Volunteering Connects Students to Community

AMELIA FAULK
COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

It was during a visit to a homeless shelter that Lisa Thornsberry realized why her volunteer efforts were worthwhile.

“I spoke with a man who had become homeless after losing his house and possessions in a fire,” said the fourth-year Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering major.

A few months earlier, Thornsberry’s brother had lost his house in a fire, and she realized that the homeless man could have easily been her brother.

“It was at that moment that I realized that the people I serve through volunteering aren’t so different from me,” she added. “Everyone has their times of need, and being there for each other during those times is what being a community is all about.”

According to the Office of Community Service, Georgia Tech students engaged in discovered volunteering through her involvement with National Honor Society and Beta Club. When she arrived at Tech, she wanted to work with children who had developmental disabilities but couldn’t find any organizations that would allow her to do so.

“At the beginning of my second semester, Mobilizing Opportunities for Volunteer Experiences (MOVE) allowed me to start a committee to plan service activities I was interested in, and through the organization I’ve had the opportunity to work on a variety of service projects,” said Thornsberry, who is now MOVE’s president.

Thornsberry’s volunteer work has also had connections to her coursework while at Tech. She took a Spanish service learning course as a component of her Spanish minor, and as part of the course, met with an elderly Cuban woman for two hours each week.

“She lived alone, so I would go to keep her company,” Thornsberry said. “Maria

VOLUNTEER, continued on page 2

Vote on Exam Week Excused Absences Postponed

AMELIA FAULK
COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

A vote on whether or not to add a sentence to the Office of the Registrar’s Procedures for Excused Absences stating that “excused absences will not be approved for the final examination period” was postponed during the Feb. 21 meeting of the General Faculty and Academic Senate.

During the meeting, Craig Tovey, chair of the Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee, which was proposing the change, explained that although the Institute would no longer be able to grant the absences, individual faculty members would be.

The group agreed that the committee should reword the sentence to allow the Institute more flexibility when a decision needs to be made.

Separately, a decision to revise Georgia Tech’s Policy on Competitive Admissions to ensure that it is in line with current legal standards regarding discrimination, diversity and admissions was approved.

Some of the changes in the revised version include deleting a sentence stating that admission preference may be given to non-resident applicants who are legacies of the Institute and deleting a sentence that states those offered admission will be selected on the basis of “recognition of the Institute’s special responsibilities to the residents of Georgia.”

The audience did provide one stipulation to its approval; a sentence in the new policy needed to be modified. The group agreed that the committee should reword the sentence to require students to “provide substantial

MEETING, continued on page 3

Foege to Receive Ivan Allen Jr. Prize for Social Courage

AMINA FAWCETT
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Georgia Tech has named William H. Foege a recipient of the Ivan Allen Jr. Prize for Social Courage. A transformational leader in global health policies who made possible the eradication of smallpox and other diseases worldwide, Foege will be honored during Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts events to be held March 14 and 15.

“Dr. Foege’s ability to develop and implement innovative health strategies has alleviated much human suffering in our world today and for generations to come,” said President G. P. “Bud” Peterson. “It is our privilege to honor Dr. Foege for his deep moral commitment to humanitarian progress and his lifetime of service.”

During a career spanning 60 years, Foege championed domestic and international health policies, emphasizing disease eradication and control, and issues of child survival and development; injury prevention; population control; preventive medicine; and public health leadership, particularly in the developing world. Through leadership roles at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Carter Center and the Task Force for Child Survival, Foege guided the early response to the HIV/AIDS crisis and oversaw

COURAGE, continued on page 4
Imagine if smartphone and tablet users could text a note under the table during a meeting without anyone knowing. Mobile gadget users might also be enabled to text while walking, watching TV or socializing — without taking their eyes off what they’re doing.

Georgia Tech researchers have built a prototype app for touch-screen mobile devices that is vying to be a complete solution for texting without the need to look at a mobile gadget’s screen. "Research has shown that chording, or gesture-based, texting is a viable solution for eyes-free written communication in the future, making obsolete the need for users to look at their devices while inputting text," said Mario Romero, a postdoctoral fellow in the School of Interactive Computing (IC) and the project’s principal investigator. The free open-source app, called BrailleTouch, incorporates the Braille writing system used by the visually impaired.

