

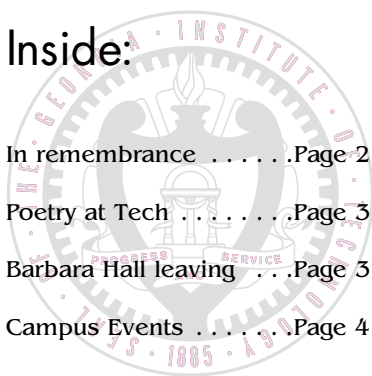
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THE WHISTLE

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THE GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Tech to offer limited benefits program to employees' domestic partners

'A matter of practicality and competitiveness'

Dan Treadaway
Institute Communications
and Public Affairs

In the summer of 2001, a small group of faculty and staff from units throughout the University System of Georgia met at the Tech Student Center to discuss the issue of advocating for domestic partner benefits for the same-sex partners of System employees.

At that meeting, Danny Ingram of Tech's Office of Information Technology (OIT) explained why the efforts of that group, the University System Domestic Partner Benefits Coalition, were so important: "In the highly competitive environment of higher education, an institution that needs to maintain a competitive advantage must recruit and retain the best employees and students," Ingram said. "Georgia's University System cannot afford to lose gay and lesbian faculty, staff, researchers or students to other universities that offer domestic partner benefits."

A little more than a year later, the efforts of both the Coalition and a separate Georgia Tech domestic partner benefits committee are beginning to pay off. Starting Jan. 1, the same-sex domestic partners of Georgia Tech employees will be able to participate in a limited benefits program.

Benefits that will be available to domestic partners include dental insurance and accidental death and dismemberment insurance. Unlike the standard employee benefits program in which the Institute pays the large majority of the premium, the domestic partner program will require the employee to pay 100 percent of the premium.

Chuck Donbaugh, associate vice president for Human Resources, said that requiring employees to pay the full premium is the only way the Institute can offer benefits at this time. "The University System's benefits program is regulated by the Board of Regents," Donbaugh explained, "and that program does not include domestic partner coverage."

For the past year, Donbaugh has led the Tech committee's work of examining the domestic partner benefits issue. Donbaugh said the committee did benchmarking studies with colleges and universities and other large employers. "In today's world, we're recruiting faculty and staff both nationally and internationally," he said. "What we have found is that these benefits are not unusual in other places. So offering domestic partner benefits is really a matter of practicality and competitiveness."

Georgia Tech's cross-town neighbor, Emory University, has offered the same benefits to domestic partners that it has offered to heterosexual spouses for nearly a decade. Agnes Scott College in Decatur offers similar benefits. Within the University System, Georgia State University already offers a domestic partner program roughly equivalent to Georgia Tech's, and the University of Georgia is "on the cusp" of offering such a program, Donbaugh said.

In addition, Donbaugh cited the Institute's policy of non-discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation. "If our policy says that we don't discriminate in hiring on that basis, then it's logical to do what we can to extend that same philosophy to the employees who are already here," he said.

John Grovenstein, benefits manager in Human Resources said that specific benefits that will be offered to domestic partners of employees are the existing OHS dental plan and the new CompDent dental plan, as well as the CIGNA accidental death and dismemberment plan. In order to receive these benefits, employees and partners must sign a "Declaration of Domestic Partnership" stating that they reside together, are neither married nor related by blood, and are at least 18 years old. They will also be required to submit documentation substantiating their domestic partnership, such as evidence of a joint checking account or joint ownership of property.

"Because current Internal Revenue Service regulations prohibit insurance premium deductions on a pre-tax

Benefits continued, page 2

Buffett visits DuPree College of Management



photo by Gary Meek

Speaking to a standing room-only crowd at the Tennenbaum Auditorium, Warren Buffett spent 90 minutes answering questions from students on topics ranging from corporate malfeasance to his friendship with former Washington Post Company President Katharine Graham.

Buffett, chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway Inc., was affable, promising to answer any question "except what [my company] is buying or selling." Though the second wealthiest man in the United States, Buffett told students that the best investment they can make is in themselves, citing his own fears of public speaking as an example.

Clough passes sewer plan to Atlanta mayor

David Terraso
Institute Communications
and Public Affairs

First she took on the city's pot-holes; now Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin is vowing to clean up the city's sewers and streams, with help from President Wayne Clough. Franklin unveiled her new \$3 billion Clean Water Atlanta program last week, a five-point plan designed to improve the quality of the Chattahoochee River and its tributaries by revamping the city's aging sewer system. The new plan is the result of months of study by city officials and the Mayor's Clean Water Advisory Panel, chaired by Clough.

