New Class Continues Trend of Prestige, Diversity

On Aug. 22, another impressive group of students will begin their careers as Yellow Jackets. A record number of students applied for acceptance to Georgia Tech this year, with applications exceeding 30,500 for the first time. Of those who were accepted, around 2,860 will make up the new class. As has been the trend in recent years, their credentials set new highs for an incoming class. These students have taken an average of 10 college-level courses, and 95 percent have take college-level calculus or an.

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Summer in the City: How to Stay Cool in the Atlanta Heat

It may almost be time for fall semester, but it’s still the peak of summer heat and humidity in Atlanta. How are you supposed to get to and from class, work, and campus meetings without constantly toweling off? For Jess Hunt-Ralston, senior designer in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering who bikes to work, thinking “like a hiker” is key. “Stay hydrated, stick to shaded areas, and wear a hat,” she said. “I often wear a tank top or T-shirt on my commute, with a sweater packed in my bag for the office.” For those who walk, bike, or take transit, she also suggested wearing athletic clothes for the commute and packing work clothes to change into once on campus.

One group whose job it is to be outside at Georgia Tech Landscape Services team. Each year, the team meets with Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) at the beginning of the summer for a reminder of important tips for safety in the heat and how to identify heat illness. “We perform the hardest tasks that are in full sun in the morning, and tasks in shaded areas in the afternoon,” said Hyacinth Ide, associate director for Landscape Services and Fleet Services. Employees are also encouraged to wear sunscreen and get plenty of rest at night, and are provided hats and cotton clothing. EHS advises that they wear loose, lightweight clothing made of cotton or cotton blends that let air circulate and can.

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Board of Regents Approves Health Pricing, Faculty Appointments

The Board of Regents (BOR) approved the appointment of Georgia Tech faculty members to named chairs and professorships, 2017 benefits plans, and a few business items related to upcoming campus projects, at its Aug. 10 meeting.

The Board approved health care plans and

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The University System of Georgia (USG)’s Board of Regents has appointed three Georgia Tech faculty members as Regents Professors and one as Regents Researcher. The titles represent the highest academic and research recognition bestowed by the USG, and demonstrate distinction and achievement in teaching and scholarly research.

The three Regents Professors:
- Seymour E. Goodman, professor in the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs with a joint appointment in the College of Computing, and co-director of the Center for International Strategy, Technology, and Policy.
- Nicholas V. Hud, professor in the School of

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Biomedical Engineer to Address First-Year Students

Ben Rapsas, who applied to overcome a fear of public speaking, was selected to address incoming students at this year’s New Student Convocation. Learn more about Rapsas at c.gatech.edu/rapsas

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The Search Is On

President G.P. “Bud” Peterson named a nine-person search committee of students, faculty, and staff to recommend candidates for the vacant position of director of athletics. The committee is lead by Al Trujillo, president and chief operating officer of the Georgia Tech Foundation.

c.gatech.edu/ADsearch

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Connecting with Georgia Tech’s ‘Queen Bee’

BRIGHTIE ESPINET
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

From managing the President’s Residence, to fundraising, to serving in the Association of American Universities, to mentoring, and public speaking — sometimes even in Spanish (in which she has her Texas A&M master’s degree) — Georgia Tech’s first lady is one busy bee. The “Queen Bee,” that is.

Exceptionally warm, jocular, and irrespressibly charming, the Seattle-born, Kansas City-raised Val Peterson prefers not to be addressed as “Mrs. Peterson.” Instead, she says, “Just call me Val ... or Queen Bee.” As the Institute’s first lady of the past seven years, the mother of four biological and nine foster children, today, also proudly considers herself “mom” to Tech’s more than 25,000 students, which is why she happily lays claim to the moniker Val P., the Queen Bee.

But the nurturer that is Val P. is as much Val the connector. She zealously embraces her role as a “great cheerleader for the Institute,” and, in so doing, fervidly connects with all things Tech — down to the four closets of self-made outfits that are each some combination of white and gold, black and gold, or navy and gold. Her clothes have been the topic of many a conversation that has facilitated one of things she most enjoys: “I specialize in making connections; it’s one of my favorite things. I am a connector. I love to find out where people’s passions lie and where their passions connect with Tech.”