Researchers have conceived it as a texting tool for any of the millions of smartphone users worldwide. Early studies with visually impaired participants proficient in Braille typing have demonstrated that users can input at least six times the number of words per minute when compared to other research prototypes for eyes-free texting on a touch screen. Users reach up to 32 words per minute with 92 percent accuracy with the prototype app for the iPhone. "We are currently designing a study to formally evaluate BrailleTouch through both quantitative and qualitative methods," said Caleb Southern, an IC graduate student. "We will measure the typing speed and accuracy of visually impaired users and capture the feedback from study participants in areas such as comfort, ease of use and perceived value." For sighted users, the research team is exploring how BrailleTouch could be a universal eyes-free mobile texting app that replaces soft QWERTY keyboards and other texting technologies.

BrailleTouch is an out-of-the-box solution that will work with smartphones and tablets, and allow users to start learning the Braille alphabet in a few minutes," Romero said. "It also reduces the need for expensive proprietary Braille keyboard devices, which typically cost thousands of dollars."

The researchers have designed BrailleTouch to address the limitations of soft keyboards, which do not provide tactile feedback, as well as physical keyboards, which often use small and numerous fixed buttons. The app uses a gesture-based solution by turning the iPhone’s touchscreen into a soft-touch keyboard programmed for Braille and requiring only six keys, making it a practical solution for the limited screen real estate on smartphones.

The key feature of the BrailleTouch technology is the use of the six-key configuration so that the keyboard fits on the screen and users keep their fingers in a relatively fixed position while texting. This design allows users to hold their device with the screen facing away from them — cradling the device with their palms or pinkies and thumbs — and to type with a majority of their fingers.

Researchers developed Braille-Like Texting App

Events at the College of Management.

The IMPACT Speaker Series will feature a lecture on “What We Can’t Observe: Accounting for Latency in Joint Models of Activity-Travel and Location Choice Behavior” at noon in room 142A, Mason Building. A light lunch will be provided.

March 7

The University Transportation Center, Georgia Transportation Institute Luncheon Seminar Series will feature a lecture on “Collapsing Colloidal Gels: How and Why?” with William Russel of Princeton University. He will speak on the professional potential of women.

March 14

The 27th annual Ashton Cary Lecture, March 14 at 11 a.m. in the Van Leer Building Auditorium, will host a lecture on "What We Can’t Observe: Accounting for Latency in Joint Models of Activity-Travel and Location Choice Behavior” at noon in room G011, Molecular Science and Technology.

March 19

The IMPACT Speaker Series will feature a lecture on “Theatre in Peace and Conflict Resolution” with Megan Imlay, director of the Center for Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation and professor at the University of Minnesota.

March 26

The IMPACT Speaker Series will feature a lecture on "Learning OPPORTUNITY" with Dr. Renee Samulski, president of the University of North Carolina Asheville.

Volunteer, continued from page 1

expressed to me many times how grateful she was for my company, and spending time with her gave me the opportunity to practice my Spanish skills with a native speaker.”

When Thornberry graduates, she’s not sure what kind of volunteer work she’ll take on next. "But I know that wherever I am I will find some way to give back,” she added.

ETHAN SPIER, ENGLISH AVENUE YOUTH ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

Since high school, Speir, a fourth-year biology major, has been interested in volunteering to work with children. When he arrived at Tech, a friend suggested he get involved with the English Avenue Youth Enrichment Program (YEP), of which he is now president. Every Friday, Speir and the other members visit the Bellwood Boys and Girls Club, about two miles away from campus, for two hours. Sometimes they play games such as dodge-ball, while other focused on problem-solving activities designed to help teach the 10- to 12-year-olds life skills.

"Volunteering keeps me grounded, because it’s easy to lose focus of what’s going on in the community beyond Tech when you are so immersed in your research and what will happen when you graduate," he said. "When I get to Bellwood, I leave everything else going on in life at the door.”

When he graduates this summer, Speir intends to put his 12 years of volunteering to play good by using volunteering for Bugles Across America, an organization that arranges for musicians to play “Taps” at military funerals.

TOMAS LEON, MOBILIZING OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES

Like Speir, Leon, a fourth-year environmental engineering major, started volunteering as a freshman. "I’ve been interested in giving service in Atlanta. He is now chair of MOVE’s Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Committee. Leon’s MOVE committee participates in a variety of service projects, including Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, March 4-8. (Visit info@moveatl. com/7mwmw7o for more information about the week’s events.)

One cause that has become particularly meaningful to Leon is the work that he does with the Central Night Shelter, serving homeless men and women. "I love stories and, volunteering here, I am always hearing life stories,” Leon said. “For example, I’ve met people who marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, and it’s amazing to hear their stories.”