"Most of Clean Water Atlanta is based on the Clough panel's recommendations," said Franklin.

The city's plan is a long time coming. In 1998, Atlanta settled a lawsuit filed by the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper and property owners downstream of the city. The suit charged that the 19 square miles of sewers running under the city's central core violate federal and state

water quality standards by dumping polluted water into area streams. The settlement gives the city until 2007 to meet the standards.

The nine-member panel met four times in publicly held meetings from June to September to study the city's proposed plan for meeting the terms of the settlement. Each of the eight panel members selected by Clough are nationally known experts in civil engineering, wastewater management or public health. Many of them, including Clough, have been involved with sewer projects for other large U.S. cities.

"The short time period to get clean water in Atlanta was a challenge," said Clough. "But in developing our recommendations to the mayor, we focused on three key issues: water quality, schedule and quality of life for residents."

In the end, the panel advised the mayor to tweak her previous plan for separating 27 percent of the city's combined sewer system by changing the sewer lines marked for

Sewer continued, page 3

“QUOTE—

UNQUOTE”

“In the new reality, the hub-and-spoke system doesn’t make sense. The major airlines set the system up so they would dominate the industry. The reality is the high cost (of operating the system) is coming back to haunt them.”
—Fred Allvine, professor of marketing at the DuPree College of Management, on the current business model used by the largest commercial airlines, which fly smaller planes from regional cities into giant airports, then route passengers to larger planes flying to other big cities.
(Atlanta Business Chronicle)

Daniel C. Fielder, who taught at Tech for 54 years, dies

One of Tech’s first doctoral graduates

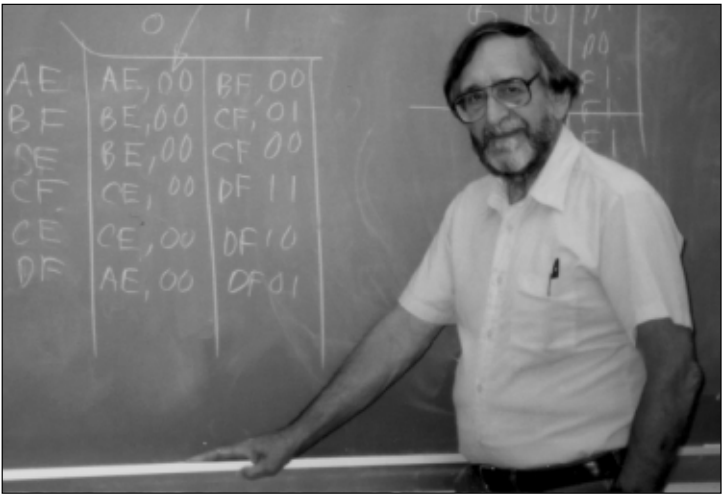
Jackie Nemeth
Electrical and Computer Engineering

The School of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) recently lost one of the academic and research minds upon which the program was built. Professor Emeritus Daniel C. Fielder died Oct. 4 from complications related to a series of strokes. He was 84.

Born Oct. 9, 1917, in North Kingstown, R.I., Fielder received his bachelor’s and professional degrees in electrical engineering from the University of Rhode Island in 1940 and 1950, respectively. He received a master’s degree in 1947 and a doctoral degree in 1957 — both in electrical engineering — from Georgia Tech. Awarded the Sigma Xi Graduate Award for his master’s thesis research, Fielder was among the Institute’s first Ph.D. graduates.

Except for one summer spent as a visiting professor at the Westinghouse Electric Corporation, Fielder was employed with Tech from 1948 until the time of his death. Although he officially retired in 1988, Fielder continued to teach on a part-time basis in computer engineering. He taught his final course in linear sequential circuits this summer.

Fielder taught courses in every area of electrical engineering and computer engineering, and had a continual curiosity about new things. He often worked late into the night to update the next day’s lecture or to learn more about a new research



interest that caught his fancy, according to ECE Regents’ Professor Emeritus Kendall Su. “Dan did everything on his own,” said Su. “He wasn’t out for rewards or recognition, just for the advancement of knowledge.”

Because of this pursuit, Fielder initiated courses in symmetrical components, transmission lines, electrical transients, modern network synthesis, network topology and graph theory, complex variables for engineers, automata theory and combinatorics.

Fielder had a mixed-breed dog, Socrates, who faithfully accompanied him to class and about the campus for 16 years. Socrates, who died in 1981, is buried in the front of the Van Leer Building, memorialized by a citation marker and a ginkgo tree.

