



THE WHISTLE

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Open Enrollment Is Underway

Open Enrollment for 2023 is underway now through Nov. 4. This is an active enrollment year, meaning you are required to take action if you want healthcare coverage for 2023. Visit hr.gatech.edu/open-enrollment to learn more.



The University System of Georgia is hosting a virtual systemwide benefits fair. The virtual fair is ongoing throughout Open Enrollment. Learn more at usg.vfairs.com.

Employees can also enroll in the Shared Sick Leave Program during Open Enrollment. Learn more at hr.gatech.edu/shared-sick-leave.

Benefit selections for 2023 can be made through OneUSG at oneusgconnect.usg.edu.

6 Tips for Work-Life Balance as an Adult Learner

Words of wisdom from working professionals in Tech's online master's degree programs.

GORDANA GOUDIE
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

"With a full-time career, three kids, and working on a master's degree, my time is spread thin. I want to ensure that each gets the proper amount of my time and attention," said master's candidate S. Chase Mecham.

If this sounds like you, you're not alone. Pursuing a graduate degree while working and making time for family is no easy feat. Mecham is one of the working professionals who shared tips for juggling family responsibilities while keeping up with the demands of pursuing a Georgia Tech online master's degree.

Mecham and others offer a few tips for those who are trying to balance these competing priorities.

1. Set Realistic Goals

Set goals you can meet. Most of the learners who shared their views suggest taking one course at a time, despite the temptation to take on more. As Joseph Kyle Richardson put it, "Be careful that your excitement about the program doesn't overwhelm your judgment of what you can truly handle."

Chrissie Flicker pointed out the importance of keeping your family needs

ASC NOW OPEN



Photo by Rob Felt

The Administrative Services Center (ASC) is now open, and ASC personnel have begun serving the campus community. The center, located at 500 Tech Parkway, will serve as the "front door" for all human resources inquiries. Read more on page 3.

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Working Groups to Explore Lifetime Learning Unit

SUSIE IVY
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

Georgia Tech has announced its intention to launch a new academic unit dedicated to lifetime learning. The new unit will bring together three entities whose work underpins its mission and vision: Professional Education; the Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics, and Computing; and the Center for 21st Century Universities.

This launch means opportunities for new and expanded research, curricula, students, and professional support for educators at every stage “from K to gray.”

The idea of a lifetime learning unit has been in development for some time. Georgia Tech’s Commission on Creating the Next in Education, and its subsequent report, led to the formation of a related Institute Strategic Plan working group.

Establishing a new academic unit is a long process, and Tech is at the very beginning. Dean Nelson Baker and Dean Charles Isbell are leading the effort, which currently has three working groups:

- Academic vision, research, faculty governance, and strategic planning
- Business model and operations
- Change management and communications

The Institute has engaged an external consultant to survey the existing state of the lifetime learning market and to provide guidance on possible benchmarks against peers and competitors inside and outside of higher education, market opportunities, and best practices of lifetime education ventures.

In the coming weeks, the working groups will ask members of the Georgia Tech community to contribute their knowledge and creative energy to the process. A series of listening sessions will be offered to provide input starting later this month. The working groups will integrate insights from the community, the consultants, and from earlier working groups into a detailed proposal for the Board of Regents and the University System of Georgia. That proposal will be submitted in early spring next year.

Time Off to Vote

Elections will take place in Georgia on Tuesday, Nov. 8. Per section 8.2.7.7 of the USG’s general personnel policies, employees are encouraged to exercise their constitutional right to vote in all federal, state, and local elections. If polls are not open at least two hours before or two hours after an employee’s normally scheduled work shift, sufficient leave time must be granted to permit the employee to vote. Employees should be granted a two-hour block of time in which to vote, if needed.



Learn more at gov.gatech.edu/vote.



