



The Whistle

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What to Look for in Campus Construction This Fall

CATHY BRIM
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Many campus construction projects moved forward in the first half of 2020. With measures taken in mid-March to reduce campus occupancy in response to Covid-19, several projects progressed as planned or will finish earlier than expected, thanks to a decrease in campus traffic. These projects will bring new green space, refreshed classrooms, and improved research and study areas

to the campus community as students, faculty, and staff members begin returning.

Complete or Nearly Wrapped Up Library Next

A four-year work in progress, the Library Next renewal project is in its final stages. The Price Gilbert renovation is substantially complete and allows for full interior connectivity from the North entrance of Clough

Commons to Cherry Street. Installation of interior furniture, landscape plantings, and outdoor bike storage areas is nearing completion.

For more information on the project, visit library.gatech.edu/library-next.

In Progress Eco-Commons

This 8-acre, park-like project is coming to life at the corner of Hemphill

see **CONSTRUCTION**, page 3

DIGGING OUT



Photo by Allison Carter

Even before a dust storm arrived in the Southeast, the dust had been kicked up around Bobby Dodd Stadium as Grant Field switches from grass to turf. The new surface will allow more student-athletes and teams to train and practice inside the stadium, and will allow Georgia Tech Athletics to host more non-football events. Read more at c.gatech.edu/turf.

Centralized Ordering, Modeling Will Keep PPE Supplied to Research Labs

JOHN TOON
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

As America's leading research universities ramp up laboratory operations that were shut down by Covid-19 in March, they're encountering a perfect storm of challenges in providing personal protective equipment (PPE) — surgical masks, cloth face coverings, gloves, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant materials.

Global PPE supply chains have been severely disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic,

see **PPE**, page 4

Can We Talk About Race — and Racism? Yes.

VICTOR ROGERS
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

Generations of Black and African American parents have had “the race talk” with their children. It’s an uncomfortable but necessary conversation about how to behave in public, how to act around white people, and especially how to interact with the police. Outside of minority households, the subject of race has largely been considered taboo — or not considered at all. But, since the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 25, conversations about race are emerging from the shadows and taking many different forms.

“A lot of people would like to talk about race, racial inequality, and the impact of racism, but don’t know where to start,” said Tiffany Hughes-Troutman, licensed psychologist and director of the Center for Assessment, Referral, and Education (CARE) at Georgia Tech. “Some worry that others won’t understand their points of view or fear that what they say might be offensive to others. Also, individuals may be confused about how to be an ally and supporter and how to make an impact in a positive, meaningful way.”

That’s the position Steve McLaughlin found himself in until a few years ago. McLaughlin, dean and Southern Company Chair of



Hughes-Troutman



McLaughlin



Ray

the College of Engineering, said that he is like many white people when it comes to talking about race: cautious because he doesn’t want to say the wrong thing.

“There are your intentions, and then there’s how it’s received,” he said. “The fear of saying the wrong thing is so strong. It’s such a block to making a difference and to being able to work on the things you feel strongly about.”

McLaughlin said that throughout his adult life he has considered himself an ally of groups that sometimes feel marginalized or misunderstood. He thought it was enough to see himself as nonracist. His thinking changed when the son he and his wife adopted from Guatemala as a baby entered his teen years.

“I started to see how the world treated him and processed him and, quite honestly, didn’t process him because they didn’t see him. Or didn’t want to see him,” McLaughlin said. “He was raised as we would have raised any other child. Then all of a sudden the world

starts to just process him differently. I became more attuned to some of the things that African Americans and Latinos experience — everyday microaggressions and racism. I became more passionate. And, I decided I need to speak up.”

McLaughlin said he is still trying to find his voice in terms of race. He posts on social media about his journey, and he shared his experiences with Transformative Narratives, a digital story library curated by the Office of Institute Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

“I did it rather quietly at first,” he said. “I was the chair of the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, then came into this role as dean and realized I have a platform. I can pick the things I think are important to talk about, and this is one of them.”

Where to Begin?

When trying to start a conversation about race, Hughes-Troutman suggests starting small.

“There is great potential

in intergroup dialogue that leverages diversity and creates opportunity for connection among large groups,” she said, “but I would suggest starting on an individual level and creating a safe space with friends, colleagues, or co-workers you genuinely care about and whose lives and experiences you are sincerely interested in learning about.”

Stephanie Ray agrees.

“I want you to call me because you really care about me. Don’t call just because you think you should join the conversation about race,” said Ray, associate dean of students and director of Student Diversity Programs in the Division of Student Life.

Ray added that people should not expect their Black colleagues to be the only ones talking about or even leading the conversation. “Everyone has a responsibility to do some heavy lifting,” she said.

McLaughlin is determined to do his part.

“I have African American colleagues with whom I have close enough relationships to initiate the race talk and feel uninhibited in both directions,” he said. “I haven’t had many, but a few, that I could really have a direct conversation about race and not feel worried. I want to get more and more comfortable talking about it.”

Read the rest of the story at c.gatech.edu/race.



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CONSTRUCTION, from page 1

Avenue and Ferst Drive. Demolition, grading, tree transplant, and storm line and infiltration systems are complete. Current activity includes sidewalk and interior seat-wall installation, pathway layout, soil modifications, and lighting. The three areas of programmed space — an area to reflect, an area to engage, and an area to learn — feature unique design elements with opportunities for connection and interaction with nature. The area will also include more than 600 new trees, tens of thousands of new perennials and shrubs, and an abundance of ferns and grasses. The Eco-Commons is set to open in early fall. For more information on the project, see facilities.gatech.edu/ecocommons.