William E. Sayle, associate chair for ECE Undergraduate Affairs,

recalled “Socrates accompanied Dan everywhere — to class, to faculty meetings, everywhere. The only time that I recall Socrates not coming to a faculty meeting was when President Joe Pettit came to visit.”

Fielder also gave a particularly distinctive meaning to the term “lifelong learning” that was not just limited to technical subjects, said ECE Professor Erik I. Verriest. A fan of gadgets and computers, Fielder was one of the first people in ECE to own a digital camera in the 1990s, as well as a Radio Shack TRS-80 computer in the mid-1970s.

Responsible for the QMCF (Quine-McClusky-Caldwell-Fielder) method for tabular reduction of Boolean expressions, Fielder also had 15 published special purpose morphing sequences that bear his name. He is survived by his wife, Connie, of Atlanta, and his brother, Leonard, of San Marcos, Tex.

Tech’s daycare center accepting applications this month

Michael Hagearty
Institute Communications
and Public Affairs

The Georgia Tech and Home Park communities will soon have a new childcare option. The R. Kirk Landon Learning Center, currently under construction at the corner of 10th and State Streets, will open mid-January 2003. According to Garey McAnally, director of the Center, the initial registration period has begun, and will continue through Nov. 1. To reserve a space, parents must submit an application during this period.

McAnally noted that priority will be given to full-time enrollment, for

families needing care five days a week, though a limited number of part-time spaces would be available. The Center may also provide back-up care for parents with occasional needs, but only when space is available. At the close of the initial enrollment period, applications will be sorted by age group. If the number of applications exceeds the number of spaces available, a lottery system will be utilized.

Additional information and applications will be available at the information meetings to be held in the OHR training room on Oct. 24 at 4 p.m. and on Oct. 31 at noon. The Childcare Center will also have an information table at the Benefits

Fair, to be held at the Student Center on Oct. 23 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. McAnally is available by calling 385-1411.

Through a CCAMPIS (Childcare Access Means Parents in School) grant from the U.S. Department of Education and matching funds from the Provost’s Office and the deans, Tech has announced the availability of 10 mini-grants to eligible students with children in need of childcare assistance. The mini-grants will cover half the tuition costs for childcare. Application forms and program details will be available in conjunction with registration. For more information, call 385-2351 or e-mail monique.tavares@coe.gatech.edu.

Benefits, cont’d from page 1

basis, premium deductions for domestic partner insurance must be made on an after-tax basis,” said Grovenstein. “Employees may enroll their domestic partners in these plans during Open Enrollment,

which runs through Nov. 14.”

In addition to dental and accidental death insurance, domestic partners will also be eligible for certain non-paid benefits such as a BuzzCard and access to the Student Athletic Complex.

“This is a great step forward for Georgia Tech, and it’s definitely a

move in the right direction,” said George Smedberg, senior project director in OIT who served on the Tech domestic partner benefits committee. “I’ve felt all along that the Tech administration really wanted to work with us on this, so it’s very gratifying to see this kind of progress.”

Georgia Tech

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Head of Enrollment Services announces departure from Tech

David Terraso
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and Public Affairs

After 11 years as the head of Enrollment Services, Barbara Hall is leaving the red brick of Georgia Tech for the brownstones of Greenwich Village, where she will become the first vice provost for admissions and financial aid at New York University.

"This is a big loss to Georgia Tech," said Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Academic Affairs Robert McMath.

Hall came to Tech as the first associate vice president of the newly created Office of Enrollment Services, which placed admissions, financial aid and special programs under the same roof for the first time. During her tenure, she has been a driving force in improving the quality of the freshman class and increasing financial aid to students.

In 1992, the average SAT score for entering freshmen was 1226 compared to 1336 for 2002. Student financial aid awards also skyrocketed from \$20.4 million to \$63.7 million over the same period, as did the President's Scholarship Program, which grew from 48 to 83 students.

Increasing diversity has also been a key effort, with 39 percent more Hispanics enrolling at Tech this year compared with last year.

"She scans the horizon and when she sees something that needs doing, she's there to make it happen," explained McMath.

And making it happen is what she'll do at NYU, where she'll oversee a revamping of the admissions and financial aid offices. "NYU is rethinking their program. They have a brand new president and much of the senior staff is new. It's a new challenge," explained Hall.

McMath is conducting a national search for Hall's position and hopes to have someone named this spring. Hall is leaving at the end of the year. Deborah Smith, director of Undergraduate Admissions, will act as the associate vice president for the interim.

"I'm extremely disappointed that Barbara is leaving, but I'm happy for her that she has this opportunity," said Smith. "She's been a mentor to me."

