Workshops Explore Issues of Innate Bias

MICHAEL HAGEARTY
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

In the realm of classical music, men have historically been considered the finest performers in the world, while women were largely considered unsuitable for openings in top-tier symphony orchestras. Long-held criticisms of poor technique and temperament kept the ranks of elite musicianship overwhelmingly male.

Then orchestras began blind auditions, and the simple act of masking gender led to dramatic changes in orchestral membership. As subsequent studies have demonstrated, the differential treatment was based not on the competency of the candidate but rather the lingering prejudice — both overt and subtle — of those on the hiring panel.

It's a reminder of how ingrained beliefs, no matter how open- or independent-minded individuals may believe themselves to be, can cloud judgment. They are part of both the conscious and subconscious mind. And for those who have a hand in hiring and promotion, implicit bias can have a lasting impact on the hiring panel.

Several projects were completed over the summer, while a few continue into the fall.

All Buttoned Up

The area surrounding the Corliss Pump now includes benches, tables, and more integrated pedestrian paths.

Environmental Health and Safety Building

Multiple units under Facilities Management’s Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) department moved into a new home at 793 Marietta Street. This adaptive reuse project transformed an old armored truck transfer station into a cutting-edge space for EHS that includes offices, a training room, and a custom-designed materials management space.

President Addresses Black Student Experience, Gender Equity

At his annual Institute Address last week, President G.P. “Bud” Peterson highlighted achievements of the past year and discussed Georgia Tech’s present momentum. He also provided an update on the Black Student Experience task force that was established last fall, and on a series of listening sessions related to gender equity on campus.

Co-chaired by Institute Diversity Vice President Archie Ervin and Student Life Vice President and Dean of Students John Stein, the Black Student Experience task force presented its 11 recommendations to Peterson late last spring. All recommendations were approved and will be implemented over the next three academic years.

While the task force was formed at the start of Fall 2015 following allegations that several students were racially harassed on campus, the group’s charge was to examine the broader issues of climate and culture at Georgia Tech,” said Stein. Recommendations were based on research findings and a report from an

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Researcher, Leukemia Fighter, Paralympian

Cassie Mitchell, research engineer in the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering, didn’t let a leukemia diagnosis stop her from making it to the 2016 Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Watch a video with Mitchell at c.gatech.edu/mitchell
EVENTS

ARTS & CULTURE

Sept. 9
Project One hosts a free screening of Lemonade from 7:30 to 11 p.m. at the Ferst Center for the Arts. projectone.gatech.edu

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Aug. 31
The Office of Human Resources hosts a Be Well session on Maximizing Lifestyle Benefits from noon to 1 p.m. in Room 320, Student Center.
ohr.gatech.edu

Sept. 14
The Office of Human Resources hosts a Be Well session on Fast and Fresh: Cooking Quick Meals That Are Fresh and Nutritious from noon to 1 p.m. in Room 343, Student Center.
ohr.gatech.edu

Sept. 22
The Habitat Permanent Corporate Run/Walk 5K will take place at 6:30 p.m. at Turner Field. Employees can sign up with the Georgia Tech team for $10. Learn more at c.gatech.edu/kp5k

TRAINING

Sept. 6
The Library hosts a Patent Search Class from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Homer Rice Center, Ground Floor West, Library.
library.gatech.edu

Sept. 7
The Office of Campus Sustainability hosts a session on Cool Weather Crops: Urban Organic Gardening from noon to 1 p.m. in the Piedmont Room, Student Center.
sustain.gatech.edu

SEMINARS & LECTURES

Sept. 1
The Commission on Creating the Next in Education hosts David Levin, president and CEO of McGraw-Hill Education, at 11 a.m. in Room 1116, Klaus Advanced Computing Building.
prevenl.gatech.edu

PROJECTS, from page 1

improved crosswalks, and better lighting. The small improvements will make a big difference in pedestrian traffic flow when football season kicks off.

