Ask a Question, Save a Life: QPR Training

STACY BRAUKMAN
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

There are about 50 of us filing into a large, brightly lit classroom in the Instructional Center. Students, professors, staff. We are all here for one reason: to learn what we can do, as individuals and as members of the Georgia Tech community, to help prevent suicide.

It’s called QPR Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training. The acronym stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer, and Georgia Tech is one of hundreds of institutions that have incorporated the training program into their comprehensive mental health services and outreach.

Created in the mid-1990s by a clinical psychologist, QPR is a unique approach to emergency mental health interventions. It’s based on the same principle as its pseudo-namesake, CPR, in which non-medical experts learn the skills to stabilize people who aren’t breathing — keeping them alive until they can receive proper medical care.

Organizational Changes Announced for Research Office

The restructuring is designed to provide improved service support for Georgia Tech’s entire research operation through increased collaboration and resource sharing, as well as a coordinated approach designed to strengthen the administrative ties between the research and academic divisions.

c.gatech.edu/research-restructure

Annual Integrity, Compliance Campaign Underway

All faculty, staff (including Tech Temps), and student employees are expected to review, comply with, and confirm their understanding of these Institute and USG policies. To complete the requirements by the April 3 deadline, visit training.gatech.edu

Meet Camilla Brewer, Welcoming Face at the LGBTQIA Resource Center

VICTOR ROGERS
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

Camilla Brewer, coordinator for the LGBTQIA Resource Center, has been in the newly created position since May.

“Tech hiring this position has really helped our center grow,” Brewer said. “I’m focusing on student-facing initiatives while our director, Aby Parsons, focuses on faculty and staff initiatives. We’re able to say ‘yes’ to more. We’re able to do more and be at more places.”

Brewer coordinates programs, events, and training for the campus community. This includes organizing discussion groups for students, training facilitators to conduct programs, conducting two- to four-hour training sessions, and co-coordinating large-scale events such as student welcome receptions and Lavender Graduation for LGBTQ students.

Because of her welcoming demeanor, Brewer has had several students that have either come out to her or felt comfortable enough to have a personal conversation with her.

“This semester has been particularly interesting. We have experienced an influx of students who are coming out to themselves or may be questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity,” Brewer said. “I love that I get to make very real connections with students who may not have that anywhere else. That’s really special. It can be difficult some days, but I’m willing to be that resource for students.”

The most rewarding part of

CODA COMES TO LIFE

Employees have started moving into their new workspaces in the Coda Building in Tech Square. The building boasts the world’s tallest spiral staircase. Groups that will have employees in the new space include the Office of Information Technology, Georgia Tech Research Institute, and researchers from multiple colleges. Learn more about the project at realestate.gatech.edu/coda.

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Construction to Lay Groundwork for Campus Center Project

KATE CURNOW
STUDENT CENTER

Beginning this spring, signs will go up across the southwest sector of campus to indicate the start of the Campus Center construction project. The design-build team is working to finalize the project details as campus prepares for the anticipated impact of the construction.

“Throughout construction of the Campus Center, our aim will be to minimize and communicate about the disruption to campus life as much as possible,” says Lindsay Bryant, senior director of the Student Center, “but with a project this size, some disruption is inevitable.”

Before the larger construction efforts begin, the project team will begin preparing the site in the next month. This work will include:

• Installation of utility infrastructure across Ferst Drive between Regents Drive and the Campus Recreation Center.
• Alterations to the southwest and southeast corners of the W02 parking deck to prepare for a new entrance and exit that will be in effect this summer.
• Intermittent work in the Area 3 (visitor parking) and W03 parking lots to inspect utility lines.

Construction activity notices will be available in advance of these projects. The campus community can find more information about the Campus Center project at reinnovation.studentcenter.gatech.edu and the Facilities Management campus construction webpage at facilities.gatech.edu.

About the Campus Center Project

The Campus Center project will encompass a 13-acre site from the Campus Recreation Center (CRC) to the Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons, with four new buildings accompanying a significant renovation to the existing Student Center. The outdoor space between buildings will be punctuated by a series of walks, plazas, and opportunities for social, creative, intellectual, and restorative engagement.

To minimize disruption to the campus community and help ensure continuity of services during construction, the design-build team came up with a staged approach that consists of two construction phases. Although details about Phase II of the project are being finalized, the team anticipates completing the entire Campus Center project in late 2022.

