



The Whistle

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Staff Appreciation Day

The Staff Council invites you to attend the first-ever Staff Appreciation Day. Enjoy fun, free food, and giveaways.

Thursday, Oct. 1

11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Tech Green and Tech Walkway

Register and get your QR code for admission at c.gatech.edu/staff-appreciation. You will not be admitted without a QR code.

Masks are required, physical distancing will be in place, and hand sanitizing stations will be provided. For more information, contact stephanie.merrick@design.gatech.edu or candice.bovian@ohr.gatech.edu.

Cabrera Expresses Gratitude During Annual Address

VICTOR ROGERS
INSTITUTE
COMMUNICATIONS

President Ángel Cabrera delivered the annual Institute Address on Tuesday, Sept. 22, to nearly 5,000 viewers online and to a physically distanced and masked audience in the Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons.

“What a year it has been,” said Cabrera, who recently finished his inaugural year as Georgia Tech’s 12th president. “Over the past six months, we have navigated through one of the most difficult periods in our history. We have each faced unique challenges in our own personal lives. Together, we have managed to keep Georgia Tech strong and delivering on its important mission.”

Cabrera said that despite the challenges created by the coronavirus pandemic, Georgia Tech is having a bigger impact in the world than ever before.

“We educate more students and graduate

them at higher rates. We conduct more research that helps address some of the biggest challenges we face. We drive more innovation in our local economy and are helping attract some of the most iconic companies of our time — the likes of Google and Microsoft — to our neighborhood,” he said.

“I am humbled and grateful that I get to work with a fine group of people every day,” he said. “If there is one message today, that is a big, huge thank you!”

Cabrera talked about the far-reaching effects of Covid-19 around the world, in the U.S., and at Georgia Tech.

“The impact has been felt in our very own community. I know it has created a lot of stress among many of us, and it has created a lot of stress in all of us together as an institution. This was a time of very difficult questions, very difficult issues, with very difficult answers,” Cabrera said.

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VOTE AT MCCAMISH



Photo by Rob Felt

McCamish Pavilion will serve as an early voting site for all residents of Fulton County Oct. 21–23. The venue will also serve as a polling precinct for voters assigned to this precinct on Election Day, Nov. 3. Learn more at c.gatech.edu/votemccamish.

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“The path we’ve taken at Georgia Tech is to try our best to return to campus and resume our activities safely. It hasn’t been easy. But it has allowed us to keep our important work moving forward while minimizing the economic damage, not just to the Institute but to many people whose livelihoods depend on us.”

Cabrera thanked the many members of the Tech community who helped keep Georgia Tech open and moving forward, from students and their families, to Stamps Health Services, Facilities, Environmental Health and Safety, and so many others.

“Among all the things we have done to navigate this storm, I am particularly appreciative of the impressive surveillance testing we have built — not only because it has helped us identify and contain outbreaks and curb infections, but because it shows what Georgia Tech is all about: bringing people together, collaborating, innovating, advancing and leveraging technology, solving problems, and serving others.”

He recognized the individuals who joined Tech’s leadership team in recent months: Kelly Fox, executive vice president for Administration and Finance; Kaye Husbands Fealing, dean and Ivan Allen Jr. Chair, Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts; Leslie Sharp,



Photo by Rob Felt

President Ángel Cabrera highlighted Georgia Tech’s surveillance testing system, developed on campus by researchers and staff members. To date, the program has processed more than 50,000 samples — all on campus.

President’s Report

The 2020 Georgia Tech President’s Report marks the introduction of a new approach in the yearly storytelling of the Institute’s accomplishments. It not only gives a glimpse into our 2019-20 fiscal period but also highlights how our efforts and successes beyond that have been furthering our latest strategic plan goals.

View it at report2020.president.gatech.edu.

dean of the Library; Jodi Geary, chief audit executive; Daren Hubbard, chief information officer; and Steve McLaughlin, incoming provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs.

Cabrera noted that even while battling a pandemic, the Institute continued to plan for the future with a new 10-year strategic plan. The new plan, currently under development, is grounded in a new mission statement and values, declaring Tech’s commitment to “developing leaders who advance technology and improve the human condition.”

“The mission and the values are not just words on paper,” Cabrera said. “They describe who we are when we are at our best and who we aspire to be every day. They are also, as we have learned, our lodestar in times of crisis. Not only as we deal with Covid-19.”

He outlined how Tech’s vision is grounded in six areas of strategic priority:

- Amplify impact
- Champion innovation
- Connect globally
- Expand access
- Cultivate well-being
- Lead by example

Cabrera thanked Provost Rafael L. Bras, who is retiring, for his exemplary

service to the Institute.

“Under Rafael’s leadership, Tech increased enrollment by 74% and now has as many graduate students as undergraduates; created new degree programs; expanded cocurricular and extracurricular programs; launched Georgia Tech Arts; transformed the campus; increased international collaborations and started a new campus in Shenzhen; and devised new, accessible pathways to graduate education and alternate educational options for learners around the world,” Cabrera said.

