



Tech Promise Program Expands

BECKY TANKERSLEY
ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

Georgia Tech is furthering its commitment to enrolling talented Georgia students from low-income families by expanding the G. Wayne Clough Georgia Tech Promise Program to include even more students with financial need.

Under the new program guidelines, Tech Promise will now assist qualified families whose annual estimated income is \$55,500 or less.

Thanks to this expansion, more Georgia students than ever before will be able to graduate debt-free from Georgia Tech.

“For more than 15 years, Tech Promise has helped some of Georgia’s brightest talent overcome financial constraints so they can pursue their dreams and create multigenerational change for their families and communities,” said President Ángel Cabrera. “We’re proud of this program and excited about its expansion, which will create untold opportunities for even more of our state’s best students.”

Tech Promise is the first program of its kind provided by a public university

in Georgia. It offers the possibility of a debt-free degree to hundreds of talented and ambitious students who, without financial assistance, would likely not be able to achieve the dream of graduating from Georgia Tech.

“We are very pleased that the expanded Tech Promise program will allow us to serve more of our state’s outstanding students by removing financial barriers,” said Steve McLaughlin, provost and executive vice president for Academic Affairs. “We also know there is more work to be done here. Our Transforming Tomorrow fundraising campaign will give us incredible opportunities to continue expanding access to students from all backgrounds and walks of life.”

Since 2007, more than 1,000 students from 103 Georgia counties have benefited from Tech Promise. The program fills a gap in the financial aid support system by picking up where other scholarships and financial aid options leave off, covering a student’s full cost of attendance.

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Photo by Allison Carter

Nelson stands on a terrace at the John Lewis Student Center.

Meet Jayde Nelson, Director of Civic Engagement

VICTOR ROGERS
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

Jayde Nelson is director of Civic Engagement in the Center for Student Engagement, which is part of the Division of Student Engagement and Well-Being. Before coming to Tech in 2022, she worked in residence life at the University of Georgia for four years.

“I came here to expand my resources and take that next step in my career,” she said. “There has been nothing better than understanding the students and meeting their needs. I’ve been excited to do the work that I’ve been doing for the last five months.”

Nelson’s role is to help students understand that what they’re doing in the

classroom has an impact on what is happening outside of it.

“I’m here to help bridge that gap,” she said. “It’s great to say to students, ‘This net that you’ve 3D-printed can be used to collect debris in lakes and streams.’ I see them have lightbulb moments when they see an immediate connection between what they’re doing as an engineering or science major and what is needed by nonprofits.”

Last month Nelson coordinated Georgia Tech’s MLK Day of Service, with 120 students participating in five off-campus projects and two on-campus projects. Now she’s working on two Alternative

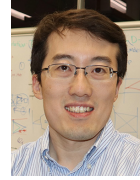
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FACULTY AND STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

Assistant Professor **Ahmet Coskun**, who holds the Bernie Marcus Early Career Professorship in the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering, has been named a Rising Star by the Biomedical Engineering Society Cellular and Molecular Bioengineering Special Interest Group. He is the first faculty member from Tech to receive the award in more than a decade.



has awarded a team led by **Shu Jia**, assistant professor in the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering, the prize for best paper published in the journal from 2019 to 2021. It's the first time the flagship journal of the Optical Society of America has awarded such an honor.



in the George W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering, has been awarded a prestigious Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Award from the National Science Foundation's Division of Chemical, Bioengineering, Environmental, and Transport Systems.



School of Interactive Computing Associate Professor **Munmun De Choudhury** has spent more than a decade studying social media and online forums with the goal of making the internet a better place. For her career efforts, De Choudhury is the co-recipient of the 2023 Special Interest Group on Computer-Human Interaction Societal Impact Award. Other recipients this year include **Shaowen Bardzell**, who was announced last week as the new chair of the School of Interactive Computing.



