



# PSSSSSSSSSST!

A newsletter for alumni and friends of the President's Scholarship Program at Georgia Tech • Winter 2006

## ***Baker Scholar Haynes wins Marshall***

If Ryan Haynes lacks anything as a student, it most certainly is not drive. At age seven, he began to dream of a future in medicine. At age 11, he started writing his own software.

In fall 2003, Haynes arrived at the Institute as an enthusiastic and brilliant freshman with plans to complete his B.S. in Biomedical Engineering in two years and move on to medical school.

His intellectual curiosity led him to adjust his stay from two to three years, but next year, Haynes will head to England as a recipient of a 2006 Marshall Scholarship.

Haynes is the seventh Tech student and fifth President's Scholar to win the Marshall, established by the British Government in 1953 to foster ties between the United Kingdom and the United States.

Haynes' selection as a Marshall winner came just days after a committee of PS alumni and Tech faculty named him the Dr. E. Jo Baker

Outstanding President's Scholar.

"I will be ever grateful to Dr. Baker for starting the President's Scholarship Program," Haynes said.

"Without it, I would not be at Georgia Tech and would have missed the excellent preparation my studies have given me for a medical career."

Established in 2001 in honor of Dr. E. Jo Baker, who founded the President's Scholarship Program in 1981, the award recognizes the junior or senior President's Scholar who best exemplifies her vision for the program. Owing to Dr. Baker's passion



Ryan Haynes

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## **Over 4,600 high schoolers apply for scholarship**

About 4,662 applications have been received for the PS. This includes 10 who scored 2,400 on the new SAT. Approximately 10 percent of the applicants were selected as semifinalists and interviewed at the regional level.

## **Freshmen maintain top grades**

The 2005 class of PSs equalled the mark set by last year's class with a combined average of 3.75. The new freshmen also brought with them an average of 17.4 hours of credit, the highest average since Tech switched to semesters back in the fall of 1998.



## ***"Celebrity Poker" host Gordon speaks at PS Family Weekend***



Phil Gordon (back), ICS '91, appears with Kim Roush (center), BME '09, and her parents from Indiana.

As a President's Scholar, Phil Gordon learned the role that hard work and preparation play in shaping one's future—and allowing one to take advantage of luck. Gordon certainly knows; after all, he retired from his first career at age 26 to become a world-class card player.

At this fall's PS Family Weekend, Gordon shared some thoughts with the PSs, delighting the students with his anecdotes and life experiences. He shared his five tips to be successful at poker and life, encouraging students to be patient, but to also take advantage of opportunities when they present themselves.

The 6'9" Gordon stood out from the crowd from an early age for more than just his height. In 1987, at age 16, he left high school to enroll at Tech as a physics major and President's Scholar. A card enthusiast from age seven, Gordon formed the Tech bridge club and later took a year off from school to travel around the country and play in bridge tournaments.

When he returned, Gordon switched his major from physics to computer science, cramming 21 courses into his final three quarters in order to graduate with his incoming

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Incoming President's Scholars enjoyed this year's fall retreat at Unicoi State Park.

## ***Incoming freshmen making their marks***

A new class of President's Scholars has leapt into action at Georgia Tech. Coming into Tech, this class of 59 outstanding students brought with them a wide variety of skills and talents—and a bundle of enthusiasm and energy.

"Everyone has so many talents and abilities that I know that only great things can come from this family, and I consider myself blessed to have the chance to witness all of it," freshman Morgan Wolfe said.

Whether excelling in the classroom or on the field, this group has covered all the bases. The group has an average SAT score of 1513, up from 1504 in the previous class.

The new freshman class started their fall retreat at Unicoi State Park. Though the retreat was only for a few days, they bonded quickly through the plethora of icebreakers and team-building activities. The freshmen also enjoyed their Chattahoochee River tubing expedition, despite an unexpected thunderstorm, and their final hike to Georgia's highest peak, Brasstown Bald.

"We have complete trust in each other, even though we have known each other only briefly," freshman Malcolm Neave said.

On their return, the students branched out to make new friends across campus, but have still remained close to each other. They normally frequent each other's dorm rooms and even have been caught having a

few singing parties, as well as some studying parties.

