



The Whistle

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HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVES



Covid-19 Vaccinations Continue

Georgia Tech will continue to administer Covid-19 vaccines to Tech faculty, staff, and students, as well as their family members ages 12 and older. Vaccination appointments are available on Tuesdays. Learn more at health.gatech.edu/coronavirus/vaccine, and make an appointment at mytest.gatech.edu.

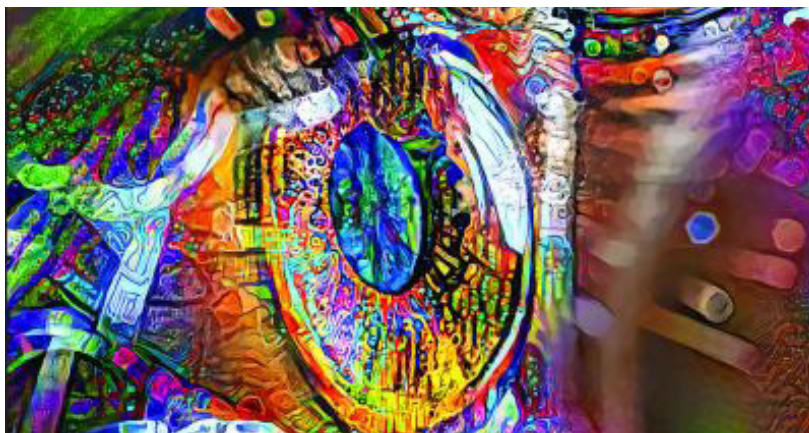


Image courtesy of the School of Literature, Media, and Communication

Since the School of Literature, Media, and Communication debuted *Humanistic Perspectives in a Technological World* in 2014, upheavals have rocked the nation and world while raising awareness of social justice issues and questions of gender equality. The second volume explores those themes and more. Read more at c.gatech.edu/perspectives.

Chung Kim: Inclusivity, Kindness, Celebrating Heritage and Culture

GRACE PIETKIEWICZ
COLLEGE OF SCIENCES

From a young age, Chung Kim says she learned how to adapt to life in different areas of the world and make friends with people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Now, at Georgia Tech, Kim brings that generous compassion for others in sharing advice and support, encouraging conversations and listening, and helping the graduate student community thrive.

As academic program coordinator for the School of Biological Sciences, Kim helps master's and Ph.D. students complete graduate school studies and research — from applications and research to dissertations and graduation day.

"I have such respect for students and grad students," she says. "Some of these students have families, they're taking



Photo courtesy of the College of Sciences

Chung Kim

care of children — so they have a lot on their plate, aside from the enormous amount of research that they're doing. And sometimes they encounter

unexpected problems throughout the course of their journey. So I try to help out as much as I can, trying to find resources for them."

Kim began her tenure at Tech four years ago, after several of her colleagues at Savannah College of Art and Design came to work at the Institute. "Every one of them was so happy with what they were doing, and just the whole vibe at Georgia Tech. I just could not resist."

Turns out those colleagues were on to something. "I would say it is definitely the people, you know — and people meaning the staff, the faculty, the students," she says. "Every encounter at Georgia Tech has been very positive."

"And what I really love is that, in everything we do, no matter what our role here at Georgia Tech, I always get

see **KIM**, page 3

GO FOR A SLIDE



Photos by Christopher Moore

With fewer students on campus in the summer months and some employees returning to their offices more regularly, it's a great time to enjoy campus amenities (before the onset of peak summer temperatures). The recently completed EcoCommons features sculptures, slides, and hammocks for relaxing. Stop by and visit at the corner of Ferst Drive and Hemphill Avenue.



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**Georgia
Tech**

Better Homes and Autos

Chris Rettkowski, director of Facility Services for the Georgia Tech Alumni Association, keeps the 110-year-old Alumni House and the Association's Wreck in top shape.

KARI LLOYD
GEORGIA TECH
ALUMNI MAGAZINE

When it comes to team players, Georgia Tech Alumni Association's Chris Rettkowski is one of the best.

As director of Facility Services, he was recently recognized by his fellow Alumni Association staff with the Golden Teammate Award for embodying the organizational value of excellence. He started at Georgia Tech running McCamish Pavilion before joining the Alumni Association six years ago.

When he's not focused on helping the organization's workspaces and facilities run smoothly, Rettkowski can be found driving the Association's own Wreck to events and around campus.

What was it like when you first started at the Alumni Association?

I talked to a few people about it, as I didn't necessarily know anyone here at the Alumni

Association, but I heard it was a great place. I also heard that the one caveat of the job was that the building was in disrepair. Being a building that's 110 years old this year, it had been really neglected and needed a lot of help. I liked the idea of a challenge. I had some folks say, "Hey — if you take the job, we'll partner with you to make sure you have what you need to get it back into shape."

What's it like being in charge of the Association's Wreck?

The way I like to put it is that out of the 100% of my job, somewhere around 60% is the facility management, there's about 35% that's event management, and then about 5% is fleet management. We have a pickup, a golf cart, a van, and then this 1931 Ford Model A. It's a strange part of the job. Really, any of our employees can drive it. In fact, every once in a while, I do the open invitation to teach people how to drive it.

President Cabrera has even learned to drive our Wreck.



Photo by Scott Dinerman

Chris Rettkowski pictured in front of the L.W. "Chip" Robert, Jr. Alumni House on North Avenue.