Christopher W. Jones, the John F. Brock III School Chair in the School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, has been selected for the 2023 Distinguished Researcher Award from the Energy and Fuels Division of the American Chemical Society.



Vidya Muthukumar has been awarded a National Science Foundation Faculty Early Career Development Program (CAREER) award. Muthukumar is an assistant professor in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering with a joint appointment in the H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering.



School of Interactive Computing Assistant Professor **Zsolt Kira** has been awarded a prestigious Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) Award for his proposal, "Visual Learning in an Open and Continual World."



Laura Taylor, professor and chair of the School of Economics, has been appointed to the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine standing committee on the Use of Emerging Science for Environmental Health Decisions.



Srinivas Garimella, Hightower Chair in Engineering and professor in the George W. Woodruff School of Mechanical Engineering, has been named a fellow by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers. Garimella is one of 13 to receive the honor in 2023.



Regents' Professor **Dimitri Mavris** was announced the president of the International Council of the Aeronautical Sciences (ICAS) at the beginning of January. As president, he will serve a two-year term and work with its governance committees to carry out the ICAS mission and vision and will engage with leaders of the aeronautical community.



Mitchell L.R. Walker II has been named a fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, the premier professional organization for aerospace researchers, industry leaders, and academics. Walker, professor and John W. Young Chair in the Daniel Guggenheim School of Aerospace Engineering, is the 15th Georgia Tech faculty member elevated to this distinction.



Akanksha Menon, assistant professor

The journal *Biomedical Optics Express*

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“From its inception, the Tech Promise program has demonstrated Georgia Tech’s commitment to removing the financial barrier to earning a bachelor’s degree. Today, with this expansion of the program, limited-income families can see that Tech’s commitment to these talented Georgia students is stronger than ever,” said Paul Kohn, vice provost for Enrollment Management.

Rick Clark, associate vice provost of Enrollment Management and executive director of Undergraduate Admission, echoed Kohn’s sentiments about the Institute’s responsibility to Georgia:

“As a public university, our goal is to serve our state by expanding access to Georgia’s most talented students by providing an affordable, world-class education, regardless of economic background. Increasing our investment in Tech Promise is a reflection of that

commitment,” Clark said.

Tech has a well-established tradition of providing access to financially disadvantaged students, beginning first with low tuition and fee charges, coupled with available scholarships, student loans, and the nation’s largest voluntary co-op program. Because of these programs, Georgia Tech has opened the doors of opportunity for many students, including first-generation college graduates.

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Service Break trips — to New Orleans and the Dominican Republic.

In New Orleans, students will work with a community partner, Merry Green Marvel, on projects addressing environmental issues in a region that is on the front lines of climate change. Students also will have opportunities to participate in fun activities such as kayaking and a New Orleans cooking class.

In the Dominican Republic, students will collaborate with 7 Elements, a community partner, to build bottle houses in La Colonia. The houses have a cement foundation and a wooden frame, and the insulation is made of recycled plastic bottles to both reuse waste and protect homeowners during extreme temperatures. Students will also get to explore areas near the work sites and learn about common problems facing the community.

“We are preparing the students with details about the locations so they will know what to expect,” Nelson said. “We have student leaders as well as advisors leading the trips, and we’re excited about the Alternative Service Break projects.”

Away From Work

Nelson’s hobbies include adding mugs to her collection of more than 100 and exploring Georgia’s small-town downtowns.

“I am a history nerd, so I like to stop and talk to the local residents to learn the town’s history,” she said. “I also like a good festival and a good concert.”

Nelson, who has a bachelor’s degree



Photo by Allison Carter

Jayde Nelson talks with students in the Center for Civic Engagement, located in the John Lewis Student Center.

in biology from Francis Marion University in South Carolina and a master’s in student affairs and higher education from Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas, is continuing her education at Georgia Southern University. She is pursuing an Ed.D. in educational leadership with an emphasis in higher education, anticipating earning her degree in 2025.