Since fall semester started, ten freshmen joined fraternities, eleven joined sororities, and six joined one of Tech's bands—marching, concert, or symphonic. In addition, the class also includes a varsity softball player, a track and cross country runner, two water polo players, and two cheerleaders. Additionally, many of the new PSs are involved in freshman leadership organizations, such as Freshman Council, Freshman Activities Board, and FreShGA (student government's first-year organization).

The day after the retreat, the students took time to write letters to their benefactors, sharing a little about themselves and thanking them for their scholarships. Some of the students have received responses back from the men and women to whom they sent letters in August.

These freshmen are really a well-rounded group of students. Many plan to study a form of engineering, but the class includes students in each of Tech's six colleges: 42 in engineering, five in liberal arts, four in architecture, four in science, three in computing, and one in management.

"With each passing year, I find myself amazed at the intellectual firepower, the diversity of interests and talents, and the all-around goodness of President's Scholars," said PS alumnus Chris Young, HTS '00, who serves as an ad hoc freshman mentor.

### ***Haynes, Continued from Page 1***

for learning, the award places special emphasis on academic achievements, but it also rewards and recognizes broad scholarship and leadership.

PS alumni Keith Hollingsworth, IE '90; Tara Ryan, EE '93; and Michael Williams INTA '92, along with Dr. Evans Harrell, School of Mathematics, and Kathy Schlag, Georgia Tech Research Institute, formed the Baker selection committee. They found Haynes the perfect fit.

"The committee was very impressed with Ryan's overall combination of intellectual ability, leadership, and service," Hollingsworth said.

"His passion to use his gifts to uplift those around him and to improve the world resonated throughout his essay and his interview. It would not surprise us to see him in the headlines one day having made a major contribution to society.

"All of the applicants were so strong that they made us proud to be associated with Georgia Tech and the President's Scholarship Program."

In his second semester at the Institute, Haynes began work in Dr. Steven Potter's neuroengineering lab, studying the mechanisms behind learning and memory. He later researched neuroradiology at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. Additionally, Haynes continued software development, designing a program to promote collaboration among college calculus students, which he used as a teaching assistant.

Haynes, who maintains a perfect 4.0 while undertaking these endeavors, ultimately sees himself contributing to both medicine and education. "I hope to develop technology to provide people from all socio-economic backgrounds with unrivaled education and superior medical care," Haynes said.

The first step in this path starts at Cambridge University and Imperial College of London, where he will study nanotechnology enterprise and bioimaging science, respectively. In the long run, Haynes plans to pursue the M.D./Ph.D. and a career in clinical research.



## Retreat approaches ten-year mark



Liz Roellig, ChE '01, and Erin Elder, ME '02, enjoy a laugh at the first fall retreat in 1997.

This fall, for the ninth time, the freshman PS class returned to campus just before the start of school—tired, dirty, and with smiles on their faces. They returned, of course, from the annual PSP freshman fall retreat, and this coming fall will mark the event's tenth incarnation.

The brain child of James Clawson, IE '01, and Dave Connors, IE '00, the retreat began as a hiking trip in the fall of 1997. Clawson and his soon-to-be brother-in-law Connors saw a need for a pre-college event to facilitate bonding among the freshman PSs.

Nikki Cross, Math '97, described that first trip as “a gang of kids loading up a couple of vans in the ORGT parking lot.”

That first group headed to Unicoi State Park near Helen to enjoy the great outdoors of north Georgia and get to know each other better. “The thing I remember the most about [the retreat] was being completely in awe of the amazing group of people that had been assembled,” Erin Elder, ME '02.

Today that gang of kids has grown up. The retreat continues to utilize Unicoi and its infamous squirrels' nests, but recent retreats focused even more on team-building activities to accelerate the bonding process.

Andy Bozanic, HTS '03, was involved with five fall retreats during his time at Tech and enjoyed watching it develop. “Even though it possesses the same basic elements, we never went on the same retreat twice,” Bozanic said.

“Whether it was an extra day in Atlanta, a different set of hikes in north Georgia, or some alternate rain plans that we finally had to use, everyone who went on the trip experienced something unique.”