Georgia Tech Community Cycling Class

Get comfortable traveling by bike with an instructional group ride Thursday, Oct. 27, at 4 p.m. on campus. This free, in-person class is offered by Parking and Transportation Services in collaboration with Propel ATL and is designed specifically for members of the Georgia Tech community – that includes students, staff, and faculty!

The class will meet behind the Campus Recreation Center on Tech Parkway. Here, we will perform a few quick drills then hit the city or campus streets for a 45-minute ride of three to four gentle miles. Once rolling, we’ll take it slow, stay together, and practice our skills in a safe and supportive manner.

Learn more and sign up at c.gatech.edu/cycling-oct27.

Administrative Services Center Launches

RACHAEL POCKLINGTON
INSTITUTE COMMUNICATIONS

The ASC is an outcome of Administrative Excellence (AdminX) — a strategic initiative that is delivering on operational excellence and providing an exceptional quality of service and customer satisfaction.

The initiative is designed to help employees focus on the core aspects of their roles by streamlining administrative tasks.

Ira Bragg, executive director of the ASC, is responsible for all aspects of designing, implementing, and overseeing the ASC.

“The growth and changes Tech has

experienced over the past several years have created the need for a customer service-focused organization like the ASC,” Bragg said. “I’m eager to create a culture dedicated to making the many processes around campus simpler and more efficient.”

The first wave of the ASC is focused on navigating human resources activities and providing improvements to the hiring process. This is a multiyear initiative, and the scope will include transactional activities in information technology, finance, and support to research administration.

New Processes

The ASC is now the one-stop shop

for onboarding activities, including BuzzCard and I-9. With the new HR service delivery model, the ASC consolidates approvals at the local unit level and, as of Wednesday, Oct. 19, will remove many of the central office approvals.

Units will continue to follow the current process for traditional hires (i.e., candidates who need to be selected through an interview process), using OneUSG Connect Careers and submitting any requisite Manager Self-Service transactions. ASC will work closely with the hiring manager throughout the hiring process and create the job offer transaction in Careers on behalf of the unit. *Read more at c.gatech.edu/asc.*

6 Programs Join Equity in Graduate Education Consortium

BRITTANI HILL
GRADUATE EDUCATION

Georgia Tech is now an institutional partner in the Equity in Graduate Education Consortium. Partners of this consortium work with other academic leaders and graduate programs to build a more equitable and inclusive graduate experience for students from marginalized backgrounds.

Led by faculty directors at the University of Southern California and Rochester Institute of Technology, the consortium consists of a network of faculty and administrators from more than 60 institutions across the U.S.

“We are happy to partner with many of our peer institutions by helping our faculty and staff to learn strategies for improving the climate in research groups with the goal of being more inclusive and equitable,” said Bonnie Ferri, vice provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Education. “This is an important step in our work toward our strategic plan.”

The consortium offers training opportunities geared toward equity-minded admissions, recruitment, and



Photo by Rob Felt

Students study in the new Price Gilbert Library, which includes a graduate student lounge.

mentoring practices; coaching and learning opportunities for graduate programs to bring about institutional change; and infrastructure for faculty development in graduate schools and other organizations.

As a partner of the consortium, six of Georgia Tech’s graduate programs will be participating in activities related to graduate student mentoring and well-being over the next two years. Those programs are chemistry,

chemical and biomolecular engineering, economics, interactive computing, materials science and engineering, and physics.

Activities sponsored by the Equity in Graduate Education Consortium include a three-part workshop series this fall.

For more information, contact Bonnie Ferri at bonnie.ferri@gatech.edu or Steve Ruffin at stephen.ruffin@pe.gatech.edu.

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in mind when selecting your courses. “Plan to finish the degree slowly. It’s better for your stress levels and for your family. Keep your goals realistic.”

2. Communicate Ahead

Accept that adding an education program to an already busy life will be challenging. You’ll need a strong support system at home to make it work. That’s why it’s essential to communicate with family to set expectations, clarify how much time you’ll need, and get family members’ buy-in before you start your program. “The commitment issue needs to be dealt with up front,” said Colleen Fellows. “If you don’t decide on how to handle responsibilities beforehand, it’s only more stressful to figure out in the moment.”

