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Town hall meetings present campus with a uniform system of 'wayfinding'

The Wayfinding Master Plan is almost complete. At the end of an 18-month planning process that began with town hall meetings to invite stakeholder input, Paul vander Horst emceed two concluding town hall meetings on January 24. The purpose of these meetings was to report to stakeholders on both the highlights of the process and the resulting Wayfinding Master Plan.

vander Horst, the master planner in the Capital Planning and Space Management Office, turned the proceedings over to MIG, a consulting firm that was commissioned to develop the Wayfinding Master Plan.

"We asked MIG to develop a wayfinding system that addresses the needs of the current campus, but also one that is adaptable to

change as we advance implementation of the Campus Master Plan," vander Horst said.

Some of those pending changes include new buildings, street conversions to pedestrian corridors and program relocations. The wayfinding system is a comprehensive system of signs, landmarks and environmental cues that direct people from where they are to their destination. The Institute, which has never had an adequate wayfinding system, now appears to be nearing a course of action.

Upon receiving final approval, implementation of the wayfinding system is expected to occur in three phases over the course of three years. The sign components of each phase have not yet been determined, but a hierarchy of signs has been proposed by MIG

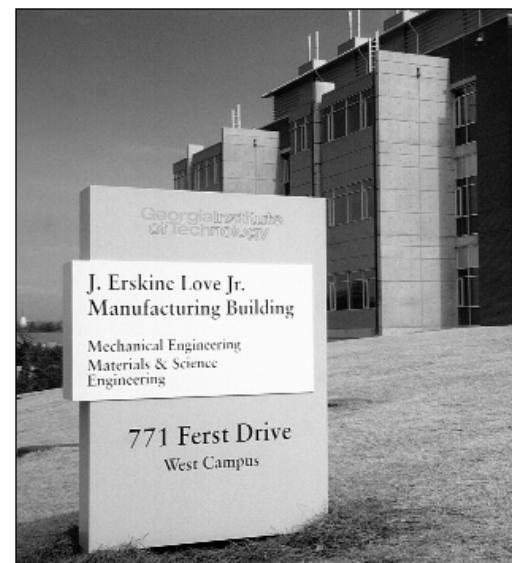
and is presently under evaluation by the Administration.

The sign component of the wayfinding system includes trailblazer signs to guide people in neighborhoods surrounding Tech and at the interstate exits to the campus, campus identification signs to define campus edges and announce arrival, vehicular directional signs to guide visitors to parking decks, parking facility signs to identify visitor and other designated parking, pedestrian directional signs and map kiosks to provide guidance to people on foot, building identification signs

to create a uniform system of facility ID, and street and Stinger Shuttle signs.

On January 23 and 24, MIG placed several prototype signs around campus in order to solicit feedback. vander Horst said that

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One of the prototype signs MIG placed on campus. This marker, which would serve as a primary building ID, is part of MIG's phase 3 proposal.

Photo by Michael Hagan

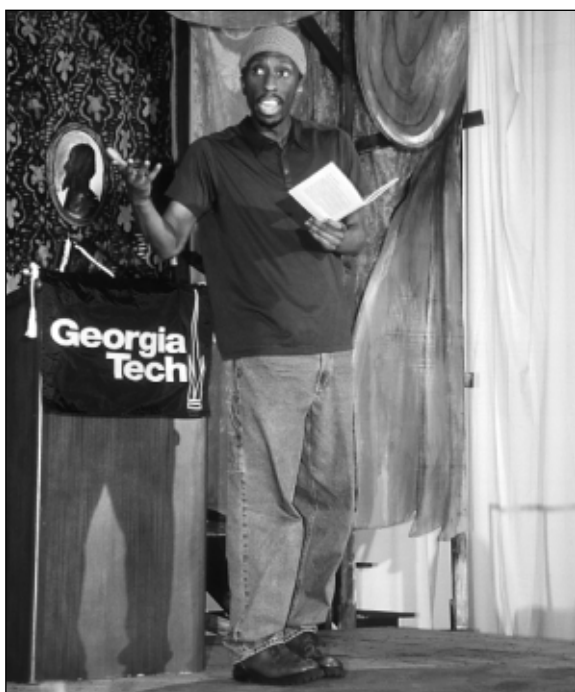


Photo by Stanley Leary

Above, poet Ayodele utilizes a performance style known as slam in the first of the newly organized events celebrating Georgia poets and poetry. Sponsored by Ivan Allen College, these monthly gatherings are a result of alumnus Bruce McEver's endowment that brings visiting authors to campus and seeks to bridge the city's writing establishment. For more about future programs, see the story on page 2.

