As we navigate working, physical distancing, and other challenges in the coming weeks, a good book may provide a welcome, if momentary, escape from reality. We asked several avid readers for recommendations. The books range from a sci-fi thriller with galaxy-traveling astronauts to a survey of the history of humankind from the Stone Age to the 21st century.

The Butterfly Girl
By Rene Denfeld, HarperCollins (2019)

“The Butterfly Girl is a quick and interesting read. A female detective sets out to try to find her missing sister, but discovers a young runaway who needs help along the way. The detective’s past creeps into the present when she decides to investigate her own abduction as a child. Connecting the dots from her memory and facing her past brings personal and professional challenges to overcome. The characters are well developed, the narration simple to follow as it shifts back and forth between characters, and the outcome is not what you would expect.”

—Holly Shikano, coordinator for staff and community development, Department of Housing and Residence Life
Timeline
Extended for
Provost Search

STEPHANIE KADEL
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

The search for Georgia Tech’s next provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs is moving forward, with some accommodation for the logistical challenges imposed by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Provost Rafael L. Bras announced in January that he will step down and return to the faculty later this year following a decade as the Institute’s chief academic officer. The original timeline for the search for a new provost has been extended in order to allow both search committee members and candidates to focus on addressing the immediate issues all colleges and universities are facing at this time. Conditions permitting, a final decision is expected before the end of the calendar year, with the goal of having the next provost by January 2021.

Two town halls were held in March, and feedback was used to shape the position description and search process. Additional town halls and opportunities for input from the community will be planned throughout the search. The next town hall is scheduled for Friday, May 15, at 1 p.m. The search co-chairs and search firm partners will discuss the search’s progress to date as well as next steps.

Nominations and applications are still being accepted and should be directed to GTProvost@heidrick.com.

To attract the best candidates for this position, the names of the finalists will not be announced publicly. But representatives of the faculty, students, and staff will have an opportunity to meet the finalists in a confidential setting and provide feedback to the search committee. Elected representatives of each of these groups have been contacted to discuss the search process.

A position profile, as well as details about joining the May 15 town hall, can be found at president.gatech.edu/provost-search. Additional details, including an application link, will be accessible on the site as soon as they are available.

USG Furlough Guidance

As noted in the USG’s press release, any action related to staffing reductions and furloughs will be based on the final state budget appropriation to be announced in June.

<table>
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<td>And Above</td>
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Implementation guidelines for this plan are being developed in conjunction with plans to reduce the Institute’s FY2021 budget by 14% from the FY2020 base. Georgia Tech’s plan is due to the USG on May 14, and final decisions on our budget will be subject to the state budget appropriation.

Nominations Open for Diversity Champion Awards

COURTNEY HILL
INSTITUTE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Do you know a faculty member, staff member, student, or unit (e.g., office, department, school, or lab) who advances the culture of accessibility and inclusive excellence at Georgia Tech?

Centered around accessibility, the 2020 Diversity Champion Awards will recognize those who have demonstrated a commitment to accessibility and creating an inclusive campus community for all.

Nominations, including those by previous nominees and self-nominations, may be made by Tech faculty, staff, and students for any award category. Honorees will be recognized at the 2020 Diversity Symposium in September.

Visit diversity.gatech.edu/diversychampionawards for more information, including past winners, criteria, eligibility, and nomination form. Nominations will be accepted through June 15.
In Memoriam

Robin Thomas

“Follow your passion, value your education, and work hard,” Robin Thomas advised graduates when he delivered Georgia Tech’s Fall 2016 Ph.D. and Master’s Commencement address. “Don’t give up in the face of hardship, and have fun.”

Thomas, a renowned mathematician and Regents Professor in the School of Mathematics at Georgia Tech, died on March 26, 2020, following a long struggle against Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS).

A world leader in graph theory, Thomas joined the faculty at Georgia Tech in 1989 and built a remarkable legacy of research and teaching that included serving as leader of the Algorithms, Combinatorics, and Optimization Ph.D. program. In 2016, Thomas received the Class of 1934 Distinguished Professor Award, the highest honor for a professor at Tech, recognizing more than 25 years of outstanding achievement in teaching, service, and research.

Thomas was awarded the Fulkerson Prize for outstanding papers in discrete mathematics twice — in 1994 as co-author of a paper on the Hadwiger conjecture, and in 2009 for the proof of the strong perfect graph theorem. In 2011, he was awarded the Karel Janéček Foundation Neuron Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Mathematics. In 2012, he became a fellow of the American Mathematical Society. He was named a Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics Fellow in 2018.

