**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Homecoming Events Coming This Month**

Some of Georgia Tech’s most time-honored traditions are celebrated during Homecoming festivities, which will take place this year during the week of Oct. 28. See a full list at [homecoming.gatech.edu](http://homecoming.gatech.edu) (student events) and [gthomecoming.gatech.edu](http://gthomecoming.gatech.edu) (alumni events).

Get an Update on the Campus Center Project

Four upcoming sessions will provide updates from the design-build team, including information about the future locations of the Student Center building and Kessler Campanile plaza. For dates and times, visit [c.gatech.edu/CampusCenter](http://c.gatech.edu/CampusCenter).

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Tech Lawn and Garden

Georgia Tech's main campus, with 400 acres and more than 13,000 trees, has a team of landscape professionals maintaining its beauty year-round. Tech Lawn and Garden taps into the knowledge of the experts in Facilities Management, showing how they do what they do and sharing tips you can use at home.

Prepare Lawns for Winter, Plant Bulbs for Spring

DANIEL "DJ" JORDAN
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

It's mid-October, and the temperature is finally starting to feel like fall. This is the best time to begin preparing your lawn for winter.

Start by lowering the blades on your lawnmower to cut the grass shorter since the grass goes dormant at the end of the cutting season. After the grass is dormant, you still should continue to cut it. This trains the lawn for the next season, and it helps with raking in the spring, which promotes a healthier lawn.

There are a couple of options for maintaining your lawn during the winter. The first is to just let the grass go dormant and turn brown until spring. Remove all grass clippings and leaves because they smother the grass. Cleaning up the clippings also helps to reduce the growth of weeds. If your lawnmower has a bag attachment, use it. If you don't have an attached bag, you should rake and bag the leaves.

Another option is to seed the lawn with winter rye so it stays green throughout the season. First, cut the grass very low, then rake the clippings. Next, you should aerate the lawn, which allows oxygen to penetrate the lawn. (You can rent a machine from a hardware store or hire someone to do it for you.) Then seed the lawn with winter rye and water it. Fertilizing the lawn is optional, depending on how quickly the rye grows. Winter rye typically grows faster than summer grass, so you will have to mow it more often.

The winter rye option is why Tech Lawn (at the base of the Hill on campus) is green year-round. Regardless of which option you choose, remember it is important to rake the leaves and avoid letting them sit there all winter. A clean lawn promotes a healthy lawn.

Planting Bulbs for Next Spring

In Atlanta the best time for planting spring bulbs is early to mid-November, before the ground freezes and it becomes hard to dig.

You can plant the bulbs in uniform rows or plant them to look like they grew there naturally. If you want to achieve a natural look, toss a handful of bulbs in the air and let them fall to the ground. Wherever they land, dig a hole and plant them there. Use a hand trowel to plant the bulbs 4 to 6 inches deep.

Daffodil, iris, hyacinth, and crocus bulbs have the best results. Tulips are hit or miss, with about a 50-50 chance of doing well. The soil type is not very important because the plants are hardy. But the location is key. Choose an area that has good drainage, so the bulbs are not under standing water. Also, look for an area with a good balance of sun and shade.

Pull weeds from the root and remove any leaves from the flower bed. As with lawn care, a clean flower bed promotes good plant health in any season.

In the next Lawn and Garden installment, Tree Surgeon Quentin Holden will talk about mulching techniques and protecting plants for the winter months. If you have a topic you'd like to see covered or a question about landscaping — on campus or in your own yard — email editor@comm.gatech.edu.
Staff Council Gears Up for Fall Season

VICTOR ROGERS
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

The Staff Council gives Georgia Tech’s 3,700 staff members a formal means to communicate with the Institute’s executive leadership. The Council comprises 20 members who proportionally represent five classifications of employees as specified by Tech’s Job Classification and Compensation System.

Though nominations for next year’s council closed last week, there are still several ways to get involved in the council’s work. This week, existing council members are reviewing nominations and verifying candidates for the upcoming election cycle. Elections will open Oct. 28 and run through Nov. 8, and all staff members are invited to cast their votes.

New members will be verified the week of Nov. 1 and announced the week of Nov. 18. At its next general meeting, the Staff Council will host representatives from the Office of Human Resources to discuss increases in health benefit premiums for 2020. The meeting will take place Thursday, Oct. 17, in room 320 of the Student Center; an HR Q&A Session will be from 10 to 11 a.m., and the general meeting will be from 11 a.m. to noon. For more information, contact Staff Council Chair David Brown at david.jbrown@facilities.gatech.edu.

The Staff Council also will host a Fall Harvest Meet and Greet on Wednesday, Oct. 23, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Student Center Ballroom. Employees can enjoy fun games, snacks, and win prizes, and meet Staff Council members who will be available to answer questions about the Georgia Tech Staff Council and listen to any staff-related concerns and ideas. RSVP online by Monday, Oct. 21, at staffcouncil.gatech.edu.

Over the past two years, Staff Council has held four Meet and Greets in various locations on campus, including the Spring Splash in May at Couch Park which had more than 300 employees in attendance. The Staff Council exists to understand perspectives that are representative of the broad population of staff about matters of institutional importance, and to communicate those perspectives along with advice and suggestions to the Institute President and executive officers at regular intervals. The Staff Council meets the third Tuesday of each month at 9 a.m. The meeting location varies and can be found on the Staff Council calendar. For more information visit staffcouncil.gatech.edu.