Phase I of the construction project will focus on the development of the four new buildings: an exhibition hall, two pavilions (one for Paper & Clay and one for Health Initiatives and the new Center for Assessment, Referral, and Education), and a standalone café. The Phase I site will encompass the Area 3 (visitor parking) and W03 parking lots, and parts of the Instructional Center (IC) Lawn.

Pedestrian routes between Stamps Health Services, the CRC and IC, the Student Center, Ferst Center, and the Student Services (Flag) Building are expected to be disrupted beginning this summer through Summer 2020. Pedestrians should look for wayfinding signage along the construction fencing. In addition, detailed maps will be available on the project website.

“Given the particularly high level of impact this will have on the campus community, we ask that folks be mindful and respectful of the site, so everyone can remain safe during the course of construction,” said John DuCongo, senior project manager for Facilities Management.

When Phase I of the project is complete, the new exhibition hall and pavilions will provide temporary space for the Student Center’s critical functions (i.e. dining, mail services, student organizations, and retail) during Phase II. Phase II of the Campus Center project will focus on renovating the existing Student Center building and is expected to last from Summer 2020 through late 2022.

More information about the Campus Center project, including town halls and site tours, can be found at reinnovation.studentcenter.gatech.edu.
BREWER, from page 1

Brewer’s job, she says, is when students have success, and they share that with her. “The most challenging part of my job is when I fail — or a student fails. I understand that failure is a natural part of any process,” she said. “But, it’s painful to watch students — and myself — go through difficult times, grieve, loss, and just plain in general.”

She said it’s also a challenge to interact with people who may not see the value in the work the Center does. As an example, she mentioned those who ask what the Center is doing or who the Center is engaging, yet there is little attempt to absorb the information.

“I love answering questions and helping people grow,” she said. “The challenging part is when people don’t want to grow.”

Brewer applauds the direction Tech is taking regarding serving the student body, and she hopes it continues to develop.

“I wish Georgia Tech had a larger network of student support services,” she said, “which I think we’re seeing now, with the Path Forward — Together initiative and the resources being allocated to mental health, more counselors being hired, a new intake center opening — these are things that will help us get more work done proactively across departments and divisions.

Away from the office, Brewer enjoys bullet journaling, going to concerts, and cooking, which is a new hobby.

“Cooking is making your own food with your own hands, so it’s like a form of art for me,” she said. “I really enjoy learning what foods work well for my body. I’m cooking paleo foods: vegetables, lean meats, good fats, no added sugar. I pretty much cook everything from scratch, including curry sauce,” she said.

Every Sunday she cooks for about five hours, preparing food for the week. “It’s a lot, but I enjoy it. It’s my time to decompress and reset for the week.”

Brewer has a few favorite meals, including a dish called the bowl of doom. “It’s ground beef with green onions, sweet potatoes, a fried egg, salsa, and avocado. I also add a sauce made of sriracha, honey, and fresh lime juice. It’s sort of like a hash or a scramble.”

With her bullet journaling — a dot grid journal system for tracking the past, organizing the present, and planning for the future — she’s able to keep up with important dates (using monthly and weekly spreads), monitor new music being released, track paleo meals she likes, take notes, and, sometimes, just doodle. She also keeps mementos from events she’s attended so she’ll have a record of them.

“I typically bullet journal on the weekend as part of my ‘Sunday refocus day.’ I fill in other things during the week.”

With her concert-going hobby, Brewer says she “feels music so strongly that going to live concerts is like another world for me. I went to Music Midtown alone. I needed to see Fall Out Boy (being a Chicago native) and Sylvan Esso. It was cool going alone because I had never done anything like that by myself. I could focus specifically on getting myself there, listening to the music, and not having to coordinate logistics with a group.”

Another one of her favorite bands is CHVRCHES, and she’s especially excited about an upcoming show by Florence + the Machine.

How to Prepare for Tech’s 22nd Annual Earth Day Celebration

GRACE WYNER
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

Georgia Tech’s Earth Day Festival will be held on April 19 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Every year, it is one of the biggest Earth Day events in the Southeast. The theme for 2019 is “Earth’s Future: It’s In Our Hands.” The event is free and open to the public, and there are several ways that Tech students, faculty, staff, alumni, and retirees can get involved even before the big day.

Office Supplies/Clothing Donation Drive

From now until March 22, new and gently used clothing can be dropped off in donation centers located at Burdell’s in the Student Center, Barnes & Noble in Tech Square, and at the Campus Recreation Center.