3. Manage Your Time Wisely

As Drew Mooney noted, “The biggest challenge has been time. Cutting back on time with a spouse and kids is hard.” Experiment with routines until you find one that works for you. A.J. Angus, for example, has set times during the week and weekends for different tasks such as reviewing lectures and working on assignments.

For some, working in the mornings before work or while children are asleep does the trick. “The time of the day I have most control over is mornings,” said Thomas Cobb. “I started getting up at 4 a.m. and doing classwork until 6 a.m., when I had to leave for work.”

For others, like Laura Beebe, evenings turned out to be a better option. “With the heavy degree requirements, I couldn’t rely on being able to complete them in a set number of hours in the morning. I had to adjust and do degree work in the evening so that I could work as long as I needed.”

If your job involves travel, you may find time for schoolwork while in transit. As Richard Powers suggested, “Work on the plane. Work in the hotel.” Javier Rodriguez, who as a consultant sometimes spends two weeks at a time on the road visiting



Tuition Assistance Applications Due Nov. 15 for Spring 2023

Georgia Tech employees can pursue continued education with the Tuition Assistance Program and the Staff Tuition Reimbursement Assistance Program. Learn more about your options at hr.gatech.edu/education-assistance-faq.

clients, adds, “Avoid the cocktails and go directly to your room to keep studying.”

Peter Sahlstrom shared that being deliberate with his time has been helpful. “It turns out that being able to get 30 to 60 minutes of work in every evening works better than an uninterrupted four-hour chunk when I’m distracted.”

For Mooney, being deliberate with time doesn’t apply only to schoolwork. “We’ve been extra intentional when we’re having family time. We put our phones away and focus on being present for ourselves and the kids. You get less time, so don’t waste it.”

Set priorities and accept that you may need to sacrifice some activities that don’t advance your current goals.

Most learners agreed that planning ahead is essential. It enables you to keep pace with your work and meet deadlines. Planning your time also allows you to avoid distractions and focus on your priorities in the time you have available. And, as Cobb found, it can help to free up time for family activities. “Working ahead provides much needed flexibility, especially toward the end of semesters when my kids’ activities are ramping up.”

4. Set an Example

Several learners in Tech master’s programs discussed the value of sharing their learning experience with their families. “It helps knowing that doing

this advanced degree to push my mind is a way to lead by example for my children,” Flicker said.

For Mecham, talking about his experience emphasizes the value of education while also keeping lines of communication open. “I want to set a good example for them and encourage their education, so I talk to them often about what I’m working on and why,” he said. “I am using this opportunity to teach by example that education is important and, at the same time, use it as a way to better communicate with my family.”

5. Appreciate Your Spouse or Partner

Without the support of an understanding spouse or partner, managing work, family, and a demanding graduate degree would be extremely difficult for most adult learners. But keep in mind that spouses and partners need a break too. As Frank Falat discovered, it can be well worth it to seek babysitting help, both to make time for schoolwork and reduce the toll on a partner.

For Sahlstrom, who completed two previous degrees at Georgia Tech with his spouse, this is the first time he’s “been a student without her” and he’s careful not to take advantage of her support. “It’s been crucial that I don’t take for granted that she’ll pick things up where I let them drop.”

6. Keep Your Eye on the Prize

When you’re overwhelmed with schoolwork, it’s important to stay focused on the big picture. The time you spend on your degree may seem endless but, in reality, it’s a short journey. Mecham advocates keeping your eye on the prize. “Yes, it’s going to be grueling at times. Prepare your family for this. Then share with them what you’re doing and how it will benefit you all as a family,” he said. “My children wear their Georgia Tech swag with pride and feel like they’re an equal part of this journey. It is something we can all be proud and excited about. Someday, maybe they’ll be students here as well.”