



THE WHISTLE

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Updates Made to Form for Flexwork

SKYE DUCKETT
HUMAN RESOURCES

Through the Working @Tech initiative, the Institute is committed to cultivating employees' well-being and providing opportunities for flexible work arrangements that support the Institute's mission and value of serving students.

In collaboration with the Office of Information Technology (OIT), Georgia Tech Human Resources (GTHR) is creating an updated flexible work arrangements form

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SUMMER IN THE CITY



Photo by Allison Carter

Undergraduate students Ella Newell and Brian Roberts walk on campus this month. A break in high temperatures has offered a reprieve as the summer semester comes to a close.

From Soul Singing to Psychology

RENAY SAN MIGUEL
COLLEGE OF SCIENCES

Tikica Platt has been singing since she was 3 years old, which is what happens when your mother sings and your father is a drummer for Clarence Carter, Otis Redding, Percy Sledge, and

other legendary soul and R&B acts of the 1960s and 1970s.

Those parental influences sparked a lifelong dream to be a professional singer. But starting in her 20s, auditions for top Atlanta-based producers, plus many demo tapes, and several opportunities to show off her

vocal talents at local events — including the 1994 Super Bowl at the Georgia Dome, where she was part of Natalie Cole's backup choir — didn't result in the stardom she sought.

"I'm in my 40s, and I've

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been trying to do this, and dropping it, and picking it back up, and I'm thinking, it's gone, it's dead," she said.

Her hopes for breaking out of the ultra-competitive Atlanta music scene are alive again, thanks to a Friday night in January 2021. Shortly after Platt landed a new job as an administrative manager in the School of Psychology, where she leads a team that oversees human resources and operations, she recorded a video of herself singing half of a cover song and posted it on her Facebook page.

"Everybody loved it," she recalls — including the two producers who called her asking if she wanted to record an album.

In April, she put the finishing touches on "IAMTIKICA," a five-song EP that she'll soon drop and shop to record companies. The album's feature single, "Lost in Your Vibe," can be heard on Apple Music, Spotify, and HearNow.

"All my life, I feel like I've been searching for the perfect place to put my gift, how to carry it," Platt said. "So I started this out of a need to just sing. I had gotten out of the church choir that I was in, and I literally felt like I had no place to sing, and I said, 'I'm doing it tonight.' You can see on the video, my hair is up in a bun. And I'm just going for it. Because what do I have to lose?"

Blazing a Path in Music

Whenever Platt searched the groups that her father, Alford J. Cooper, played drums for, she couldn't find his name on their albums. "He said in those times, groups had backup musicians they went on the road with, but weren't in the studio."

While her mother, Cheylon L. Bradford, gave her the chance to show off her vocal talents early in church choirs, she credits her father with passing along a desire to perform in front of audiences.

Platt says she was determined at a young age to make her own mark in the entertainment world. Yet as she was trying to get noticed for her vocal talents, Platt was also starting a family (she has two children) and working on a business career. She received her bachelor's in business administration from Clark Atlanta University and an MBA from Piedmont College. She then spent 22 years as a financial administrator for the University of Georgia before landing her present job at Georgia Tech.

"Even though I'm a creative, I'm extremely organized, and I'm a planner," Platt said. Along with operations and IT, she and her team handle all human resources needs for staff and faculty in the School of Psychology. "I used to handle finance and human resources for the department at UGA. But here, you have



Image courtesy of Tikica Platt

"Lost in Your Vibe" by IAMTIKICA.

your admin or HR manager, and you have your financial manager. Together we handle everything outside of academics."

Platt has spent 23 years in the University System of Georgia, and she would love to be able to continue working at Georgia Tech while pursuing her dreams of being a professional singer. "Singing has always been the ultimate dream. But I also love that I've found what I'm good at in the world, all this time that this dream has not fully come to fruition."

She credits her supervisor in the School of Psychology with supporting her efforts to become a singer. "I have crazy support, all of that. I absolutely love Georgia Tech."

"It's wonderful that all the

members of our community actively explore options to reach their full potential and fulfill their dreams," says Tansu Celikel, professor and chair of the School of Psychology.

Platt says she sang more in 2021 than in the last 10 years. She's been interviewed on Athens radio and recently sang the national anthem at a sporting event. "If I could sing the national anthem at a Tech game, that would be great," she said.

It's all part of her longtime plan: to not let rejection get the best of her, and to create her own opportunities. It's advice that she believes could also help Georgia Tech students. "As long as you have the gift, do the work and fit it in wherever you can," Platt said.

FACULTY AND STAFF ACHIEVEMENTS

Professor **Rafael Bras** is one of 12 distinguished scientists and engineers selected by President Joe Biden to serve on the President's Committee on the National Medal of Science, the nation's highest scientific honor. Nominees are evaluated by the President's Committee on the National Medal of Science, a board composed of 16 presidential appointees.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine has appointed **Marilyn Brown**, Regents Professor and Brook Byers Professor of Sustainable Systems in the School of Public Policy, to an ad hoc committee to study net metering's role in combating climate change. The group will carry out its research over approximately 20 months.

The American Astronautical Society (AAS) has announced that Associate Professor **John Christian** has been elected a 2021 AAS Fellow. Fellows are recognized for their significant scientific, engineering, academic, and/or management contributions to astronautics and space.

Laura Christian, lecturer in the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering, will spend the next year as a Governor's Teaching Fellow, where she will work with other faculty members across Georgia to learn the latest approaches to teaching. Created by Gov. Zell Miller and offered by the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia, the program selects a small number of instructors from Georgia's public and private colleges each year to participate in a series of symposia and further develop their skills.