Campus departments are also encouraged to donate their new or gently used office supplies to the Office Supply Exchange. Departments can email recycle@gatech.edu by March 22 to schedule a pickup or drop-off. Students, faculty, and staff with valid BuzzCards will be able to shop the collection of clothing and office supplies for free at the festival.

Environmental Leadership Awards

If you know a Georgia Tech student, faculty or staff member, alumnus, or retiree who advocates or works for the cause of protecting the environment, consider nominating them for the 2019 Earth Day Environmental Leadership Awards. Single, group, and self-nominations are welcome and will be open until March 24. The winners will be honored during the Earth Day Festival. More information on eligibility and the nomination process can be found here.

Run the Pi Mile Road Race

Georgia Tech faculty and staff are invited to participate in this year’s Pi Mile 5k Road Race on Saturday, April 13. Enjoy all of the traditional race day festivities, including a race through Tech’s campus, T-shirt, music, food, appearances from Buzz, and more. The faculty/staff team with the most participants will win $500 for their department or office. The race is open to everyone, so family and friends can join in the fun too. More event information and registration can be found at gtalumni.org/pimile.

Artistic Talent Performers

The Earth Day Festival is also looking for musical, artistic, or similar performers to go on during the festival itself. Applications for family-friendly performances (preferably related to this year’s theme) are being accepted until March 22, further requirements and the application form are located online. Aside from these events, more than 70 booths and attractions will be at this year’s Earth Day Festival, including eco-friendly giveaways, live music, and recycling opportunities. No matter how you want to experience the Earth Day celebration, there will be something for everyone on April 19. To learn more about the festival and how to volunteer or donate, visit Tech’s official Earth Day website at earthday.gatech.edu.

The representation of this year’s theme was designed by Rita Young, a fourth-year literature, media, and communication major.

The Whistle

March 25

The Library hosts a Tableau class demonstrating data visualization by mapping census data, from 3 to 4 p.m. in Room 2130, Crossland Tower. library.gatech.edu

March 26

Human Resources hosts a Be Well session on Using Your Leave to Welcome a Child from noon to 1 p.m. in Room 319, Student Center. br.gatech.edu/bewell

March 28

A free bike/scooter safety class will share how to share the road safely, laws regarding biking and scootering on and around campus, and general bike setup and maintenance from 11 a.m. to noon in Room 246, Campus Recreation Center. pta.gatech.edu
Aileen Morales, head coach for Georgia Tech Softball, shakes hands with the umpires before the first pitch against Kennesaw State University on Feb. 27 at Shirley Clements Mewborn Field. The Yellow Jackets won 6-3. Softball season is underway, and Morales will be profiled later this month as part of an ongoing series about women at Georgia Tech. Read stories from the yearlong series at cgatech.edu/empowerment.

QPR, from page 1

QPR training seeks the same outcome in a different context. In this case, we are learning how to identify a person in crisis, interrupt the crisis, and connect the individual to the mental health resources and services that can help them.

“Becoming a QPR Gatekeeper, learning warning signs for suicide and how to ask someone if they are thinking about suicide, and how to refer for additional support, is one way that we can assist others in times of need,” said Julia Rizzo, staff therapist and suicide prevention coordinator at Georgia Tech.

“Faculty and staff have unique positions in students’ lives, and being well-equipped to discuss mental health and make referrals can save lives,” she added. “Unfortunately, we are aware of how deeply suicide deaths can affect our community. Suicide is preventable, and we want people to know that they can reach out for help. It is not an easy conversation. It is not something that we can discuss in small groups. Life is precious,” says Folk, a 1999 Tech industrial engineering graduate who serves as campus chaplain for the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta. This is her first time leading a QPR training. “I see so much value in being able to ask these questions and save a life.”

Then follows a group conversation about ways of helping in the moment of intervention. Whether it be through referral to a service provider or offering direct help (for example, walking someone to the Counseling Center or making a phone call to a hotline elsewhere on their behalf), we learn the importance of persistence, empathy, and positivity — we learn phrases like, “I want you to live, I’m on your side, We will get through this.”

Next, we do another role-playing exercise where we practice what we have talked about. Collectively, we discuss the approaches each group took and analyze what we might have done differently.

If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, or if you are concerned about someone, you can contact the Georgia Tech Counseling Center at 404-894-2275, or you can walk in during business hours, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. You can also contact the Georgia Crisis and Access line at 1-800-715-4225, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255, the Trevor Lifeline at 866-488-7386, or visit crisischat.org.