Howey Physics Building

A phased approach to renovation of the four lecture halls was originally planned to ensure that one hall was always available for instructional use. With the switch to remote learning in mid-March, work began on all four lecture halls, as well as the lobby, at the same time. In addition to modernizing instructional space, refurbishment includes replacing water piping and HVAC systems, updated and expanded restrooms, the creation of a gender-inclusive restroom, and polished concrete floors. Halls 3 and 4 will be used for in-person instruction this fall, and the project is scheduled for completion by December.

Campus Center

As campus reopens, most of the Student Center's critical functions such as the Information Desk and the Post Office will begin operating in their temporary locations in the new exhibition hall. The Student Center Administrative Office, the Student Engagement Office, and Burdell's will be in the pavilion buildings. Because of the recent low occupancy on campus, phase 2 work — initially planned for 2022 — is taking place now. This includes the renovation of the current Student Center, utilities infrastructure,



Photo courtesy of Turner

A view of the Eco-Commons from above, prior to a water main break that took place June 27 near the intersection of Hemphill Avenue and Ferst Drive.

and demolition and rebuilding of the Stamps Commons. Site preparations and abatement and demolition of the second-floor food court greenhouse are underway.

The pathways through the plaza in front of the Ferst Center for the Arts are closed, and temporary pathways to the South and West around the Smithgall Student Services Building will be in place when students return to campus in August. The plaza in front of the Ferst Center is expected to open in October. For more details on the project, visit studentcenter.gatech.edu.

KOAN - Portman Sculpture

A 40-foot sculpture designed and donated by John Portman is being fabricated off-site, with installation planned for late summer near the Northeast corner of Tech Green. The name KOAN refers to a Zen Buddhist puzzle, and represents a belief in the power of knowledge, research, and creativity working together to unravel great truths. Portman believed Georgia Tech offered these elements in abundance to him and every student on campus. The circular brick platform and lighting elements for the sculpture are complete. Two large tents near the sculpture's intended location will be used to finish the carbon-fiber components and prepare them for installation.

Just Getting Started Veterans Resource Center

The renovated Veterans Resource Center will be located in the Ford ES&T Building in a space formerly home to the Quad Cafe. The Center will serve as a central community space for veterans and military-connected students, and the renovations will allow for larger gatherings, meetings, and study space. Additionally, the new space will host veteran networking, tutoring, and mentoring programs, and encourage partnerships with other veterans groups, campus organizations, and federal veterans resources.

Russ Chandler Stadium

Russ Chandler Stadium is undergoing renovations to improve operational functionality for student-athletes, coaches, alumni, and spectators. A new two-story, 25,000-square-foot structure will feature a concourse level atrium showcasing the history of Georgia Tech baseball and will also be available for third-party rentals. The second level will feature premium terrace level seating with skyline views of Atlanta. The project broke ground in June and will be completed in time for next year's baseball season beginning in February 2021. Learn more about the project at c.gatech.edu/chandler.

ERGONOMICS FOR REMOTE WORKERS



Photo by Rob Felt

Whether you're moving around the house or in a single work station, ergonomics is key to reducing strain on your body and preventing injuries. Professional Education shares five ergonomics principles at pe.gatech.edu/blog.

Board of Regents Approves FY21 Budget

In its closing session June 26, the state of Georgia General Assembly passed a 10% budget cut for all state educational agencies, which is considerably more favorable than the original 14% reduction to state appropriations. In addition, the General Assembly is not requiring furloughs, which means state employees, including Georgia Tech, will not have to take unpaid time off in FY21. On Wednesday, July 1, the University System of Georgia Board of Regents approved FY21 budgets for all 26 institutions in the system. A campus email sent that day shared the information.

To learn more, visit usg.edu/regents.

PPE, from page 1

producing long lead times and unreliable deliveries. At the same time, Covid-19 precautions are mandating the use of PPE in laboratories where it wasn't required before, such as computer and electronics labs. And as researchers, staff, and graduate students slowly come back to the lab, predicting how many people will be at work on any given day creates yet another unknown.

At Georgia Tech, supply chain and logistics experts have put their knowledge to work on the problem, using the kind of modeling and machine learning technologies that major retailers rely on to keep products on store shelves. In just one month, the research team has built an automated centralized system to replace traditional purchasing systems in which individual labs had to hunt for their own supplies.

By asking researchers to report details of the PPE they use each day, the labs will provide data the system needs to predict demand, allowing Georgia Tech

to place large orders and stock a centralized warehouse that will help bridge the gap between supply chain hiccups. Based on usage data, the system will know when each lab's stock of PPE needs to be resupplied from distribution centers located in 22 major laboratory buildings. The goal will be for each lab to have a robust three-day supply of PPE at all times.

"We need to make sure that every researcher, staff member, and graduate student is going to be protected properly," said Benoit Montreuil, a professor in the H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering and director of the Georgia Tech Supply Chain and Logistics Institute. "We are dealing with a very volatile situation for supply capacity, lead times, alternate sources, and reliability. With this system, we can ensure that the distribution of PPE throughout campus will be done in an efficient, seamless, responsive, and fair way."

With \$1 billion in sponsored activity during 2019, Georgia Tech

has hundreds of research laboratories. In peak times, those researchers are expected to use 400,000 gloves a month and 20,000 surgical masks. With new sanitizing guidelines, they're expected to use more than 4,000 gallons of hand sanitizer a month – but nobody really knows for sure, because this wasn't widely required before.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, most labs were responsible for purchasing their own PPE. But with so many labs worldwide now hunting for materials in the same disrupted supply chains, that's no longer possible.

"Georgia Tech can ensure better success in obtaining PPE by buying in very large quantities instead of asking individual lab managers to try to find stock on their own," said Robert Butera, vice president for Research Development and Operations. "We can track down the best suppliers and create a buffer in the system. We'll also be able to identify who are the most reliable suppliers."

Read the rest of the story at c.gatech.edu/ppes.