For example, each year a few PS alumni join the group as drivers or visitors, but this year's saw increased faculty involvement. Richard Barke, a professor in Public Policy, and Wendy Newstetter, a professor in Biomedical Engineering, accompanied the group, providing the

## From the director's desk...

The President's Scholars highly value the perks and benefits that come with that title: early registration for classes and housing, the Fleet International Scholarship for study abroad, signing day, the fall retreat, the senior dinner, and others. Of course, the money is highly valued, too. It is, after all, a “scholarship.”

While we receive the bulk of our funding for the scholarships from unrestricted giving, the growth has been tremendous in the number of endowed funds that support PSs. Before 1995, we had eight accounts currently valued at ~\$9 million. Since then, we have added 52 endowed gifts or pledges of over \$10 million in new funding. These permanent gifts to Tech have done much more than simply shift the percentage of our funding from restricted sources from less than 5% to about 30%.

Some of the funds have no limitations at all, and some rather specific. We now have scholarships with preferences for engineers from the rural American South, co-ops who have finished working and returned to school, students committed to community service, and public school students from Cobb County.

A few, including the newest PS endowment (given by the Class of 1965), have a preference for a PS with need. As you probably recall, the President's Scholarship is purely merit-based, and any offers of a scholarship are 100% based on the students's application materials: academic record, test scores, leadership and activity record, two rounds of interviews, teacher recommendations and—new this year—two short supplemental essays. So how does an endowment with a preference for a student with need figure into this process?

There are only two times that we even look at need. The first is after we know what the PS offers are so that we can communicate with the Office of Student Financial Planning and Services about which President's Scholars still have unmet need (expected family contribution plus scholarships are less than the cost to attend).

The second is when we assign endowment funds to students. Similar to a family paying the monthly bills using several different checking, savings, and money market accounts, we pay scholarships using a combination of endowed funds and unrestricted funds. If we can match a student to a restricted fund meeting the fund's criteria, we do it. Otherwise, the student would be paid by unrestricted funds.

The PS Program has been fortunate to have a wide base of support among Tech alumni; likewise, it is good that we are able to welcome gifts from many alumni while remaining true to the mission.



Randy McDow

## Graduation, retention continue to climb

Graduation rates (based on year entering GT)								
All Tech students					President's Scholars			
Year	n	4 yrs	5 yrs	6 yrs	n	4 yrs	5 yrs	6 yrs
1993	1955	20%	56%	69%	47	53%	83%	85%
1994	2012	18%	57%	69%	58	50%	84%	84%
1995	2120	21%	57%	68%	69	57%	83%	91%
1996	2120	23%	59%	68%	74	53%	81%	85%
1997	2069	24%	60%	69%	54	49%	80%	88%
1998	2487	26%	62%	72%	86	50%	88%	94%
1999	2298	29%	67%	76%	81	56%	89%	94%
2000	2243	34%	69%		75	59%	89%	
2001	2224	33%			74	58%		

Institute graduation and retention rates continue to improve, with the PS Program leading the way.

Since 1993, the four- and five-year graduation rates for Tech have more-or-less steadily climbed. Of the 1993 cohort, only one-fifth of Tech freshmen graduated in four years. One in three students in the 2000 and 2001 cohorts, however, graduated in four years. The five-year graduation rate has increased over the same span—from 56 percent in the 1993 entering class to 69 percent in 2000's entering class.

The PSP four-year graduation rate shows less fluctuation and steadier increases in the post-1998 cohorts. The five-year and six-year graduation rates also jumped between 1997 and 1998. They remain, however, about 20 percent higher than the overall Institute rates.

The causal variable of these changes remains unknown. The Institute's administration has expended greater resources to increase graduation and retention over this time span, instituting mid-term grade reports in 1000- and 2000-level classes and increasing tutoring resources, among other changes. Additionally, in 1998, Dr. Clough changed the admissions process, adding an essay and leadership record and eliminating the SAT minimum for the PS, fundamentally changing the applicant pool.

Though not pictured above, overall first- to second-year retention at the Institute has increased or held steady each year since 1993, moving from 85 to 92 percent. For the PSP, 100 percent of the last two entering classes, 2003 and 2004, have returned for the second year.

### Retreat, Continued from Page 3

freshmen an early opportunity to involve faculty early in the students' time at Tech.

