Florida State, originally scheduled for September 15, has been moved to December 1. It will mark the first time in 60 years that Tech finishes a season with a team other than the University of Georgia.

Change of address
The Surplus Property Department has moved. It is no longer at 888 Hemphill Avenue but has relocated to 711 Marietta Street in the Ziegler Tool building. The hours of operation for this location remain 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. To gain entry to the building, it is recommended that you contact Surplus Property at 404-2734 or 404-725-0185. It’s function will not change: Surplus Property will continue to serve the Tech community by picking up surplus equipment within a five-day turnaround and allowing the university community to view and possibly transfer property from the warehouse to their department.

www.whistle.gatech.edu

September 24, 2001 | 13