Because of tradition, only the Reck Club driver can drive the official Ramblin' Wreck. However, someone had mentioned to the president that he should ask the Alumni Association about driving our Wreck. We've actually got video of us driving around and me teaching him how to drive it. Subsequently, he drove it and took people around campus before football games.

What makes the car so hard to drive?

It's closer to driving a tractor than a car. You

have to be familiar with the concept of double-clutching. It's pretty challenging. There are other things—for example, to start it, the starter is on the floor and you press it with your foot.

I was over at McCamish Pavilion for the start of the Homecoming Wreck Parade, and a guy and his teenage son were taking a look at it and asked if he could take it for a spin.

I handed him the keys and said, "If you can figure out how to start it, you can drive it."

KIM, from page 1

the feeling that students come first. And that's something that has really impressed me and inspires me."

Spirit of Georgia Tech

Kim is an active player in building that thriving community and culture. This spring, she was selected for the Spirit of Georgia Tech award, an annual

honor for Georgia Tech staff members who "support and uphold the mission and vision of the Institute — and possess character and professionalism that make working at Georgia Tech better."

"I was so shocked and it was a really happy surprise," remembers Kim about hearing the good news. "It was very emotional reading everything that the professors and our students had shared.

And it definitely was very motivating. It really made me appreciate what I do and makes me want to strive to be even better."

Speaking up for representation and racial justice

Kim also serves as an inaugural member of the newly formed College of

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KIM, from page 3

Sciences Staff Advisory Council, which acts as a liaison between College staff and leadership and administration, cultivating the opportunity for significant contribution of staff expertise, input, and ideas.

Earlier this year, Kim accepted an invitation to share her own experiences at a Council event. She talked about growing up in Korea and the U.S., dismantling racial prejudice toward people of Asian descent, and ways to support the Asian American and Pacific Islander community in the wake of the March 16 Atlanta-area mass shootings that targeted Asian women.

“There were so many things that I wanted to share, but also didn’t really know how to share,” says Kim. “These things aren’t really discussed often, or not often enough, in a professional setting. It’s something that I talk about a lot with friends and family — but I don’t think there was an opportunity for me to discuss these things at work. So I really welcomed this.”

During the discussion, Kim shared how she felt after an unexpected experience with a classmate and friend in childhood — a moment that struck her as mean-spirited then, which she now realizes was a first brush with casual racial prejudice. Kim also provided a unique perspective on life in the “diplomatic bubble, where diversity was celebrated and respected” — growing up, her father worked for the Korean government, so her family moved frequently. She spent her high school years in Virginia before returning to South Korea for college at Ewha Womans University.

“With my parents, we really didn’t talk about race a lot because we moved around so much,” Kim explains. Her parents generally focused on her adjustment to a new school and environment. “But for our kids who are growing up — my older daughter was born in Korea, but our younger son was born here — for them to be growing up as citizens, they’re going to have a whole different experience. And I want to make sure that they are educated, and

that their eyes are open. I don’t want to taint their innocence. But at the same time, I want them to be aware that these things are happening. And I also want them to know how to deal with these situations and not be complacent, whether it be directed towards them, or towards others. I want them to have their own voice and stand up.”

Growing up in a mostly white neighborhood in McLean, Virginia, Kim also remembers acclimating with suburban American middle and high school communities. “If they had a spirit week, if it was ’80s week or something like that, I tried to do my hair the same way the other girls were doing, and in the way they told me would work. But it did not work because I have different hair,” she laughs.

“I also want them to know how to deal with these situations and not be complacent, whether it be directed towards them, or towards others. I want them to have their own voice and stand up.”

— Chung Kim

Kim adds that in high school, she realized she had two distinct sets of friends: “I had a Korean group of friends. And then I had my non-Korean group of friends.” At times, she says she felt like she had to be “more Korean” around those Korean friends — careful with her accent and pronunciation, so that she wouldn’t sound American. “And I just thought that was very odd and confusing. But as a teenager, you don’t want to stand out in any group, you want to fit in — so that’s just how it was. Speaking with people who had a similar childhood, we always talk about how we don’t feel like we fit into any particular group.”

Celebrating Asian American and Pacific Islander heritage and culture

“As I grow older, the line has blurred now, and I’m more comfortable just being myself. There are certain things that, when I do go back to Korea, I know it’s more culturally expected that I behave certain ways. But as I grew older I was able to find people who were more willing to accept me for just myself.”

She encourages her children to do the same — to love the American and Korean parts of themselves. In her household, Kim teaches them about their Korean culture through cooking traditional cuisine, celebrating Korean holidays, and encouraging conversation about elements of Korean culture.

At the same time, Kim focuses on having honest conversations about the realities of being a person of Asian descent in America.

In response to the March 2021 shootings in Atlanta, Kim sat down with her daughter to discuss what happened and talk about how she was feeling.

“I asked her how she felt, and she said that she was scared, which was very heartbreaking. You don’t ever want to feel like your child feels like they could be targeted because of their race.”

During that time of reflection, Kim adds that she acquired a deeper understanding of the pain of racism felt by the Black community in the U.S. for decades.

“While friends and colleagues were reaching out to me, it also dawned on me that this was something that was, very sadly, too familiar to my Black friends and colleagues, and the Black community,” she says. “They have been having this conversation for generations. It was a very sad realization of how racism is still very alive and real.”

As Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month comes to a close, Kim encourages others to continue to practice kindness and inclusiveness.

“Take a moment to try to learn, or maybe have more openness in your heart, and try to be more inclusive. You know — we’re all in this together. Try to envision the world that you want your kids to be in, and those small acts of kindness that you can do.”