Long-time friend of the program and current PSP Assistant Director Billiee Pendleton-Parker also joined the retreat this year. She delivered letters written to new freshmen, leaders, and others, which they read around a campfire with s'mores. Parents, friends, and colleagues penned their thoughts for the retreat participants.

The fall retreat cannot possibly be mentioned without including the great influence of Miller Templeton. Miller attended every retreat, save one, when he was hiking the Appalachian Trail following his retirement in 1998. Throughout that time, Miller has contributed his skills as an outdoorsman, his singing ability, his van-driving prowess, and his tremendous insight to each retreat.

The retreat continues to evolve, and anyone who has been on more than one can verify that no two are the same. This year's Super Leaders--Margaret Burgess, Allen Dreschel, and Michael Vincent--have already started work on innovations for the tenth anniversary.

"As a Super Leader, I'm looking forward to combining my experience and ideas with those of the other two leaders and Randy, and I'm really looking forward to what we're going to come up with," Vincent said.

There has always been a benefit in making a connection with a President's Scholar. The fall retreat has simply served as a catalyst to accelerate this process.

### Gordon, Continued from Page 1

class. After three years of work in his field, Gordon considered quitting to become a professional poker player. Instead, a group of friends convinced him to become the principal software architect at Netsys Technologies--the Silicon Valley start-up's first employee. Less than four years later, Cisco Systems bought the firm for \$95 million, and Gordon found himself financially solvent for a lifetime.

For two years, Gordon traveled the globe. When he returned to the

United States in 1999, he officially began his professional poker-playing career. At the 2001 World Series of Poker, Gordon finished fourth. Since then, he's won two World Poker Tour events, leading to his role as a commentator on Bravo's "Celebrity Poker Showdown." He is currently working on a second book and a series of DVDs about poker.

Despite his poker-playing prowess, however, Gordon shared in his remarks at Family Weekend that, following

the Tech football game the previous evening, freshman President's Scholar Robert Binion won \$100 from him in a hand at the Kappa Alpha house.

"Phil Gordon is an outstanding representative of Georgia Tech and the PS Program," Binion said.

"It was welcoming to interact with a celebrity who is so down to earth and so capable of expressing himself well, which is what has allowed him to find such great success in the business and entertainment worlds."

**Lafleur, Continued from Page 6**

in aerospace engineering, Lafleur exhibits a resume full of outstanding achievements. Of these, his entry in the NASA Institute for Advanced Conceptions competition stands out. Through this program, Lafleur developed a morphing wing design for use on Mars. It stands as the first published full design for a vehicle for use on a planet other than Earth. In March 2004, he presented the concept to an audience that included Dr. James Garvin, the scientist who heads NASA's Mars exploration.

In addition to this design project, Lafleur worked with a team that took first place in a spring 2003 competition to develop a reusable launch vehicle for travel to the International Space Station. He also co-oped with NASA, both at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, and at the White Sands Test Facility in New Mexico. In these capacities, he worked on a variety of projects related to the space shuttle program.

Beyond his extracurricular work related to his aerospace ambitions, Lafleur maintains an active interest in music. He plans to earn a minor in the subject, and he has served as a leader both for Tech's marching band and its flute choir, which was founded by PS alumna Jen O'Meara, AE '01.

"Jarret has been essential in finding venues and events at which to play," said Laura Christian, an alumna of the GT flute choir.

"He also composed an original piece of music specifically for us."

Upon graduation from Tech, Lafleur plans to earn a Ph.D. and work in a multidisciplinary group to conduct space design research.

Astronaut Al Gordon presented the scholarship to Lafleur at a ceremony in August. Gordon also shared his experiences as a member of the Apollo 15 mission and thoughts about the US space program. A second Tech student, Isaac Penny, also won a scholarship. Tech was one of only two schools with multiple winners.

The award ceremony also drew some of Tech's Astronaut Scholar alumni, which included PS alumna Karen Feigh, AE '01.

## Saira Amir named Ms. Georgia Tech

Saira Amir has a heart for service and a desire to lead, and the Atlanta native has acted on both during her time as a PS at the Institute. The Tech community recognized her outstanding achievements when it named her Ms. Georgia Tech at this year's Homecoming Weekend.