Nearly Complete

Boggs Classroom Improvement Project

The latest phase in classroom improvements in the Gilbert Hillhouse Boggs Building is expected to be completed by early September. This includes major updates to the auditorium to provide students and faculty with a better learning environment. The work also improves accessibility and refreshes and enlarges support spaces around the auditorium.

Carnegie Building Renovation

The Carnegie Building, which was originally built in 1906, underwent a renovation that involved asbestos abatement, exterior window replacement, life safety upgrades, and an elevator installation. With historic buildings, historic preservation must be balanced with the safety and accessibility of occupants and visitors. The building should be re-occupied in the coming weeks.

Atlantic Promenade

Along Atlantic Drive, the need for utility repairs provided an opportunity to also improve the appearance and pedestrian experience at the Atlantic Promenade. The project will be completed toward the end of the fall semester and will include new walkways, seating areas, and landscaping.

Ferst Drive Improvements at Hemphill

This summer, Ferst Drive got a complete makeover to improve both the appearance and function of the road and its intersection with Hemphill Avenue. The road underwent paving, new landscaping, and safety improvements. To prevent traffic disruption, the reconfiguration of the Hemphill intersection is being completed in small increments. The full functionality of the new intersection will be complete by November.

Tech Green

After being out of commission for six months, Tech Green is finally green again. Both the grass and the drainage have been improved, but the fences will not come down until the new turf is firmly rooted. Fencing will remain up to prevent heavy foot and event traffic from damaging the turf and root system, particularly during the colder months.

Just Beginning

West Campus Dining Commons

Design is complete and construction has started on this new building, which will house five new eateries including local food, Mediterranean, Italian, and allergy-friendly options. Environmentally friendly features will include water reuse, a high-efficiency building envelope, and dedicated space for landfill diversion activities such as pre-consumer recycling and a food bio-digester. The project is anticipated to be complete in the 2017-18 academic year.

Van Leer Interdisciplinary Design Commons

Construction on the Van Leer Interdisciplinary Design Commons will begin in late September. This project will transform the two-story rotunda of the Blake R. Van Leer Building into a shared space for education, collaboration, and research serving the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Georgia Tech makers and innovators. The project is expected to be finished in early 2018.

Library Renewal: Price Gilbert and Crosland Tower

After much anticipation, the renewal of the Price Gilbert and Crosland Tower Libraries is moving forward. Library staff should be moved into the Library Resource Center on Marietta Street by the end of September. The renovation is not expected to be completed until 2020, but the Library will remain as functional as possible over the course of the project to minimize the effect on students. Expect to see construction fencing being erected in November as interior demolition begins on Crosland Tower. The end result will be an innovative library of the 21st century.

As a reminder, resource sharing with Emory University will continue throughout the year. Learn more about the project at renewal.library.gatech.edu.
Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion Opens

In an effort to strengthen the services that support the success of underrepresented minority and women students at Georgia Tech, a new center will better centralize current Institute Diversity programs and expand Institute Diversity’s reach with new ones.

This month, the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion launched to provide more programs and pathways to success for underrepresented students on campus. The Center encourages students to excel academically, interact across cultures and perspectives, and value inclusion.

The purpose of the Center is to serve students from all backgrounds and encourage them to be inventive leaders who think globally. S. Gordon Moore Jr., executive director, student diversity and inclusion, serves as the director of the new Center.

One of the findings from Georgia Tech’s Climate Assessment Survey expressed feelings of marginalization by gender, race, and ethnicity among undergraduate and graduate students,” said Moore. “By launching the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion, we will better serve the more than 4,000 students who benefit from our programs now — and increase capacity to serve even more current and future students.

Focusing on the recruitment, retention, and advancement of underrepresented minority and women students, the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion houses the Office of Hispanic Initiatives, OMED: Educational Services, and the Center for the Study of Women, Science, and Technology.