Hall gives much of the credit for Enrollment Services' success to her staff. "I couldn't leave if they weren't as competent as they are. There will be no more than a hiccup when I'm gone," she said.

Poetry at Tech: a marriage of verse and vectors

Elizabeth Campell
Institute Communications
and Public Affairs

Ivan Allen College, the School of Literature, Communication and Culture, and Professor Thomas Lux, the Bourne Chair in Poetry, will present the first Annual Bourne Poetry Reading, an evening of stellar poetic talent, before a sold-out crowd at the Ferst Center for the Arts.

The Honorable Andrew Young, former mayor of Atlanta and chairman of GoodWorks International, will introduce poets Lucille Clifton, winner of the National Book Award and a past poet laureate of the state of Maryland; Billy Collins, the current U.S. poet laureate; Stephen Dobyns, acclaimed poet and author of 20 novels; and Rita Dove, a Pulitzer Prize winner and a past U.S. Poet Laureate.

More poetry events are planned throughout the 2002-2003 school year as part of a commitment to bring the very best poets and writers in the country to Tech, to introduce poetry into students' curriculum, and reach beyond the campus to the city of Atlanta.

These programs are made possible by two endowments, established to bring poetry and writing to campus, by industrial engineering alumnus H. Bruce McEver, a businessman and a published poet, and professor emeritus Henry C. Bourne Jr. These endowed chairs are intended to attract prominent poets to spend a semester teaching Georgia Tech students and reaching out to the Atlanta community as the McEver Visiting Chair in Writing.

"When we hear that astounded 'Poetry at Tech?'" says Lux, "we are delighted. The Margaret T. and Henry C. Bourne Jr. Chair in Poetry and the H. Bruce McEver Visiting Chair in Writing are extraordinary gifts, and we will make extraordinary efforts to honor their generosity and vision."

In spring 2001 Lux was the first holder of the McEver Visiting Chair, and this fall he returned as the permanent Bourne Chair in Poetry.

"It is a privilege," says Lux, "to come to Georgia Tech at a time when it is expanding and enriching its humanities programs, and I intend to serve the educational needs and creative quests of Tech students with a



Thomas Lux

whole heart and all the energies and experience I have in the field."

As the Bourne Chair in Poetry, Lux will invite a different internationally known poet or writer to hold the McEver Visiting Chair in Writing during the spring semester each year. Dobyns will be the McEver chairholder in spring 2003, and Collins will sit as the McEver Visiting Chair in Writing in spring 2004.

For more information...

Poetry at Tech
www.iac.gatech.edu/poetry.html

Campaign off to good start



Pete Dawkins, co-chair of the annual Charitable Campaign, and Carolyn Schneider, campus coordinator for the Campaign, hold the Governor's Cup, which Tech retained for the second straight year for being the institution with the largest increase in contributions between campaigns. This year's goal has been set at \$325,000, an increase of \$15,000 from the mark a year ago. If met, it would be a new Institute record.

Now in its 20th year, the Campaign will run through the first week of



Sewer, cont'd from page 1

separation. The adjustments will allow the city to get rid of two of its six plants that filter pollution from the combined sanitary and stormwater sewers, and one regulator plant while still immensely improving the quality of the water that is re-fed into the city's streams.

"This plan achieves the highest water quality at the lowest cost in the shortest amount of time," said Franklin.

Clough said the plan will also improve water quality by building

tunnels that would hold the excess untreated sewage that build up in periods of heavy rain. As the rain subsides and the strain on the combined sewer system is lessened, the sewage could be pumped out of the tunnels and into treatment plants before being discharged into rivers and streams. Currently, rain overwhelms the system about 60 times a year on the west side of the city and 20 times on the east side.

Implementing the panel's recommendations will also save the city \$155 million dollars, potentially reducing the amount residents will have to pay in the form of

higher water bills.

But perhaps most importantly to the lawsuit's plaintiffs, the panel's recommendations should allow the city to meet the terms of the settlement by 2007, potentially saving Atlanta the cost and embarrassment of punitive action by federal and state environmental authorities.

In addition, Clough said, his panel's recommendations will result in less construction disruption to residents and businesses.

"I'm thrilled with the way things are going," said Sally Bethea, executive director of the Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, the

organization that brought the lawsuit against the city.

Nevertheless, the city's plan is not without its critics. Fed up with sewage backups into their homes and streets, many residents were hoping the city would decide to separate all of the combined sewers at once.

For more information...

Clean Water Advisory Panel report
www.gatech.edu/president/clean-water

Clean Water Atlanta
www.cleanwateratlanta.org