To push forward on what's next in the field of ultra-wideband radio, School of Computer Science Assistant Professor **Ashutosh Dhekne** recently received a National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER award for his proposal, "Closing the Gaps in UWB Localization and Sensing: Algorithms, Architectures, and Prototypes."

Assistant Professor **Eva Dyer** has been selected for a program that previous

participants have called transformative for the community, mentorship, and foundational research opportunities it provides. Dyer is among the newest CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholars, a two-year program that aims to accelerate the careers of young researchers with \$100,000 of unrestricted research support, mentoring, and a worldwide network. Only 18 researchers around the world are part of the new cohort.

Jerry Grillo, communications officer in the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering, has won a Georgia Author of the Year award for the work from Georgia Writers, a nonprofit community of writers across the state. His book was the finalist among biographies — one of two award winners in the category.

Lorie Johns Páulez, director of Education Abroad in the Office of International Education, has been elected a member of the Global Engineering Education Exchange (Global E3) Executive Committee. Johns Páulez will serve a three-year term on the committee, a group of faculty and staff elected by consortium members that leads the consortium.

With his eighth and ninth papers published in this year's IEEE International Symposium on High-Performance Computer Architecture (HPCA), **Tushar Krishna**, associate professor in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, has been inducted into the organization's Hall of Fame. Only 10 members of the HPCA community were inducted to the Hall of Fame this year — a significant distinction reserved for researchers with eight or more papers appearing in the proceedings of the symposium.

The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine recently appointed **Margaret E. Kosal**, associate professor in the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, to two committees mandated by Congress to help better prepare the U.S. against nuclear, biological, and chemical threats. Kosal will serve as vice chair of the committee on Assessing

and Improving Strategies for Preventing, Countering, and Responding to Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism: Chemical Threats.

At the direction of Congress, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine is establishing a Climate Security Roundtable convening experts from academia, the private sector, and civil society to provide support to the Climate Security Advisory Council. **Susan Lozier**, dean and Betsy Middleton and John Clark Sutherland Chair in the College of Sciences, will serve a three-year term on the roundtable.

Keith McGregor, Georgia Tech professor of the practice in the School of Interactive Computing and director of VentureLab, has been named a Fulbright Specialist, one of only nine from Georgia Tech since the program began in 2001. The Specialist program, part of the larger Fulbright exchange offering that includes Fulbright Scholars, pairs U.S. academics and professionals with institutions abroad to share expertise, strengthen relationships, hone skills, gain international experience, and learn about other cultures.

Maryam Saeedifard, associate professor in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, has been selected as a recipient for the Eighth Nagamori Foundation Awards. The prestigious award works to vitalize the research and development of motor, power generator, actuator, and other related technologies, and support research and development engineers.

Professor **Marilyn J. Smith** has been selected to receive the 2022 American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Aerodynamics Award. Established in 1983, the award is presented to an individual with meritorious achievement in the field of applied aerodynamics, recognizing notable contributions in the development, application, and evaluation of aerodynamic concepts and methods.



Dates Set for Major Fall Events

With the fall semester just over a month away, now is the time to mark your calendar for upcoming events.

For questions about any of the events below, email events@comm.gatech.edu.

New Student Convocation

Sunday, Aug. 21

9 – 9:45 a.m.

Bobby Dodd Stadium

Graduate Student Welcome

Friday, Aug. 26

4 – 6 p.m.

Brock Football Practice Facility
Formerly Graduate Student Convocation, we will have a 15-minute program at the start of the Grad Student Fall Picnic.

Institute Address

Thursday, Sept. 1

11 a.m. – noon

Rooms 144 and 152, Clough Commons

Fall Commencement

Friday, Dec. 16,

and Saturday, Dec. 17

Bobby Dodd Stadium

Ceremony times will be announced in early September.



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that will launch in August 2022.

What's Happening

Founded on our pursuit to lead by example, champion innovation, and maximize efficiency through the AdminX initiative, the new digital form referred to as the Working @ Tech Arrangement will replace the current DocuSign version and enable the Institute to provide enhanced reporting and analytics.

The new form will also improve the end user experience, allowing for pre-populated information and a streamlined approval process. Please know that this is only a form update, and no changes are being made to the existing flexible work arrangement policy (available at policylibrary.gatech.edu/employment/flexwork-arrangements).

Next Steps

Our central GTHR employees, HR directors, and Working @Tech committee members will pilot the new form in mid-July and provide end-user feedback to our development team. Simultaneously, the team will also implement a comprehensive communications plan, which

involves targeted messaging to all full-time employees, campuswide demonstrations, and dedicated unit-level support where needed.

Prior to the launch of the new form, we will provide several town halls and information sessions to ensure understanding of the process. If you have any questions during this time, please contact your department or school HR business partner.

Managing Existing Arrangements

It is our intent that all employees have an opportunity to engage with the new Working @Tech Arrangement form. Therefore, to ensure our campus community experiences a seamless transition to the new process, we ask you to work with your unit-level HR contact in the month of July to allow for extensions to your employees' current flexible working arrangements form if they are set to expire during the summer.

If you or your employee feels you need to make changes to an existing flexwork arrangement within the month of July, you can make updates to the existing form at hr.gatech.edu/forms; however, please know your employee will be asked to submit a new Working @Tech Arrangement form in early August.