In the year ahead, the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion will offer an Outreach Initiative to assist Georgia Tech in discovering and developing its future pool of talented and diverse students.

“I am excited to see how the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion can create synergy among units in sharing resources, insights, and connections to help increase the diversity of our student population,” said Austin Kennedy, an undergraduate student and systems engineering major.

Students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community stakeholders are encouraged to visit the Center for Students. Through its website, the Center will develop greater awareness to do likewise within our own practices.” — Paul Benkeser

Jeanne Lynch-Stieglitz, associate chair and professor in the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, speaks with a fellow attendee at one of the Implicit Bias workshops.

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Benkeser.

“We convened a faculty advisory committee to gain input on the dynamics within different academic units,” Ancis says. “The feedback showed an expressed desire for broader discussion of this topic as well as tools and techniques for minimizing the effect of implicit bias.”

This past spring, more than 130 faculty members across all six colleges participated in the eight inaugural workshops, with an emphasis on candidate evaluation for the hiring process. Six more are planned for the fall semester, some of which will focus on issues specific to the hiring process and others that will focus on promotion and tenure.

The workshop offers an introduction to the concept of implicit bias, its implications for decision-making, and best practices for both individual and group judgment. Ancis and Benkeser are hoping that faculty will develop greater awareness of innate perceptions and apply this knowledge when called upon to review an applicant or write a letter of recommendation.

“There’s a growing body of literature coming from industry and research highlighting the importance of having a diverse community contributing to an organization’s goals,” Benkeser said. “We’re trying to promote this ideal to our students, so it seems we should strive to do likewise within our own practices.”

A HUMAN CONDITION

Revealing one’s bias can be an uncomfortable experience and often results in defensive behavior and resistance. Ancis, whose professional work has focused on multicultural issues including cultural and interpersonal bias, says that embracing our biases can be a starting point for learning.

“We’re trying to promote this ideal to our students, so it seems we should strive to do likewise within our own practices.” — Paul Benkeser

Jeanne Lynch-Stieglitz, associate chair and professor in the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, speaks with a fellow attendee at one of the Implicit Bias workshops.

Women, admitted she wasn’t happy with her results on a gender-related implicit association test. Ancis says the value comes from moving beyond initial skepticism toward greater self-reflection.

“It’s important to remember that each of us holds biases and that some researchers argue that this is part of the human condition,” Ancis said. “It doesn’t make you a bad person, but we do need to understand how bias can influence our judgment.”

The goal, she said, is to recognize conditions under which we are more likely to engage in stereotyping and learn strategies to minimize its potentially adverse effect.

Take a Test

Individuals can take an introductory, 10-minute self-assessment on a variety of topics at c.gatech.edu/implicit-test. Ancis suggests the Gender-Science exercise as particularly relevant for faculty at Georgia Tech.

Attend a Workshop

There will be four workshops focused on implicit bias as it relates to both faculty hiring and the reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RAP&T) process: Sept. 27 Oct. 20 Oct. 27 Nov. 3

Register at c.gatech.edu/bias-workshop.

Two additional workshops will focus only on RAP&T: Sept. 22 Sept. 29

To register, visit c.gatech.edu/bias-rpt.

For a more comprehensive listing of events, or to add your own, visit calendar.gatech.edu.

EVENTS

MISCELLANEOUS

Sept. 2

The Decision and Control Lab hosts Lars Blackmore who will discuss Landing Space’s Reusable Rockets at 11 a.m. in Room 442, Guggenheim Building.

eae.gatech.edu

Sept. 1

The Institute for People and Technology hosts its Fall Town Hall from 2:30 to 5 p.m. in Suite 600, Centennial Building.

ipat.gatech.edu

Sept. 5

Campus is closed in observance of Labor Day.

