



The Whistle

WORK AND LIFE AT GEORGIA TECH • March 15, 2021



Vol. 46, No. 6
whistle.gatech.edu

JACKETS WIN ACC BASKETBALL TITLE



Photo courtesy of Georgia Tech Athletics

On Saturday, March 12, Georgia Tech beat Florida State for the title and an automatic bid into the NCAA tournament. The Jackets, who received a No. 9 seed in the tournament, will first face No. 8 seed Loyola of Chicago on Friday, March 19, at 4 p.m.

Tech Community Invited to Wellness Days Events

This semester, two wellness days — March 16 and March 24 — are planned for students and instructors to take a break from classes. To encourage the Tech community to take time off and enjoy the spring weather, a variety of activities will be hosted leading up to and during the wellness days. The events range from virtual paint parties to in-person yoga at the Campus Recreation Center. In-person events will require social distancing and face coverings.

Most events are open to all students, faculty, and staff, who are encouraged to get tested through the campus Covid-19 testing program before and after they participate in events.

Instructors have been asked to not schedule assignments during or immediately following these wellness days to give students a chance to recharge. And, staff are also being encouraged to prioritize wellness on these days, whether that's by incorporating exercise into their day or clearing nonessential meetings to allow for more focused mental activity. Read more at c.gatech.edu/wellnessdays.

Meet Valerie Edward, Stationary Engineer

VICTOR ROGERS
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

In March 2019, Valerie Edward moved from Detroit to Atlanta to become a stationary engineer at Georgia Tech's Holland Plant. The plant's steam keeps many buildings heated and cooled, and it provides hot

water for some showers and dining halls. The facility also provides processed steam for some research labs. A stationary engineer is technically trained to operate, troubleshoot, and oversee the plant's industrial equipment. After two years on the job,

see **EDWARD**, page 4



Photo by Allison Carter

Edward at work in the Holland Plant, where she has worked since 2019.

Baunach Named Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Faculty Development

AMELIA PAVLIK
GRADUATE EDUCATION AND FACULTY
DEVELOPMENT

Dawn Baunach has been named Georgia Tech's new associate vice provost for Graduate Education and Faculty Development. She will assume her duties on April 1.

"After an extensive search, we're so glad to welcome Dawn to our team," said Bonnie Ferri, vice provost for Graduate Education and Faculty Development. "Her enthusiasm as well as her years of experience when it comes to supporting faculty, postdoctoral scholars, and students make Dawn an important asset who will help our office as we put Georgia Tech's new strategic plan into action within our unit."

Since 2020, Baunach has served as the interim associate dean for Faculty/Student Development and Strategic Initiatives in the Norman J. Radow College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Kennesaw State University.

Baunach came to Kennesaw in 2016

to serve as a professor of sociology and chair of the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice. During her time at the university, Baunach received Kennesaw's Teresa M. Joyce Presidential Diversity Award and served as diversity fellow for the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

She also established a College Diversity Council and Makerspace Advisory Board within the Radow College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and created a New Faculty Series to support new college faculty in their first year.

Prior to 2016, Baunach spent 20 years serving in roles ranging from director of Graduate Studies to interim chair in the Department of Sociology at Georgia State University. In these positions, her accomplishments



Dawn Baunach

included creating an alumni advisory board, developing a faculty affiliate program for scholars internal and external to the university, increasing graduate student enrollment by 50%, and doubling funding levels for graduate teaching and research assistants.

Baunach earned a bachelor's in sociology from Duke University, and a master's and Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Virginia.

"I'm thrilled to join Georgia Tech's community of world-class faculty, graduate students, and postdoctoral scholars, and am looking forward to helping them grow and succeed," Baunach said. "Plus, I'm especially excited about collaborating with my colleagues in Graduate Education and Faculty Development on initiatives that support leaders in technology — leaders who can use their skills to ultimately improve the human condition. This position feels like a perfect fit for where I'm at in my career."

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council Gets To Work

COURTNEY HILL
INSTITUTE DIVERSITY, EQUITY,
AND INCLUSION

Last November, more than 50 Institute faculty, staff, and students gathered for the initial meeting of the Georgia Tech Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council (GTDEIC). The campus representatives were appointed by President Ángel Cabrera, and the group was tasked with monitoring and assessing the Institute's progress toward becoming a model campus community for diversity, equity, and inclusion

(DEI). In the months ahead, it will also submit recommendations to Cabrera and the Institute's executive leadership team for consideration in developing strategic actions.

Enhancing diversity has been one of Cabrera's top priorities. "Our Diversity and Inclusion Council is one of several action steps announced this past summer to deliver on our promise of inclusion," Cabrera said in 2020. "As outlined in our new strategic plan, we are striving to remove barriers to access and success, and to build an

inclusive community where people of all backgrounds have the opportunity to learn and contribute to our mission."