Leon and his fellow volunteers work at the shelter most weeks for a 12-hour shift from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. (they create a shift schedule, so one has to stay awake the entire evening), serving food and taking care of any other tasks the shelter might need.

“The challenge with volunteering is that sometimes it can feel like we’re just putting a bandage on these huge social issues, because they are so complex,” Leon said. “I hope that going forward, I will be able to have more influence on the policy side of these problems.”

The Center for the Study of Women, Science and Technology welcomes Jane Z. Daniels, program director for Clare Boothe Luce and Higher Education programs, Henry Luce Foundation, at 4 p.m. in the Clary Theater, Student Success Center.

THE WHISTLE

Georgia Tech’s Faculty/Staff Newspaper

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Archived issues of The Whistle can be accessed at www.whistle.gatech.edu.

Georgia Tech is a unit of the University System of Georgia.
The InVenture Prize @ Georgia Tech competition has announced six finalists who will showcase their inventions during a live show on Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB Media) on March 13 at 7 p.m. Students will present their inventions during a primetime broadcast, co-hosted by New York Times technology columnist David Pogue.

The InVenture Prize is an innovation competition for undergraduate students at Tech. Students work independently or in teams on inventions that will be presented to and judged by a panel of experts. Here are this year’s finalists:

- **Entricpe Wake**: A rigid, portable and customizable obstacle/rail system for extreme water sports.
- **CourseShark**: An online system that creates and shares college class schedules.
- **CardiacTech**: Chest retractor for bypass surgery.
- **An extraordinarily precise and pressure-sensitive capacitive stylus**.
- **A software-assisted, home-use hand assessment and rehabilitation device**.
- **A Touchscreen device giving guitarists the functionality of a distortion pedal**.
- **A Chest retractor for bypass surgery**.

The two winning inventions from either individuals or teams will be selected and the teams will receive:

- A cash prize of $15,000 for first place or $10,000 for second place.
- A free U.S. patent filing by Georgia Tech’s Office of Technology Licensing (each valued at approximately $20,000) for both the first and second place winners.
- Automatic acceptance to the summer 2012 Class of Flashpoint, a Georgia Tech start-up accelerator program.

In addition, a $5,000 “People’s Choice” award, provided by the Georgia Tech Research Corporation, will be presented. The live audience and broadcast viewers will have the opportunity to help select the winner of this award by voting on the Internet or texting in their favorite finalist.

In addition to airing on GPB, the 2012 Georgia Tech InVenture Prize competition will be streaming online at www.gpb.org. The InVenture Prize is free and open to the public. You can reserve your tickets by registering online at [http://inventureprize.gatech.edu](http://inventureprize.gatech.edu).

### Buzzworthy Achievements: Spring Honors Roundup

The following Georgia Tech employees or units have been honored in recent months:

- **Thomas Barker**, assistant professor in the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering, was awarded the Junior Investigator Award by the American Society for Matrix Biology.
- **Vicki Birchfield**, associate professor in the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, was awarded the distinction of Chevalier de l’Ordre Nationale du Merite (Knight in the French National Order of Merit) by decree of the President of the French Republic.
- **Turgay Ayer**, assistant professor in the H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering, was honored for his research in breast cancer screening policies with three awards during the 2011 Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS) annual meeting.
- **Sigrun Andradottir**, professor in the School of Industrial and Systems Engineering, was presented with the Kuhn Award for her paper, “Adaptive Random Search for Continuous Simulation Optimization,” co-authored with Andrei Prudius, at the 2011 INFORMS annual meeting.
- **Eberhard Voit**, professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering, was elected a fellow of the American Institute of Medical and Biological Engineering.
- **The Campus Recreation Center, in partnership with LEAD and the China Summer Program, won the NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education Bronze Award of Excellence in the Athletic and Recreation Program category.**
- **Ben Wang**, the executive director of the Manufacturing Research Center, has been named the Eugene C. Gwaltney Jr. Chair in Manufacturing Systems in the College of Engineering.
- **Mark Styczynski**, assistant professor in the School of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering, received funding through the Grand Challenges Explorations initiative to pursue a global health research project.
- **Michael Filler**, an assistant professor in the School of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering, was awarded the Early Faculty Career Development Award from the National Science Foundation.
- **Larry McIntire**, Wallace H. Coulter Chair in the Department of Biomedical Engineering, was elected to be a council delegate from the Section on Engineering to the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Submissions will be accepted on an ongoing basis. Provide name, title, unit and honor (please spell out all acronyms) to editor@comm.gatech.edu.