He concluded as he began, with words of gratitude.

“Let me thank each one of you for your commitment to Georgia Tech and our students during this difficult year,” he said.

“The challenges we have faced have been significant, and we can be proud of how we have responded. I am convinced that this experience will ultimately make us stronger. More committed to our mission of Progress and Service and to the idea that technology, the science that supports it, the scholarship that guides it, and the leadership that deploys it can help us improve the human condition — and be more open to envisioning new ways to deliver on that mission.”

The Institute Address was followed by a question and answer session. The event was recorded and is available at president.gatech.edu.

A DECADE OF DEDICATION

This fall marks the end of Rafael L. Bras' 10-year tenure as Georgia Tech's provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs and the K. Harrison Brown Family Chair — a decade of service defined by some of the largest and boldest innovations in the Institute's history.

Under his leadership, Tech increased enrollment by 74% and, now, Georgia Tech has as many graduate students as undergraduates; created new degree

programs; expanded cocurricular and extracurricular programs; and launched Georgia Tech Arts. Read more about Bras' tenure at c.gatech.edu/bras.

Steven McLaughlin, current dean of the College of Engineering and Southern Company Chair, will assume the role of provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs effective Oct. 1. McLaughlin has been at Tech for 25 years. Learn more about him at c.gatech.edu/mclaughlin.



Photos by Rob Felt

(Above) Bras shakes a graduate's hand at the Ph.D. Hooding Ceremony in 2015. (Below, left) Bras and Benjamin Joon-min Ahn share a sentimental moment, following the biology student's delivery of the Student Welcome address at the 2019 New Student Convocation. (Below, right) Bras chats with Tech's first Black students at the 2019 unveiling of the Trailblazers sculpture crafted in their honor.

Meet Steven Sheffield, Mentor for Students

VICTOR ROGERS
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

1997 was a momentous year for Steven Sheffield. He began his career at Georgia Tech, and he was ordained as a minister.

Sheffield is the machine shop manager for the George W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering. He was working as an industrial machinist at Atlantic Steel, which is now the site of Atlantic Station, as the company was closing its doors in 1997. He applied for a job as an instrument maker at Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI), and he got it.

“It was a great opportunity and an exciting time to come to Tech because technology was starting to change the way we work,” he said. His job at GTRI provided research support primarily for Department of Defense projects and occasionally for the Department of Energy. He worked at GTRI for a little more than two years before moving to the academic side of campus.

Today he leads a team at the Woodruff School’s Montgomery Machining Mall that includes one shop supervisor, five mechanical specialists, and two Co-op students. They are professional metal workers, skilled in welding, metal cutting, metal joining, fabrication, and CAD. The team supports the research efforts for mechanical engineering, the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, and the College of Sciences, as well as the undergraduate activities and most of the fabrication manufacturing for those units.

Sheffield describes his role as a “permanent mentor” to students in the makerspace and in workshops.

“Some students come from environments where maybe they learned how to use tools, and other students have never used a tool. So, they come into our space and we train them,” he said. “We support their education experience, from classroom projects to the Capstone Design, which is a cumula-



Photo by Allison Carter

Sheffield and his team have been part of Georgia Tech’s response to the coronavirus pandemic. He is pictured behind a protective barrier manufactured at Tech.

tive project incorporating everything they have learned.”

Sheffield and his team do design reviews with students, help them with the materials needed, and walk them through the manufacturing process.

“Hands down, the most rewarding part of my job is that by working with students I have a chance to make a difference in someone’s day, someone’s career, or someone’s life,” Sheffield said. “When working with students, it’s not always academic or technical help they need. Sometimes they just need a little encouragement that they will make it through the project.”

Sheffield keeps in touch with a lot of students long after they have graduated. Some come back to visit years later, bringing their spouses and children to show them where they got their start.

“They remember the things they learned here,” he said. “Sometimes they call and say, ‘We’re looking to hire an employee. Can you recommend someone with similar experience?’ So, I have helped place students with companies.”

Sheffield said the most challenging part can be some of the technical aspects, but like most technical people

he thrives on that. In recent months his team has been part of Georgia Tech’s response to the coronavirus pandemic. In late March they began making personal protective equipment (PPE) for hospitals and medical professionals. They also helped develop prototypes of barrier protection devices designed to contain droplet spray and aerosol with a goal of reducing the risk of virus transmission during certain medical procedures.

Away From the Office

Sheffield and his wife Robin have been married 35 years, and they have two adult daughters, Rebekah and Hannah. Rebekah, a public school teacher, has a master’s degree in education, teaches piano, and plays and sings for the church. Hannah, a Tech graduate with a degree in industrial and systems engineering, works for Chick-fil-A.

An ordained minister, Sheffield is the pastor of a 225-member Baptist church in Canton, Georgia. He is at the church on Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, and on call “all hours in between.”

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