Sept. 6

Georgia Tech Cyber Security hosts a GPG (GNU Privacy Guard) Key Signing Party, covering the basics of cryptography and how to encrypt messages, from 9 to 11 a.m. in Room 242, Rich Building. Coffee and donuts will be served.

security.gatech.edu/gpgbasics

Sept. 9, 23

The Center for Teaching and Learning hosts a book club that will meet twice to discuss Are You Smart Enough? How Colleges’ Obsession with Smart Brains Impairs Students. The book club will meet from 4 to 5 p.m. in Room 466A, Clough Commons.

cctl.gatech.edu

Sept. 10

The Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets host Mercer University at 3 p.m. at Bobby Dodd Stadium.

ramblinwreck.com

Sept. 15

The 2016 Diversity Symposium takes place from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Historic Ballroom.

diversity.gatech.edu

Sept. 21

The Georgia Tech Faculty Women’s Club invites the wives and significant others of faculty and administrators, and female faculty and administrators, to its annual Open House from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the northern terrace of Community Smith Restaurant at the Renaissance Hotel, 866 W. Peachtree Street NW.

gtfwc.gatech.edu

For a more comprehensive listing of events, or to add your own, visit calendar.gatech.edu.

ADDRESS from page 1

independent consultant, who conducted more than 130 interviews — both through focus groups and one-on-one discussions — with undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty and staff. Student members of the task force also gathered feedback directly from the student body to form a list of issues for the Institute to consider.

“After reviewing the collective research findings and the consultant’s report, the task force outlined 11 recommendations that fall into four categories: programs, trainings, physical spaces, and planning and assessment,” said Ervin.

Meeting with students, faculty, staff, and students — and informally with various groups of faculty, staff, and students — back from faculty and staff showed that some of the Institute’s collaborative actions, practices, and policies have represented a lack of recognition for the contributions of women.

For a full list of recommendations issued by both groups, visit c.gatech.edu/bsetf and c.gatech.edu/gendereq.

For those who were unable to attend the Institute Address, an archive of the presentation is available at president.gatech.edu.

ANNETTE FILLIAT
INSTITUTE DIVERSITY
As Professor, Dean, or President, Schuster Connects by Caring

VICTOR ROGERS
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

Gary Schuster gives Peter Pan partial credit for inspiring his 50-year career in academia.

“He never had to grow up,” Schuster said. “Being in academia, allows you to maintain a child-like curiosity for your entire life.”

Being surrounded by intellectually curious students also helps.

“Every year, there is a new class of enthusiastic young people, many who hope to change the world. It’s infectious and impossible to ignore,” he said.

Over the course of his career, he has seen countless teaching fads and trends come, then go. But he believes the essentials remain the same.

“It really comes down to a couple of things. Both seem to be highly valued by students,” said Schuster, the Vasser Woolsey Professor and Regents Professor in the School of Chemistry and Biochemistry.

The first thing is to be prepared. “Know what you want to do and accomplish in the classroom,” he said. “Have a plan. Every faculty member at Georgia Tech is capable of doing that.”

The second thing is to sincerely care about your students.

“That part, you can’t fake. People are extraordinarily skilled at detecting insincerity,” he said. “It’s not hard [to care] because they are really good kids and most are working really hard. I think about it in terms of my own kids and grandchildren. How would I want them to be treated?”

Schuster, who affectionately refers to students under the age of 45 (the age of his oldest son) as “kids,” has spent years working with students as a professor and administrator.

For 20 years, Schuster was a faculty member at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) and served as head of the Department of Chemistry there. He came to Georgia Tech in 1994 and served as dean of the College of Sciences and professor of chemistry and biochemistry until 2006, when he was named provost and served as dean of the College of Sciences and professor of chemistry and biochemistry. He came to Georgia Tech in 1994 as interim president of Georgia Tech between G. Wayne Clough and G.P. “Bud” Peterson. He served as interim president of Georgia Tech and executive vice president. He has three rules to help keep the students focused.

In his classroom, Schuster has three rules to help keep the students focused.