### MEETING, continued from page 1

Evidence” of their potential to “embrace the diverse campus community,” among other things. So, the sentence will be modified accordingly by Tovey’s committee. In other meeting news:

- The Student Sexual Misconduct Policy was changed to include a statement saying both parties have the right to appeal a misconduct decision, and a student may change the complaint from formal to informal at any point in the process.
- Revisions to the Student Code of Conduct were approved, including one requiring that all documentation in an academic misconduct claim be submitted within 10 business days of submitting a case. Also, a statement was added that says students have a right to a written statement of the case outcome.
- Nominees are needed for open faculty governance positions in a variety of areas. If interested, contact Andrew Lyon (lyonf@ece.gatech.edu) or David White (david.white@cc.gatech.edu).

To view open faculty governance positions, the agenda for this meeting and the supporting documents that were provided for each meeting item, go to [www.facultygovernance.gatech.edu](http://www.facultygovernance.gatech.edu).

### Article Ideas?

We rely on the campus community to let us know what is going on. If you have an article idea for The Whistle, send it to editor@comm.gatech.edu.

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**MATT NAGEL**

**COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING**

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**CLASSIFIEDS**

**AUTOMOBILE**


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28R/28A condo for rent. Piedmont Park is your front yard. Private entrance, two reserved parking spaces just steps from your front door. Five minutes to campus. $1,450/month. Call 770-312-7497 or email mikelawson@comcast.net.

Classifieds continue on page 4
Bowman Still Leads Study Abroad After 13 Years

AMELIA PAVLIK
COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING

Some teachable moments can’t be created in the classroom, and no one knows this better than Kirk Bowman.

“For example, I was leading a study abroad trip to Cuba, and it was during President Carter’s visit to the country,” said Bowman, director of undergraduate programs in the School of International Affairs. “The students listened to Carter deliver a speech to a large crowd and had the opportunity to interact with the Cubans around them during and after the speech. This is the sort of thing that can’t happen in a classroom.”

In his 13 years at Georgia Tech, Bowman has led 13 study abroad groups to countries ranging from Spain to Cuba. Currently, he is director of the 2012 Valenciana, Spain and Lisbon, Portugal Program in Biology and International Affairs.

“I spent many years living in Latin America and feel strongly that you need to experience a culture to understand it,” Bowman said. “I think that all students should spend time abroad while at Tech, and if I think that way, I feel like I need to do it myself.”

Bowman added that the students are generally well-behaved, so leading the trips is not a chore.

“They know we’re not their chaperones,” he said. “Plus, students are easy to incentivize. If you make participation a part of their grades, they are more likely to be engaged and prepared. Read on to learn more about Bowman and his time at Tech.

What did you want to be when you were a child?
A cowboy, then an oceanographer and then an attorney.

How did you arrive at Georgia Tech?
I didn’t earn my bachelor’s degree until I was 32. I’d gone through more than five careers, including a stint as an underwater photographer, and I didn’t want my kids to have a dad who didn’t graduate from college. So, I went to college. I became friends with a professor who convinced me to stay in academia and eventually came to Tech because I liked the idea of working in a School of International Affairs. Working in international affairs allows for more eclectic research agendas than I could take on in a School of Political Science. I’ve been able to do educational and research programs that involve biology and international affairs.

Tell us a bit about your research.
My research is field work-driven. I study variations in political and economic development, primarily in countries in Latin America. For example, I’ve looked at the relationship between the militarization of a country and its development.

What piece of technology could you not live without?
Prescription sunglasses.

Which do you prefer and why: Facebook, Twitter or a world without either?
A world without either. These tools may help create relationships — but they are broad and shallow.

Where is your favorite spot on campus?
The Campanile. When you’re there, Georgia Tech can feel like a regular college campus in the middle of nowhere, rather than in the middle of a city.

If you could have dinner with one person, dead or alive, who would it be?
Penelope Cruz; she’s gorgeous. And I have enjoyed so many of her films over the years, especially those directed by Almodovar.

Where is your favorite place to have lunch, and what do you order?
Elliott Street Deli & Pub, and I order the Caprese sandwich.

Tell us something about yourself that people might not know.
When I lived in Las Vegas — and had a very different career — I had a chance to party with musical artists such as Alice Cooper. But it wasn’t much of a party with him — he sipped a Diet Coke most of the time.

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