24 Lose Jobs As A Result of Budget Cuts, Reorganization

By Vera L. Dudley
Twenty-four members of Georgia Tech’s staff have been laid off as of Oct. 23. According to Russell Capella, manager of personnel at Tech’s Office of Human Resources, the terminations were a result of state budget cuts and reorganization plans.

The Office of Information Technology, Combined Operations and the News Bureau sustained the most significant blows with the loss of several members, many who served Tech for over a decade. The Institute, which hasn’t seen history experienced layoffs, hiring freezes, and budget cuts equaling those of fiscal year ’92 has made it through the end of another emotional period of change. Directors, faced with a “most unpleasant task” of terminating valuable employees were provided with expert advice on the most empathetic approach to take.

“Termination is an anxiety-provoking process,” explained Jerry Dark, executive vice president of the Office of Human Resources. “One of the things we did was publish a Process and Planning Guide for Implementing Reduction in Force Decisions. There was mandatory training for the manager who was to deliver the message to the employee. We also asked them to designate an assistant in the area who had all the information.”

The 1992 budget cuts resulting in layoffs and relocation of some Tech employees, provided important lessons implemented during the current financial crisis, Dark said. Precautions were taken to ensure people were handled in the most humane way possible. Human Resources advised people to be notified of their termination before the end of the week. Terminated employees were given the option of returning to work or going home and, they were also encouraged to use the Counseling Center.

In addition, directors were able to offer several services designed to provide job hunting assistance. Human Resources established a “Transition Assistance Center,” providing seminars on networking, interviewing techniques, and resume and cover letter writing. So far, 12 to 15 people have attended the classes said Staff Development Manager Debra Covin Wilson. Others interested in assistance will be referred to the State Department of Human Resources and the State Department of Labor which provide similar services.

Consideration was also given to the remaining staff Wilson said, who are encouraged to use the Counseling Center when needed.

“We didn’t want this to become an emotional situation that got blown way out of proportion,” she said. “We suggested a memo be sent to the other employees and a meeting be held explaining what had happened. We didn’t want them to hear it through the grapevine.”

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) which supplies numerous computer services to faculty, staff and students lost 11 positions. According to Dr. F. L. (Bud) Suddath, director of OIT, the department, already overburdened with campus-wide service calls, will have to do without the System Support and the Applications Services groups. Systems Support members assisted campus clients with traditional software administrative functions and the Applications Services group. It was a difficult decision said Dr. Suddath, because all of the groups in OIT are important.

“We feel strongly that everything we were doing should have been doing,” he said. “The services we were providing need to be recovered. The president had mandated that we continue to serve. It was a compromise between the unpleasant tasks of laying off and the responsibility to continue.”

While the changes in OIT where made to fulfill budget requirements, the Office of Communications, which lost four positions used the opportunity to restructure its operation to run more efficiently.

Georgia Tech Satellite Literacy Project Branches Out Across Georgia

By Toni Mills
The Georgia Tech Satellite Literacy Project sends literacy instruction via satellite to sites in rural and urban Georgia. The free program began in 1989 with just one sending and two remote receiving sites. Today, it has grown to 63 sites with nearly 75 classes.

The Satellite Project, whose programs originate from the Tech campus, offers people with poor reading skills a chance to come out of hiding. Current enrollment, said Project Monitor Barbara Christopher, is around 500.

The class on the Georgia Tech campus is broadcast via satellite to the remote sites. Students on the Tech campus have television monitors and microwaves, allowing them to communicate with the remote sites. Students at the remote sites, located in universities, technical schools, and libraries watch the live broadcast and can interact with the class via telephone. Even a pool hall once served as a classroom.

The program is recommended for students reading on a second, third or fourth grade level. Students range from 17 to 70 years old, both male and female. Classes meet twice a week for six quarters. After completing the year and a half of instruction, students normally gain at least two grade levels.

Teachers are trained in the language experience approach. “That simply means, we don’t use a textbook,” explains Program Specialist Liz Black.

Ms. Black, also a reading specialist, says, “We encourage the students to produce the text. We give them a topic and they give us the vocabulary. It’s their vocabulary, it’s their world. That’s very important for adults because they want materials to be relevant to their lives.”