Read on to find out more about what makes the Queen Bee buzz.

What do you enjoy most about being Georgia Tech’s first lady?

I enjoy fundraising. That’s what I spend most of my time doing. I go where I think I add value. If I’m choosing whether to accept this invitation or that, I will always take the fundraising opportunity. My family says that I can talk to rocks, and that is a wonderful skill in fundraising, especially in this job, in my support of Bud.

Which cause within the fundraising realm are you most passionate about?

I love the Tech Promise program! Bud and I give our personal philanthropy in support of this program. We just finished the capital campaign in which we were supposed to find $1.5 billion, and we found more than $1.8 billion. So proud! Our goal specifically for Tech Promise was $50 million, but when we finished the campaign, we had more than $60 million. (Editor’s Note: Fundraising for Tech Promise continues to be one of Georgia Tech’s highest priorities in the post-campaign period.) Tech Promise just fits in with who I am because I love to take care of the underdog. I love to tell people about Tech Promise because it’s such an inspiring story. I’m so thankful to [President Emeritus] Wayne Clough for starting it right before we got here so we could carry on his good work.

Talk about your involvement in foster care.

That conversation could actually be a separate interview because it’s so big, but we basically had nine children over 11 years, after the last of our four entered the public school system. I was at the point where I didn’t want to work anymore, and I didn’t want to get any more degrees. I just wanted to stay home and be a mom. Today, I have one young lady who says to me, ‘Of all of my moms — and I have a lot [biological mother, stepmother, mother-in-law, foster mother] — you’re the best.’ She makes me cry when she says that.

What’s your favorite place on campus and why?

It’s the President’s Residence at Tech because my family is here. Half of our children have lived here, and my father [who passed away four months ago] lived here.

Also, the arch on North Avenue is another of my favorite places on campus. I think it’s so pretty, it’s a neat way to enter the campus. That archway is just filled with hope as to what you’re going to find on the other side.

What are the top three things on your bucket list?

I want to zip line with my family. I want to lead a Tech tour for the Alumni Association. And, I want to be a grandmother — which is coming Jan. 8, 2017! Man, these kids are 33, 35, 37, and 39... I’ve been waiting forever!

How do you and President Peterson unwind together?

We walk. On nights that we don’t have Tech events, we walk on campus and meet the most interesting people.

If you had to choose one thing that makes you the most proud of Dr. Peterson, what would it be?

His vision! I recently accused him of running INTO the future with Georgia Tech! We walk.

What do you want your legacy as First Lady of Georgia Tech to be?

For our students, I want to be known as their Georgia Tech mom, while they’re on this campus, and I want our marriage to be a model of a relationship to which they can aspire. For our faculty and staff, I want to be known as a sincere supporter. For the administration, I want to be known as a member of the team. But most of all, I want to be known as an amazing fundraiser for our incredible, cutting-edge, life-changing university!
Staff Council Session Highlights
Health, Breaks Down Parking

KRISTEN BAILY
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

At the Staff Council’s third Inform Georgia Tech event, leaders from the Center for Community Health and Well-Being and Parking and Transportation Services (PTS) gave an overview of their department’s offerings, plans, and challenges.

Suzy Harrington, director of the Center for Community Health and Well-Being, explained the holistic approach the Center takes when it comes to wellness.

“Health and well-being is about who we are, not what we do,” she said. She mentioned the breadth of health and wellness-related programs and initiatives on campus, but that they are not always connected. Some aspects, such as Stamps Health Services, have varied accessibility for students versus employees. Stamps recently began accepting insurance for employee prescriptions, and Harrington hopes to continue to expand the Center’s employee-focused efforts.

One upcoming initiative that will be available to all is a LiveHealth kiosk in the Student Center. Students, faculty, and staff will be able to teleconference with a doctor and receive prescriptions, which can be filled a few steps away at Stamps.

Harrington was followed by Lance Lunsway, senior director for Parking and New Business Development. Lunsway outlined how parking costs are structured, why they continue to rise, and other campus transportation options.