Since that initial November meeting, the GTDEIC has launched three working groups comprised of Council members and issue-area experts from across the campus: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan; Campus Climate Assessment; and Covid-19 Impacts on Faculty.

This story has been edited for length. To read more about the council, visit c.gatech.edu/divcouncil.



The Whistle

WORK AND LIFE AT GEORGIA TECH

Editor: Kristen Bailey
Copy Editor: Stacy Braukman
Photographers: Allison Carter, Rob Felt, Christopher Moore

Published biweekly throughout the year
by Georgia Tech Institute Communications.
Archives are posted at whistle.gatech.edu.
Georgia Tech is a unit of the University System of Georgia.





Why I Got Vaccinated

Employees Share Motivations for Getting the Covid-19 Vaccine



“I believe that, in addition to wearing masks, social distancing, and handwashing, the vaccine will be an important step toward ending the pandemic. I chose to get the vaccine because I believe it will help me better protect my family, my friends, my colleagues, and myself.”

— Quinaé Ford, 2021 Staff Council chair and administrative manager for Sustainability, Facilities, and Safety

Vaccines at Tech

Vaccinations are continuing to take place on campus. Eligibility for the Covid-19 vaccine in Georgia now includes all Georgia residents age 55 and up, and those age 16 and up with certain high-risk medical conditions.

For more information, and to learn how to sign up for an appointment, visit health.gatech.edu/coronavirus/vaccine.

“My initial fear came from media outlets undermining the certainty of the vaccine. As research continued, I began to become more comfortable about receiving the vaccine. I think, too, after all my close encounters and having to quarantine so many times due to exposure, I was ready for the vaccine for the sake of not only myself but those in my home. I hope that others would consider the vaccine, not only for themselves but for those around them. I am thankful I was able to receive the vaccine.”

—Public Safety Officer Enrique Victrum, Georgia Tech Police Department



“I heard many people were eligible for the vaccine but did not get it. I teach remotely and can avoid encounters with others. So, I thought I could help if I let others get it first. However, Pinar Keskinocak and others told me that it is people like me that slow down the process. Therefore, I went to get my shots and recorded the process to urge others to do the same. Please do it. Jackets help Jackets. Think that you are doing this for our community, not just yourself.”

—Chen Zhou, associate chair for Undergraduate Studies and associate professor, H. Milton Stewart School of Industrial and Systems Engineering

EDWARD, from page 1

Edward works each day to increase her knowledge.

“A variety of components and accessories make up the plant,” she said. “Operators must make sure they’re knowledgeable on every aspect by tracing out the different lines — water supply, steam, and chill water systems. Tracing the lines is tedious but necessary if I’m going to be the best.”

Edward really enjoys seeing everything work in harmony.

“The most rewarding part of my job is when the textbook information matches the practical application. You can read about boilers and combustion and all of those things, but it’s exciting when all of it comes together here and you get to see the fuel-air ratio working the way it should,” she said. “The other rewarding part is knowing that we’re providing a service to the campus — cooling in the summer and heating in the winter.”

The Holland Plant, located on the Hill, sends steam as far as the Campus Recreation Center and also to some of the buildings along Ninth and 10th streets.

The most challenging part of her job is keeping the equipment in working order and solving problems, such as when systems go offline. “You have to think on your feet. You can’t waste time deciding what to do first,” said Edward, who relies on experience and instinct to address problems quickly.

Being the only woman working at the Holland Plant was a challenge initially. “The guys have come



Photos by Allison Carter

Edward loves when all of the parts of her job come together to work the way they should, which in turn means heating and cooling is provided for the campus.

around,” she said. “They see that I am here because I enjoy the work and I want to do a good job.”

Edward is also working to implement a recycling initiative at the plant. “Changing the way we dispose of waste is important today, given population growth and the massive landfill space that’s occupied because of it,” she said.

Away From Work

Edward is interested in carpentry, reading, and ballroom dancing, and she hopes to develop a green thumb.

She bought a house about a year ago and it keeps her busy with lawncare and general maintenance. She plans to build a woodworking shed where she can make furniture.

“I have done some carpentry work. I can operate a wood lathe, and I was a machinist working with metal. I’m pretty



handy,” she said.

One of the projects on her list is a rollaway table to hold her books and magazines while she reads in bed. She likes reading technical books to keep up with what’s happening in the field. She also likes reading books about the Victorian era and watching PBS’ Masterpiece.

Before the coronavirus pandemic and physical distancing, Edward enjoyed ballroom dancing. She danced when she lived in

Detroit and she was taking lessons in Atlanta. “It’s a good way to stay in shape. It’s also relaxing and fun.”

Edward is not a gardener, but she loves mangos and wants to see if she can grow a tree. She gave a few mango seeds to a co-worker, Miguel Zarate, who planted the seeds and grew a sapling for her.

“I’m nurturing the plant right now,” she said. “If I can keep it alive it will be the first tree that I plant in my backyard.”