“Wherever there’s a group of students and teachers, we can have a class,” Christopher adds. By April 1992, Christopher hopes to have 12 to 15 additional remote sites. The most recent addition was in Warm Springs in conjunction with the Roosevelt Institute, where interest has been greater than expected. Some of the other sites include: Albany State College, Georgia Southern College (Statesboro), Athens Area Tech.

See Literacy Action p. 2, col 1

Georgia Freight Bureau Launches Transportation Logistics Program

By Charles Hyatt
The Georgia Freight Bureau has announced a new undergraduate certificate program in transportation and logistics in the School of Management and School of Industrial and Systems Engineering.

The certificate program will be directed by a new endowed chair -- filled as a joint appointment between the two schools -- in transportation/logistics. Both graduate and undergraduate students can specialize in this area.

See Freight Bureau p. 2, col 1
Layoffs . . .

continued from page 1

effectively as well as inexpensively said Jim Langley, vice president of External Affairs.

"The decision was to reorganize and reallocate a new communications organization that would allow us to be as strategic as possible in reaching the key constituency," Langley said. "We decided that we needed more account executive models where we would have individuals who are capable of handling all aspects of communications instead of specialists."

Terminated employees have been offered clerical assistance with preparing their resumes, and several job bulletins listing available positions outside the Tech community are posted in the Human Resources. According to Capell, terminated employees are welcome to apply for any available positions at Tech.

"Anybody who meets 75 percent of the criteria is being referred to the advertising department," Capella said. "We are strongly encouraging departments to consider them. We can't make them hire, but we can strongly encourage."

Literacy Action . . .

continued from page 1

Moultrie Area Tech and Middle Georgia College (Cochrann).

The Georgia Tech Satellite Literacy Project is a partnership of Georgia Tech's Center for Rehabilitation Technology (CRT), Literacy Action, Inc., Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education and the Georgia Board of Regents. The program is funded through CRT and sponsored by federal, state and private agencies.

Freight Bureau . . .

continued from page 1

In addition to teaching, research and service, the chairholder's duties will include developing a curriculum, launching a career fair and newsletter and starting an awards program for outstanding students in the discipline. Students enrolled in the program can take courses in Tech's Material Handling Research Center and at the Production and Distribution Research Center.

Dr. John J. Jarvis, director of the School of Industrial Systems and Engineering, and Dr. Fred Tarpley, associate dean of the Ivan Allen College of Management, Policy and International Affairs, initiated this new program. Bureau President Joel Hammond said, "Atlanta finally has a logistics program for its many distribution-oriented businesses. We've grown from a regional transportation hub to an international business center, and our corporations increasingly need a local supply of quality graduates with a global perspective. We are excited about the new partnership with Tech."

500 of Tech Faculty Now Included On National Research Database

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More than 500 entries from Georgia Tech are now included in the BEST North America Database, a comprehensive database of faculty research interests and expertise. In his letter, Dr. Crecine encouraged more faculty members to participate. "Georgia Tech faculty members are truly the best in North America," Dr. Crecine wrote. "Therefore, I believe it is important that each of you be represented in this national 'Who's Who' of academic and research expertise."

The database, which includes research information from over 85 research universities, is designed to link the foremost research institutions in the U.S. and Canada with the technology-driven corporate community and leading funding agencies. Corporations and agencies use the database to identify research resources to establish better ties with universities and to explore opportunities for funding research. Universities use the database to coordinate their research efforts, develop research relationships with each other and to further public relations endeavors.

Dr. Crecine further explained. In addition to the individual expertise records, it includes records relating to research facilities, inventions and beginning next year, information on graduate students for corporate and university recruiters.

According to a letter to faculty members from President John P. Crecine, this resource will soon be available through BEST * Georgia Tech, a database consisting of only Tech's records. Currently, all search requests are being handled by Ruth Straussner in the Office of Information Systems and Services (4-4128).

Computer Purchase Program Will Pay Up to $2,000 For Faculty PCs

The 1991 Faculty Computer Purchase Plan is underway at Georgia Tech to supply permanent full-time faculty members with computer equipment for use at home or at work to facilitate their teaching, research or other endeavors.