Thomas published more than 100 research papers in top journals, including Annals of Mathematics and the Journal of the American Mathematical Society. His extraordinary research record includes several major results, any one of which would be considered a lifetime highlight. The College of Sciences and the School of Mathematics at Georgia Tech join Thomas’ family and friends in celebrating his life and legacy:

A Renowned Mathematician

The recent passing of Regents Professor Robin Thomas has left a hole in the School of Mathematics, and in our hearts. Robin was known not just for his extraordinary mathematical renown, but also for his kindness and mentorship. The lives he touched are many, and several of his colleagues shared tributes and memories of his influence. Read their remarks at c.gatech.edu/robinthomas.

Leslie Sharp speaks at Georgia Tech’s inaugural 3-Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition in 2015.

Sharp Named Library Dean

Leslie Sharp, associate vice provost for Graduate Education and Faculty Development, has been named dean of the Georgia Tech Library. She will officially assume the role on July 1. Since March 2019, Sharp has served as the interim chief executive officer for the Library.

“Leslie Sharp has been an outstanding administrator during her time at Georgia Tech and I thank her for her service to the Library over the last year,” said Rafael L. Bras, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs and Outreach for the College of Design.

Sharp is a Georgia Tech alumna, earning a Ph.D. in the history and sociology of technology and science, with a doctoral minor in architectural history. She holds a master’s degree from Middle Tennessee State University and a B.A. in history from the University of Georgia.
Providence
By Max Barry, G.P. Putnam’s Sons (2020)

“This science fiction thriller is a true page-turner, following a team of four astronauts in an enormous galaxy-traveling AI warship as they fight humanity's war against the ‘salamanders,’ an alien race that wants nothing but to annihilate us all. The balance between action, character, and mystery make this a perfect summer read.”

—Charlie Bennett, public engagement librarian

All About Love

“bell hooks outlines a definition and examples of love and compassion that includes, yet goes beyond, the romantic version. In this book, she describes how and why people can embrace love for self, each other, and community. In a time where our inter-connectedness is on major display, her book reminds us how to demonstrate an ethic of care in our workplaces, schools, and homes.”

—Tiffany D. Johnson, assistant professor, Organizational Behavior Area, Scheller College of Business

Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI
By David Grann, Doubleday (2017)

“In the 1920s, the Osage Indians were among the wealthiest people in the U.S. thanks to the millions of barrels of oil discovered on their Oklahoma reservation. And dozens of them were victims of mysterious deaths and unsolved murders. In Killers of the Flower Moon, journalist David Grann proves an adept historian and gifted storyteller, scouring archives, court records, financial documents, and newspapers, and interviewing descendants of people who lived during the ‘Reign of Terror.’ It is a tragic story, but a gripping read and an important reminder that atrocities against Native Americans did not end with the closing of the frontier.”

—Stacy Braukman, senior writer and editor, Institute Communications

How to Stop Time
By Matt Haig, Viking (2018)

“Tom, the narrator in this enjoyable novel, was born in 1581. Yet he is living in present-day London, and looks to be in his mid-40s. He may be falling in love for the second time in four centuries. The setting switches from 17th-century England (he had a brief stint working for Shakespeare) to other memorable places. His benefactor is a wealthy man who is head of the Albatross Society (and who has dubbed people with his condition ‘albas’). There are rules in this Society, and there are severe consequences to Tom if the main rule — not falling in love — is broken. A bit of intrigue and romance, with an English backdrop to boot. All in all, a breezy summer read.”

—Patricia Kenly, business reference librarian

Becoming
By Michelle Obama, Crown Group (2018)

“I typically do not read memoirs, but wanting to learn about Michelle Obama and her truth was my inspiration for selecting the audiobook. It did not disappoint. A modern inspirational memoir, it gives readers a view into her roots growing up on the South Side of Chicago, family challenges, education, and law career. Then of course there’s Barack Obama, their relationship, her reluctance in agreeing with his decision to run for president, and ultimately her experience as the first African American first lady of the United States.”

—Charming Jobe-Moseley, program manager, Office of Development, International College of Design Graphic Designer

Jessie Brandon recommended two books:

Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind
By Yuval Noah Harari, Harper (2011)

“Honestly, this book blew my mind. Even just in the first 100 pages, there was information that has completely recontextualized how I think about the human race. Its description sounds very academic, but it’s not a hard read and is incredibly interesting and unlike most other books I have read.”

The Houseguest and Other Stories
By Amparo Dávila, New Directions Publishing (2018)

“The short stories in this book are all a little creepy in their own way, but beautifully written and thought-provoking. Everyone else I have talked to who has read them has different interpretations of what is actually going on in each story. I’ve never been a huge fan of short stories, but this opened my eyes to what is possible. I recommend reading them at night.”