“Being in this program is broadening the way that I think because my cohort is half higher education and half P-12,” she said. “I’m gaining an understanding of what students are like before they come to college.”

Nelson originally wanted to be a physician, but ended up on a different path.

“I still want to do something in the medical field, so maybe down the line I would like to work at a medical university in student affairs,” she said. “I’m

also looking at access to college, how students in rural Georgia are coming to Tech, and how admissions counselors are really guiding the work of getting those students to attend technology schools. That has been my trajectory thus far.”

Between working and studying, Nelson tries to catch up on her sleep.

“I take a mean nap,” she said. “I feel like I took naptime for granted in kindergarten. I was the student who wanted to get extra recess time while everybody else was napping.”

Nelson also enjoys spending time with her 4-year-old nephew.

“He’s my little chicken nugget and I absolutely love him,” she said. “He’ll be 5 this year and he’s going to kindergarten. I don’t know where the time went, but I know I’m going to be right next to him, walking him into his classroom. I need that experience.”

New Leaders Take Roles in Development

BEVERLEY SYLVESTER
OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT

On March 1, Jim Hall will assume the role of senior associate vice president for Major Gifts and Next Generation Philanthropy in the Office of Development. Hall has been at Tech for more than 24 years. In his new position, he will take on the objectives of enhancing major gift programs, helping the Office of Development to establish a new fundraising effort that will bring forward the next generation of major gift donors, while maintaining the collaboration he has built between Development and Athletics.

Development also will welcome Leslie Taylor Gonnella to the team as associate vice president for Development Operations and Services, effective April 1. Gonnella will assume

responsibility for all aspects of Development's operations and services efforts. She will provide strategic leadership for the Stewardship, Research and Prospect Development, Information Management and Technology, Gift Accounting, Budget, and Facility teams.

The Development team at Georgia Tech is focused on securing transformative philanthropy to support the strategic priorities of the Institute and its colleges, schools, and programs. For fiscal year 2022, the team's efforts resulted in more than \$211 million in new gifts and commitments, which



Jim Hall

helped to publicly launch Georgia Tech's largest comprehensive campaign in the Institute's history, Transforming Tomorrow: The Campaign for Georgia Tech. The campaign is

intended to bring in more than \$2 billion in new commitments and gifts from individuals, foundations, corporations, and other organizations. One of the most significant priorities within Transforming Tomorrow is ensuring access for the brightest undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds. Learn more at transformingtomorrow.gatech.edu.



Leslie Gonnella

Exhibit Recognized for 'Contributing to the Fabric of the State'

ANN CLAYCOMBE
COLLEGE OF COMPUTING

The College of Computing has won a 2023 Georgia Association of Museums (GAM) award thanks to the work of staff member Birney Robert.

The award honors *Extension of Self: What It Means to Be Human in a Digital World*, an exhibit curated by Robert, who works as an events coordinator for the College. The award recognizes special projects that "demonstrate scholarship and originality contributing to the cultural fabric of the state," according to the GAM website.

The exhibit was on display in the Georgia Tech Library from August to October last year and featured six interactive digital art installations. Each installation considered ways in which technology has become integrated into our lives, with a special focus on accessibility. The

exhibit had nearly 1,000 visitors, including eight classes of Georgia Tech students brought by their instructors.

"I think art can be another avenue for making knowledge at a top-tier research university," Robert said. "I know I learned a lot."

Robert will curate another art exhibit in the coming year, this one on climate and the environment. She believes these interactive digital arts experiences are good for the Institute as a whole.

"Georgia's economy is developing so fast in arts and entertainment," she said, "and this gives us connections in that sector." Robert is also a member of the Institute's Visual Arts Working Group.

The exhibit was funded by a \$40,000 Georgia Tech/Microsoft Accessibility Research Seed Grant through the Center for 21st Century Universities.



Photo courtesy of the College of Computing

Birney Robert, who curated the *Extension of Self* exhibit, holds the award from the Georgia Association of Museums.