A senior in Public Policy, Amir currently serves as the undergraduate student body's Executive Vice President, presiding over the Undergraduate House of Representatives and representing student concerns to the administration. Amir has been involved with SGA since her first year.

"When I am involved in something I am passionate about, it is my natural inclination to work my way up to a leadership position, whether it be an official position or otherwise," Amir said.

"I take the time to 'work my way up' because I believe that it is the responsibility of a leader to be well qualified and prepared before he or she attempts to lead."

An aspiring lawyer with an interest in public service, Amir also serves as the mock trial team's vice president. The team finished second nationally last season, and she has won individual recognition for her performance at various tournaments.

Amir also puts her passion into practice outside the Institute. She worked as the Field Director for a state House election campaign, where she managed over 80 volunteers. She also interned at the Georgia General Assembly and the American Civil Liberties Union.

At Tech she conducted research on two occasions. She won a President's Undergraduate Research Award to examine historical trends in developing state formation with Dr. Bill Winders in the School of History, Technology, and Society. She also performed a policy analysis for the Institute's En-



**Saira Amir, PubP '06, embraces Institute President Wayne Clough after being named this year's Ms. Georgia Tech.**

rollment Services division, where she developed a proposal to attract more students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds to the Institute.

In the breadth and depth of her experiences, Amir has earned recognition from those around her. She garners perhaps more praise, however, by the way she conducts herself.

"Saira has been my friend and roommate throughout college," fellow PS Shannon Fatehi, BME '06, said.

"She has become a polished, respected, and accomplished student who I am proud to call my friend."

A native Spanish-speaker, Amir is currently in the process of applying to the Peace Corps, with the hopes of taking her policy experience to Latin America.

When she returns, she plans to attend law school.

### Keep in touch!

Update your contact information with PSP. You can contact the office using the address, telephone number, or email given to the right.

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## Apollo 15 astronaut presents scholarship to PS Lafleur



Apollo 15 astronaut Al Gordon (left) presents PS senior Jarret Lafleur (far right) with an Astronaut Foundation Scholarship.

Give Jarret Lafleur the opportunity, and his passion will convince you of the importance of the future of the US space program. His ideas are, literally, out of this world; he seeks a future career in research that will lead him to work on projects related to Mars exploration.

The Astronaut Scholarship Foundation honored Lafleur this summer, naming him one of its 17 Astronaut Scholars. Lafleur, one of two Tech students to win the award, was selected based on his motivation, imagination, and exceptional performance in the fields of science and engineering. Lafleur was also a finalist for the Dr. E. Jo Baker Outstanding President's Scholar Award.

"Choosing to attend Georgia Tech has brought me farther than I ever imagined possible," Lafleur said.

A senior from Mapleville, Rhode Island, with a 4.0

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## How can I give back?

President's Scholar alumni often ask how they can give something back to a program that they feel benefited them. There are several ways to do this:

- Give your time by interviewing semifinalists for the President's Scholarship; this not only helps us select the most outstanding high school students to offer the PS, but it is also a great recruiting tool. Though we ultimately only have the resources to offer scholarships to a select number of semifinalists, we seek to enroll every student interviewed through the competition. By representing Tech and PSP well, you can help us achieve this goal.

- Give an in-kind donation to the President's Scholarship Program. For example, this semester a parent's company donated 50 picture frames to the program. If you or your company finds something that might be of use to the Program, please contact us.

- Give to the Alumni Association's Roll Call. A portion of all gifts to the Institute's unrestricted funds supports the PS program. You can find giving forms online at [www.gtalumni.org](http://www.gtalumni.org).

- Give directly to the PS Program through the endowment created in honor of our founder, Dr. E. Jo Baker. As the fund grows, income from this endowment will be used to support scholarship stipends for President's Scholars. To donate, send a check payable to:

**The Georgia Tech Foundation**  
**60 Spring Street NW, Suite 400**  
**Atlanta, Georgia 30308**

Be sure to write "Dr. E. Jo Baker President's Scholarship Fund" on the memo line of the check. Contributions to Roll Call and the Georgia Tech Foundation are tax-deductible.



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