Reverend Al Sharpton to speak at Tech during Black History Month

Richard Hermes
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

Tech's African-American Student Union is sponsoring several events in celebration of Black History month in February. The 32-year-old campus organization has planned activities that run the gamut from enterprising to entertaining to educational. Over the course of the next four weeks, the community can take part in an entrepreneurship panel, African dance classes, and a visit to the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site with a high school outreach program, an event co-sponsored by the National Society of Black Engineers.

Delivering the keynote address will be Rev. Al Sharpton. Often controversial, always outspoken, Sharpton is one of America's most prominent civil rights activists. On February 15, Sharpton will visit Georgia Tech as the keynote speaker for Black History Month, delivering an address on "Civil Rights in the 21st Century." Sponsored by the African-American Student Union (AASU), the event will be held in the Alumni House ballroom at 6 p.m. and is open to the public.

"Hopefully, hearing about Sharpton's experience as a civil rights activist will inspire others to get excited and stand up for what they believe in," said

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IAC’s new McEver Chair links Tech with Atlanta’s writing and poetry community

Elizabeth Campell
Institute Communications
and Public Affairs

How does an industrial engineer become a poet? Witness the path taken in the mid-1960s by Bruce McEver. It began by enrolling in a poetry class taught by English Professor James Dean Young, who taught at Tech for 28 years. This experience spawned his lifelong love of poetry. Today, McEver is a successful businessman as well as a published poet.

“Bruce McEver wants all Tech students to experience the broader aspects of liberal arts, including poetry, literature and travel, so they will understand the context and impact of the technical expertise they are gaining,” says Sue Rosser, dean of Ivan Allen College. “McEver recalls that when he was at Tech, his conversations, classes and interactions with faculty in English — as well as engineering — gave him the background that helped to make him the successful businessman that he is today.”

In 1999 McEver endowed the

H. Bruce McEver Chair in Writing so that the School of Literature, Communication and Culture (LCC) in Ivan Allen College can use the visiting chair to bring a top writer to campus each year. The visiting chair will teach Tech students in addition to reaching out to the community.

“The McEver Chair has provided LCC and Tech with an unparalleled opportunity to bring some of the finest writing talents in the country to campus for a semester or a year — from poets to novelists to screenwriters,” said Robert Kolker, chair of LCC. “Thomas Lux, the first McEver Chair holder, is a distinguished poet who immediately took to the Tech environment. LCC’s students have taken to him as well, and all are having a terrific learning experience. Lux’s work in the Atlanta community is proving that Tech embraces a wide range of activities, including the power of great writing.”

It is fitting that the first McEver Chair holder also has a personal connection to the benefactor.

Lux first met McEver about 12 years ago, when McEver attended one of his poetry classes in New York.

To meet the community outreach aspect of the visiting chair’s duties, Lux has arranged a series of four poetry events for the public and is teaching a free, eight-week class for people in the community with a serious interest in writing poetry.

“Celebration of Georgia Poets and Georgia Poetry”

Thursday, Feb. 22 at 7 p.m.
14th Street Playhouse, 173 14th St.
Features Turner Cassity, Kathryn Stripling Byer, John Stone and Coleman Barks.

Thursday, March 22 at 7 p.m.
Margaret Mitchell House, 990 Peachtree St., N.E.,
Features Judson Mitcham, Kevin Young and Leon Stokesbury.

Thursday, April 26 at 7 p.m.
The Academy of Medicine, 875 West Peachtree St.
Features Pearl Cleage, Bettie Sellers and David Bottoms.

A reception follows the readings. All events are free. Reservations are not required.

The first poetry reading celebrating Georgia poets and Georgia poetry featured younger, newer poets from traditional to free form to Slam poetry and drew a full house at Actor’s Express on January 23.