Georgia Tech’s parking is completely funded by users. As the campus continues to become more friendly to multi-modal transportation and build more parking decks — a nationwide trend, Lunsway said — costs continue to rise, as decks are more expensive to construct and maintain than surface lots.

PTS does subsidize user parking rates through special event parking, visitor parking, Official Business Permit sales, and other methods, all of which add up to bringing down the cost around $550 per year, per user.

PTS is also looking at ways to conserve energy and cut costs where possible. Recent LED light installations in the Tech Square deck brought a 70 percent energy savings, and the installation will pay for itself in around four to five years.

Still, Lunsway acknowledged that not everyone can afford or wants to pay to drive and park on campus. He encouraged users to consult the commute calculator at gacommuteoptions.com to determine the best commute method for them.

This fall, Tech will partner with the City of Atlanta’s new Relay Bike Share program to bring five stations and around 50 bikes to campus in the coming weeks.

Finally, Lunsway presented what he said could be the future for campus transport — a driverless car named Olli whose parts are made on a 3-D printer. For now, though, trolleys and buses will continue to service Tech’s campus.

For full presentations from both Harrington and Lunsway, visit staffcouncil.gatech.edu.

REGENTS, from page 1

Chemistry and Biochemistry and director of the Center for Chemical Evolution.

• Vladimir Tsukruk, professor in the School of Materials Science and Engineering, founding co-director of the Air Force BIONIC Center of Excellence, and founding director of the Microanalysis Center.

The Regents Researcher.

• Alexa Harter, associate director and chief scientist of the Advanced Concepts Lab.

“Georgia Tech is incredibly proud to have some of the world’s best and brightest scholars, and we congratulate these faculty members on their new appointments,” said Rafael L. Bras, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs.

“This new distinction is a testament to their continued commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and scholarship.”

Each year, academic deans may nominate two academic faculty members for the Regents Professor title and one research faculty member for the Regents Researcher title. The Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) may nominate two research faculty members for Regents Researcher. The titles are awarded upon approval of the chancellor and the Committee on Academic Affairs, only with unanimous recommendation of the president, the chief academic officer, the appropriate academic dean, and three other faculty members.

“The contributions of these faculty members make a lasting impact on the research and education enterprise here at Georgia Tech,” said Steve Cross, executive vice president for Research. “That impact also bolsters the Institute’s goals to serve as a driver of economic vitality in Atlanta, the State of Georgia, and beyond.”

HR UPDATES

New Supplemental Retirement Savings Option Now Available

Tech employees now have an option for a supplemental retirement investment. Employees now have access to a Roth 457(b). While there has been a Roth 403(b) option available for some time, this new offering gives employees the opportunity to defer compensation after taxes. Visit ohr.gatech.edu/retirement to learn more about the Roth 457(b) option. Employees can contact supplemental savings plan vendors for more specific information regarding contribution limits, taxation questions, or any aspect of Roth contributions.

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The Board's next meeting will take place on Oct. 31 through Nov. 11, and Georgia Tech Human Resources will continue to share information as it becomes available. For more details, visit ohr.gatech.edu and usg.edu.

Two new named positions were approved as a result of Campaign Georgia Tech: the Betsy Middleton and John Clark Sutherland Dean's Chair in the College of Sciences, and the John E. Bickel III School Chair in the School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering.

The BOR approved the appointments of Paul Goldhart and David Sholl to the two new positions, respectively. The Board also approved three new Regents Professors, a Regents Researcher, and the renewal of seven Regents Professors.

In Real Estate and Facilities, the Board authorized a new project to build a Cell Manufacturing Facility in the Marcus Nanotechnology Building. This project will involve the build-out of clean room space as part of Georgia Tech leading the National Cell Manufacturing Consortium.

Georgia Tech was selected to lead this initiative by the federal government, with more than $15 million in support from the Marcus Foundation over five years.

The Board also authorized renovations on the first floor of the Savant Building, home to the University System of Georgia (USG) moves to a defined contribution model. More information will be available soon about exact plan pricing, but increases for each plan will range from 0 to 8 percent. Open enrollment this year will take place from Oct. 31 through Nov. 11, and Georgia Tech Human Resources will continue to share information as it becomes available. For more details, visit ohr.gatech.edu and usg.edu.

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