The annual program sponsored by the Georgia Tech Foundation and the Georgia Tech Research Corporation will contribute up to $2,000 to applicants towards the purchase of computer equipment from selected vendors. Faculty members need only to submit an application to his/her department director, by Friday, Nov. 1 including a description of how the grant will enhance the performance of his/her duties at Tech.

Program coordinators require that a complete system, including a central processing unit (CPU) be purchased from the Georgia Tech Computer Store and that applicants refrain from using the grant to purchase peripheral equipment for a previously acquired system. They also stipulate that purchased equipment not be sold or disposed of for a minimum of one year from the date of receipt. Previous participants of the program are not eligible to for the grant.

DramaTech News

DramaTech will open their fall production of "Fahrenheit 451" on Friday, November 8 at 8:00. The story is about a society that believes the written word to be dangerous and is adapted from the science fiction work by Ray Bradbury. The cast includes students, alumni, faculty and members of the Tech community, including Dr. Jack Winnick, a professor in the School of Chemical Engineering. The production, directed by Greg Abbott of the Department of Literature, Communication and Culture, will incorporate new audio and visual technical elements.

DramaTech's International Theatre Festival will open on January 9, 1992 with the Atlanta premiere of the French play, "The Illusion," which will run through January 25. The second performance in the festival will be "Hunting Cockroaches," a play from Poland, which will open January 31 and run through February 8. The final play of the second annual festival will be George Bernard Shaw's "Major Barbara," which will open February 21 and run through March 7.
Site Simulation Could Improve Construction Facility Planning

By Lea McLees

Organizing people, materials and machines to work effectively could become easier for construction managers with help from a computer visual simulation being developed at Georgia Tech.

The Construction Visualizer (CV) would let managers simulate construction processes at a particular site — to plan equipment and material placement, for example. The simulation would provide information in three dimensions and as real-time simulations, said Dr. Walter Rodriguez, associate professor and chairman of the Engineering Computer Graphics Program in the School of Civil Engineering. The visual simulations would include input from all key planners involved in design and construction processes.

“We can use this as a tool for visualizing and prescribing the best plan, shape or arrangement within that space,” Dr. Rodriguez said of his research, sponsored by the National Science Foundation. “Ultimately, we hope to improve the dynamic communication between all the people involved — the client, architect, engineer, contractor and workers — using visual means.”

CV is being developed in C programming language and uses a UNIX-based workstation to display several different construction situations. One option depicts material hoist, or elevator operations programmed to simulate those of a hoist on a future construction project. Workers and equipment at different floors moving a variety of materials are also represented.

Dr. Rodriguez became interested in improved planning of construction operations while he supervised construction of the $20 million Federal Building and Courthouse project in San Juan, Puerto Rico, during the 1970s. The concrete batch plant was arbitrarily located at one end of a very large site. Additional facilities and materials, he said, were spread everywhere.

“I noticed all the travel time wasted by the subcontractors,” Dr. Rodriguez said. “People were waiting for materials and doing nothing, just because the supply facilities were so far from each other — something had to be done to improve site productivity.”

He saw similar problems on a crowded construction site for the University of Florida's football stadium while studying for his doctorate at the Gainesville school. He noticed the contractor had to move the concrete batch plant three times during construction, a street had to be closed — and still, the trucks involved had difficulty loading and unloading materials. Dr. Rodriguez suggests that simulation could prevent such time consuming problems.

“Visual simulation allows the design team to manipulate time — the fourth dimension,” he said. “We can go back and forth in virtual time and make design changes in response to problems detected while modeling the project on the computer. We can play 'what if' games...it's like having your own time machine. We have had a lot of interest in this project, particularly from large construction companies in the U.S. and abroad.”

Another option of the visual simulation program addresses crane operations. The site manager whose crew is installing panels on the tenth floor of a building, for example, could factor in the speed, angular movements, reach and dimensions of the crane’s boom, the material hoist’s specifications, workers’ paths; and even the site’s topography and dimensions. The system would help supervisors decide on the best place to locate not only cranes, but also building materials and construction support activities such as steel fabricating.