“These four poets tonight show the tremendous range in American poetry today,” said Lux. “There are all kinds of poetry, and there has been a renaissance in poetry in the last 10 years.”

Lux is a member of the writing faculty and director of the MFA Program in Poetry at Sarah Lawrence College. In recent years, he has been on the graduate faculties of Boston University, the University of California (Irvine), Columbia University, Warren Wilson College, and the universities of Houston, Iowa, and Michigan. A former Guggenheim Fellow and recipient of three NEA grants, Lux won the Kingsley Tufts Award for his book of poems, *Split Horizon*, and has been a finalist for both the Los Angeles Times Book Award in poetry and the 1998 Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize.

Details about future poetry readings can be found at www.iac.gatech.edu/news.htm.



Photo by Sue Crites

At left, Professor Thomas Lux seated alongside former student Ginger Murchison.



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Pre-retirement planning sessions offered by OHR

The Office of Human Resources’ Benefits Program will provide a series of two pre-retirement meetings, free of charge, in room 117 of the Student Services Building on consecutive Tuesday afternoons in February from 2:00 to 4:30 p.m. These sessions are designed for people who are within 10 years of retirement and are structured as a presentation followed by an opportunity for questions and answers. The first, set for February 20, will cover Social Security benefits as well as Georgia Tech benefits. The following week, on February 27, the meetings cover Teachers Retirement benefits, IRS rules, and general guidelines for distributions from 403(b) and 401(a) retirement accounts (ORP and TDA)

John Grovenstein, benefits manager in the Office of Human Resources, said, “This is an opportunity for our office to speak en masse to a sector of the Tech community that have questions about their financial security as they look toward their golden years. We have designed these sessions in an effort to help those individuals navigate the waters of retirement planning.”

Each meeting will be divided into two segments. The first segment, “Making Sense of Social Security,” is concerned about current changes in the law, how to file for benefits and military service credits, the proofs needed when filing for benefits, and when checks are paid. Those attending this session will receive a form for requesting a personalized earnings credit statement from the Social Security Administration.

The second segment provides an overview of retirement

benefits available under the Georgia Institute of Technology. Participants will receive information on how to apply for retirement, when benefits are paid, cost of living adjustments, unused sick leave credit, and what happens to an employee’s health and life insurance benefits at retirement.

The first segment of the February 27 meeting covers specifics regarding the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia benefits — the choices and processing requirements.

The second segment of that meeting is designed to help individuals understand distribution options at retirement for 403(b) and/or 401(a) accounts. This presentation explains the full range of income options and the flexibility offered. Additionally, it will help take stock of current retirement plans and guide thinking about retirement goals. Specifically, the program covers topics such as the realities of retirement planning, replacement ratios, closing an income gap through tax deferred saving, and sources of retirement income.

Those interested in participating must register separately for each of the two courses, available online at <http://www.training.gatech.edu>. Since space is limited, it is a good idea to check the Master Calendar for availability. E-mail confirmations will be sent following a successful registration.

While it is not necessary to register for both sessions — they are “stand alone sessions” — participants may choose to attend either or both. For more information, call John Grovenstein at 894-8374 or Glen Williamson at 894-3418.

Ford partnership yields car deals for Tech employees

Michael Hagearty
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

The administration announced last week that Tech faculty and staff are eligible to take advantage of a new partnership program that will provide significant discounts for those in the market for a new automobile.

The Ford College Partner Recognition Program, known colloquially as the X-Plan, is offered on purchased or leased cars in the Ford Motor Company. This means that, under this agreement, virtually all Ford, Lincoln, Mercury, Mazda, Volvo and Land Rover products are available.

“This is a benefit we can offer our employees without any conditions,” said John Donbaugh, associate vice president of human resources. “The X-Plan is the best discount plan that they offer to their commercial partners.”

Participants are required to obtain a Personal Identification Number (PIN), either from Ford’s website (www.fordpartner.com) or by calling

the program’s hotline at 1-877-XPLAN-00. With the PIN, individuals may then contact participating dealerships and, with proof of employment, receive the X-Plan price on the selected vehicle. Because participation is voluntary, it is important to ask in advance whether or not a particular dealership is offering the X-Plan.