The first rule is no computer or cellphone use. “It seems impossible for some to avoid checking email or social media when that laptop is open in front of them, and that inevitably distracts those seated nearby,” he said. Students who want to take notes on their laptop must sit in the front row, also called “computer row.”

The second rule is no eating — because it too can annoy other students.

Schuster’s final rule is no snoring. “You can sleep, but you cannot snore. Snoring also annoys others,” he joked.

Gary Schuster has been a professor, dean, and interim president at Georgia Tech. His best advice for faculty is to show genuine care and concern for students.

From the Source

Mike Zott, a second-year chemistry major, took Gary Schuster’s class during the fall semester of his freshman year.

“My absolute favorite part of Professor Schuster’s class was his coaching of the material, which allowed a teaching style that had a certain panache or swagger, but without any of the self-importance that those words might connote,” Zott said. “This gives him great authority in the classroom, which makes you feel confident that you are learning something important.”

Zott, who loves teaching himself directly from textbooks, concedes. “There really is no replacement for the insights of an excellent teacher. I think [Professor Schuster] puts it best, in fact, he says, ‘Teaching yourself should be looked at as having laid a foundation,’ but it [is] much more pleasant to live in a house than in a foundation.” The teacher builds the house, and the excellent teacher builds a mansion.

Zott said that because of the internet, one can ask just about any question and find hundreds or even thousands of people who already know the answer and how to solve the problem. He believes this eliminates the need to memorize things that can be looked up easily.

“However, [Schuster’s] teaching power the mastery which is that not only can you solve problems quickly and without aid, but primarily that mastery instills confidence in those around you,” Zott said. “This is a critical skill in science when you have to explain the value of your research to those outside your specialty or perhaps even outside of your field.”

Zott said he has greatly enjoyed discussing more than organic chemistry with Schuster. He has recommended several books for reading and discussion with Zott, who plans to graduate in three years (or less), against Schuster’s advice.

“Something that he tries to impart to me is to maintain openness in my choice of specialty due to the rapid narrowing of my focus toward computational chemistry. The books he has recommended were chosen to aid this, and I try to embrace this advice constantly,” he said. “In fact, I was not planning on taking biochemistry this semester, but, because of my trust in his advice, I added the class to my schedule. I’m still not won over on his advice to take four years in the school of chemistry, however,” he added.

Advice for New Faculty

Schuster’s advice is straightforward: Be prepared and be concerned about your students.

“At Georgia Tech and most research universities, faculty members are expected to be successful independent scholars,” he said. “A beginning faculty member’s research efforts must succeed before the tenure clock runs out. But that doesn’t mean that their other responsibilities can be ignored.”

In the Classroom is a series that showcases some of Georgia Tech’s faculty, driven into what they teach, how they do it, and what motivates them. Read more stories at c.gatech.edu/classroom.

REAL ESTATE

38D/38A house for rent. Perfect for a Tech family. Walk to work, restaurants, and shops. Beautifully renovated with den, office space, backyard with play structure. Within half a mile of Atlantic Station, Georgia Tech, Tech day care, $2,800/mo. Contact Sojin at 404-271-5644, homepark2v@gmail.com.


“A Cottage with a View” — 38B/38A peaceful, furnished, waterfront cottage w/ private beach and sundock along southern Outer Banks (Morehead City, North Carolina). WIFI, central A/C, 3BD, 2 1/2 bath, rocking chairs, hammocks. Excellent fishing from 430’ dock. Boat slips. No smoking or pets. $1,200/week, or $250/night. More info at vrbob/71844.

Contact juderyl@gatech.edu.

Lovely garden apartment in Ansley Park. 2BR/1BA (or less), against Schuster’s advice. Has three rules to help keep the students focused. Both seem to be highly valued by students, said Schuster, the Vasser Woolsey Professor and Regents Professor in the School of Chemistry and Biochemistry.

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