An additional program has been developed to simulate topography — the hills, valleys and rivers on which bridges, buildings, roads and other civil engineering projects are constructed. The visual rays producing the image are traced from known points on the terrain’s surface to the observer’s position, instead of the usual other way around, Dr. Rodriguez said. Reverse ray tracing allows realistic visual representations of complex shapes. Based on the site’s geographical data, a designer can alter the topographical model on the computer screen. The designer can increase the vertical axis, for example, to exaggerate hills and valleys and visualize tiny contour changes caused by a particular design decision.

Dr. Rodriguez would also like to develop visual thinking tools to allow students, designers and builders to communicate and reason with images, rather than just with words. Such tools would enhance the user’s ability to communicate and think visually, as well as verbally and mathematically.

“The visual thinking tools we are planning are not necessarily artificial intelligence or expert systems,” he explained. “These new tools will be like adding another dimension to the human mind.”

People on the Move

William E. Sayle II, professor in the School of Electrical Engineering has been elected Administrative Vice President of the Power Electronics Society effective Jan. 1, 1992.

Bruce Sinclair and Melvin Kranzberg recently participated in a conference in Tokyo, “U.S.-Japan Comparison in National Formation and Transformation of Technology.”

Dr. Kranzberg delivered a keynote address on “Technology Transfer and Industrial Growth: Lessons from the Past for the Future,” and Dr. Sinclair chaired a session and also delivered a talk on "International Engineering Congresses and the 'Modern' Agenda for Technology.”


 Classifieds . . .

FREE - Abandoned kitten needs home! Female, about 9 weeks, box trained, likes people, healthy/active, solid black/yellow eyes. Call Jane at 4-3466 or 522-1032.


For Sale - Exercycle Precor recumbent, like new, $300; Janny Lamp crib, good condt., $50; Fisher Price hi-chair, like new, $40; play pen, $33; and more. Call Jane at 4-3564.

For Sale - Downtown 2 BR, 2 BA condo in McGill Place. Ideal for roommates. Eat-in kitchen, walk-in closets, screened deck, security system, fplc. all appliances, W/D, pool, $600/mo. Call Theresa at 523-0515.

Informal Lunch Discussion with

Drs. Krassi Paskaleva & Phil Shapiro on

"The Effect of Economic and Political Restructuring in Bulgaria on Environmental Quality." Friday, November 15, 1991 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. Student Center - Room 227 (Chapel)

Sponsor: The Technology Policy and Assessment Center For more information call Dr. Alan Porter, 4-2330

Professional Publications


What's Next

LECTURES & SEMINARS

November 1

November 4
CIMS seminar, W. Hal Gurley, Automation Intelligence, Inc., “Technology and Trends in Automation Control Systems,” 4 p.m., Instructional Center, Rm. 211.

November 5

October 30
Georgia Tech Women's Forum meeting, Myrtle Davis, “How Each of Us Can Contribute to Better Government,” noon, Woodlaw Center, Geordy Dining Rm. Lunch 86. Brown baggers are welcome.

October 31
Spy/From Alan Imaging Lab Brown Bag Seminar, Holly Bashmeier, Global Illumination in Computer Graphics,” noon, College of Computing, Rm. 201.


MBRC seminar, Richard Landey, Digital Equipment Corp., “Computer Aided Plant Layout - CAPL.” 4 p.m., Instructional Classroom, Rm. 213.


Blood Drive, Nov. 12, 13, 14.
A generous student donates her blood at one of Tech's several blood drives held throughout the year. The next one is scheduled for November in the Student Center Ballroom from 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Official Georgia Tech Holidays for 1992

January 1
New Years Day

January 20
Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday

May 25
Memorial Day

July 3
Independence Day

September 7
Labor Day

November 26, 27
Thanksgiving Break

December 25-31
Winter Break

whistle

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INSIDE.....

• Twenty-eight staffers lose jobs after budget cuts/ reorganization. Page

• Tech satellite delivers literacy instruction to rural and urban Georgians. Page

Research Spotlight: Planning of construction sites may be made easier with simulation program. Page