Staff Council members are representing institution positions, along with the athletics director, on NCAA legislation and other matters affecting or related to intercollegiate athletics on campus; serving as vice chair of both the Student-Athlete Grievance Committee and the New Transfer Appeals Committee; and serving as a member of Tech’s NCAA Eligibility Certification Team, primarily responsible for evaluating the processes used.

The role is also detailed in section 5.3 of the Faculty Handbook, available at facultygovernance.gatech.edu. Additional questions may be directed to Shoshana Engel, associate athletic director for compliance, at senge@athletics.gatech.edu.

Students are gaining firsthand knowledge from different guest speakers, including patients who share their personal stories. This is coursework that goes beyond academics, according to Platt. “This takes us inside and outside of the science.” He says. “We can have the best solutions in mind, but if it doesn’t get to the people who need it, what good is the solution? There are hurdles beyond figuring out the science.”

In past years, Platt has asked his students to explain why a product or treatment is scientifically and commercially relevant. This year he’s adding another challenge: Identify the societal barriers to getting a product to market and to the patients who need it most. Platt and Singh are working together to help their students find the answers to these questions.

“We want our students to work with community partners to identify and better understand how resources, access, and agency shape community health,” Singh says. “By linking our courses, we will be able to bring together the social and natural sciences in new ways that relate to social, environmental, and economic issues of biomedicine.”

BME, from page 1

doesn’t. The final project in BME 3600 is to design a specific treatment for either HIV/AIDS or sickle cell. The students from HTS 3088 will serve as consultants to identify the potential social, ethical, and economic issues that may arise when these drugs go to market.

“This type of interdisciplinary work is critical for our future in biomedicine because everything that is made in the lab must integrate and work within the realities of people’s everyday lives,” explains Singh, who points out that, for conditions such as sickle cell or HIV/AIDS, as well as the contemporary market and to the patients who need it most. Platt and Singh are working together to help their students find the answers to these questions.

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ARTS AND CULTURE

Oct. 24

Opening festivities for the Clough Art Crawl will begin at 4 p.m. in the Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons. The exhibit will be on display through the fall semester. arts.gatech.edu

WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING

Oct. 16

Human Resources hosts a Be Well session on Education Assistance from noon to 1 p.m., in the Student Center Theater. hr.gatech.edu/beowell

Oct. 17

The LGBTQIA Resource Center hosts a Train 101 session from 2 to 4:30 p.m. Learn more and register to attend at: lgbtqia.gatech.edu

Oct. 25

The End Suicide initiative hosts a Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) Training from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Room 210, Curer Living Learning Commons (549 8th Street NW). Register to attend at: endsuicide.gatech.edu

Oct. 25

The Center for Teaching and Learning hosts a workshop on “How Learning Works” aimed at postdoctoral fellows and graduate students preparing for careers in higher education. The workshop takes place from 9 to 10:30 a.m. in the Piedmont Room, Student Center. cfl.gatech.edu

Oct. 30

The Georgia Tech Library hosts a workshop on “Avoiding Plagiarism (and Citing Your References Correctly)” from 2 to 3 p.m. in Classroom 2130, Oronzio Tower. library.gatech.edu
With the year coming to a close, it is a good time to review what worked well in 2019 and what did not — including your benefits. It is important to know this is an active open enrollment that requires you to take action. You must make benefit elections in order to have coverage in 2020. You can begin to review 2020 options and plan changes by visiting usg.edu/hr/benefits.

Additional information will be mailed to home addresses in the coming weeks. To view premium changes and a full benefits guide, visit c.gatech.edu/2020benefitsguide.

### 4 Things to Note for Next Year

#### Working Spouse Surcharge

There will be a surcharge of $100 per month applied to spouses covered under the plan who work and receive an offer of coverage through their place of employment.
- As part of this change, the “Employee + Child” coverage tier is changing to “Employee + Child(ren).”
- In 2020, an employee covering two or more children without a spouse can enroll in the “Employee + Child(ren)” tier and pay less than they would today in the “Family” tier.

#### Tobacco Surcharge

A $100 per month tobacco surcharge will be added to your monthly premium if you or any of your dependents use tobacco products.
- Employees and dependents age 18 and older covered under a USG medical plan are required to certify tobacco use.
- Free smoking cessation classes and support are offered by Georgia Tech, Anthem, and Kaiser.
- Once an employee or dependent is tobacco-free, a certification can be completed, and the surcharge will be removed the first of the following month.

#### Pharmacy Coverage

The USG is moving from co-pays to co-insurance for brand name preferred and nonpreferred medications.
- The employee cost of the drug will be a percentage of brand name preferred and nonpreferred medications.
- Plan co-pays are increasing, and specialty drugs will increase as part of this change.
- Its co-insurance structure is already in place. The Kaiser plan co-pays are increasing, and specialty drugs will have a 20% co-insurance.

#### Well-Being Incentive

The 2020 well-being program will continue to offer a $100 well-being incentive, as well as an expanded list of activities to earn the incentive. The 2020 program will include resources about diabetes education, prevention, and management, as well as a weight loss program that is offered at a reduced cost for those who qualify.