Ford representative Jason White indicated that while both model years 2000 and 2001 are currently considered new, that label will be dropped from the 2000 models effective March 31.

For most automobiles, the website indicates a fixed pricing formula between 2 percent and 4 percent above the plan reserved for Ford employees. Additional negotiations or trade-in value for used cars is not part of the program, but may be broached at the dealer level only.

Georgia Tech is one of several universities — including Stanford, University of Michigan and Duke — participating in the program.

More information on the plan is available at Ford’s website (www.fordpartner.com) by entering the Institute’s promotional code, GTECH. In addition, brochures detailing the X-Plan are available by request at OHR’s Benefit Office.

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Letitia Meade, president of the AASU.

Thomas Parker, interim director of the Georgia Tech Counseling Center, has been the AASU faculty advisor for most of the last 20 years. “Tech students have always been involved in presenting an outstanding set of Black History Month activities, inviting not only African-American students, but everyone, and they are continuing in that tradition this year. I hope Rev. Sharpton will cause people to take another look at how they view diversity. He looks different, he talks different, and his message is different. Granted, we are a busy people, but let’s take the time to listen to his entire message and learn about each other. That’s the beauty of diversity, and I imagine that will be part of Sharpton’s speech.”

For political candidates courting the African-American vote in New York and, increasingly, the nation, a visit to Sharpton’s Harlem office is practically a requirement. The Brooklyn native carries significant political clout — in 1997 he garnered 32 percent of the vote in the New York City democratic



Reverend Al Sharpton speaks at 6 p.m. in the Alumni Center Ballroom. The event is free and open to the public.

mayoral primary. In a 1992 Senate run he won 16 percent of the vote, with more than 70 percent of the black vote. In 1994, against incumbent Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynahan, he won 26 percent of the vote and 87 percent of the black vote.

It is Sharpton’s civil rights activism, however, where he has made a name for himself. Most recently, he spoke out against the acquittal of four white New York City police officers charged in the February 1999 shooting death of Amadou Diallo, an unarmed Ghanaian immigrant. He has led numerous large demonstrations over the years, including a 1987 march that shut down the Brooklyn Bridge, and a 1997 demonstration against the treatment of Haitian immigrant Abner

Louima by the New York City Police. He has brought attention to the racially motivated murders of Michael Griffith in Howard Beach, Yusef Hawkins in Bensonhurst, and Roland Adams in London, as well as the Bernhard Goetz subway shootings.

In 1988, Sharpton saw his credibility questioned when a grand jury found no evidence of any crime against Tawana Brawley, a black teenager who claimed she had been abducted and raped by several law enforcement officers. Sharpton had served as an advisor to Brawley, vigorously championing her case in the national media.

In January of 1991, Sharpton was stabbed in the chest while preparing to lead a protest march in Bensonhurst. He has described that incident as a turning point in his life, causing him to reflect on his controversial public image and tone it down, rather than what he has called “shooting from the hip, overplaying the theatrics and not the issues.”

Today, Sharpton serves as director of the National Rainbow Coalition’s Ministers Division, and he is the founder of the National Action Network, a political and social activist organization that sponsors the Saturday Morning Community Forum, a weekly program broadcast live on black owned WWRL radio.

The AASU exists to provide a voice for African-American Students at Georgia Tech, to promote social and cultural awareness in the community, and to improve and maintain relationships between African-American students and students of other ethnic backgrounds.



For an up-to-date listing of Black History Month events, go to cyberbuzz.gatech.edu/aasu/.

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comments have been positive and have helped “fine tune” the choice of colors, size of signs and size of text for the final design of the signs.

Implementation is dependent on funding. Current projections for the signage component of the plan are estimated to be \$1.5 million. According to vander Horst, the

administration is supportive of the project, but just when the first phase might begin is still a question. As a best-case scenario, he indicated that phase one could be started as early as fall 2001.

The other components of the Wayfinding Master Plan include environmental landmarks and site development. These components identify a hierarchy of landscape architectural features, including paving materials, plants, lighting and outdoor furniture in order

to develop a thread of continuity in the built environment that unifies the eclectic palette of building architecture on campus. These components are far more costly than the signage component and will be implemented in conjunction with capital projects, and as individual site development projects such as large pedestrian corridors and entire streetscapes.