University officials crack down on fraud

Campus crime doesn’t pay

Campus-wide blood drive expected to be Georgia State’s most successful

By Leah Harris
leh@gsu.edu

In a quiet office in Sparks Hall, a team of auditors spent more than 1,000 hours last year investigating potential lawbreakers at Georgia State University.

From the misuse of calling cards to falsified payroll records, multiple cases of fraud in the last five years have forced university officials to take rigorous steps toward educating employees about the consequences of fraud and how to prevent it.

"Everywhere you go you get people trying to stay under the radar and do illegal activities without being caught and without reprisal," said Corporate James Porter, Georgia State University Police Department. "We are always looking out for any type of activity that is causing harm to the university community, whether physical or financial."

Susan Mondello, associate director of University Auditing and Advisory Services, said fraud costs organizations in the United States more than $600 billion annually, or about $4,500 per worker, according to the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners.

Recent potential fraud cases investigated at Georgia State involved employees receiving proceeds from product rebates and an unrelated case when $4,823 of fraudulent charges were made to a university-issued calling card.

Auditing officials also remarked on classic fraud cases in which former employees from three Georgia State departments stole thousands of dollars by falsifying payroll records and creating fictitious vendors. Those cases resulted in penalties ranging from termination, fines of up to $5,000 or jail time of up to 10 years.

"We want the university community to know that we take this seriously," said Sterling Routh, director of University Auditing and Advisory Services. "Since we use public money, it wouldn’t matter if we lost just $100. That is a violation of the public trust and that’s why we have to place a great deal of emphasis on fraud."

In March, President Carroll F. Trotter issued a memorandum to all university deans and vice presidents placing responsibility on them for implementing and maintaining internal controls, in order to prevent putting the university at legal or financial risk. For example, one internal control ensures that all expenditures are approved by someone other than the person initiating the transaction, while another ensures expenditures are reviewed after they post to financial records.

Mondello also has delivered several presentations to numerous audiences in recent years, the most recent titled "Fraud and Abuse in Higher Education." The presentation addresses issues such as management accountability, identity theft, illegal downloading and product rebates.

"Fraud often occurs when one person has too much control, perceived financial pressures, the opportunity to commit crimes and the ability to rationalize his or her actions," she said.

"In my career as an auditor, I spend more time on fraud investigations than I ever did before," Mondello said. "Sometimes it seems this type of crime is even admitted. We have to be vigilant about fraud cases, and it’s important to raise consciousness about these things so that the university community knows that we take this very seriously."

Jennifer Santiago, a coordinator of the Georgia State University Blood Drive Challenge, said that last year, the University of Delaware won the challenge with 857 attempted donors and 588 units of blood collected. The University of Delaware has won the competition the last three years.

"In terms of the Colonial, we want to make an impact in the first year," especially with the Katrina tragedy," Santiago said. "The Red Cross is rerouting staff here to help us, so we have an obligation to meet our goal."

To encourage donations, organizers will give away tickets to a home basketball game — with the exception of the Kentucky game — to those who donate or attempt to donate. All participants will be entered into a raffle to win tickets for the Kentucky game, in addition to other prizes.

Georgia State also is giving away T-shirts to the first 100 participants who sign up online and schedule a time to donate blood. Though the organizers will accept walk-ins, those with an appointment will be served first.

Organizers expect the incentives to make this blood drive the most successful one at Georgia State. Previous drives averaged 68 pints a day.

"We hope people understand that there is a need, not just now, but also through-out the year," Santiago said.

Preliminary response to the drive has been strong. "All the student organiza-tions have been great. We also have a lot of people who just want to volunteer on the day of the drive," Santiago said.

To schedule a time online, visit www.givelife.org, and enter georgiasu as the sponsor code.

Campus blood drive expected to be Georgia State’s most successful

By Joe Schulman
joe.schulman@gsu.edu

You don’t have to be an athlete to compete in the Colonial Athletic Association, thanks to its upcoming Have A Heart Blood Drive Challenge. The competition pits the 12 CAA universities against each other to see which one collects the most pints of blood. Georgia State will participate in the drive for the first time since it joined the CAA in July.

From 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sept. 30, the university will host the CAA Blood Drive Challenge with help from the Red Cross. Faculty, staff and students can donate at the Sports Arena on the fourth floor.

The fiercest competition, however, may not be among CAA universities but rather among Georgia State departments. Blood drive organizers will award a presidents cup to the department with the highest percentage of participating employees. To level the playing field, departments will be divided into four categories: 10 employees or fewer, 11-20 employees, 21-30 employees and more than 30 employees.

Georgia State has set a goal of donating 600 pints and 800 attempts for the challenge, said Cross in rerouting staff here to help us, so we have an obligation to meet our goal."

To encourage donations, organizers will give away tickets to a home basketball game — with the exception of the Kentucky game — to those who donate or attempt to donate. All participants will be entered into a raffle to win tickets for the Kentucky game, in addition to other prizes. Santiago said.

Georgia State also is giving away T-shirts to the first 100 participants who sign up online and schedule a time to donate blood. Though the organizers will accept walk-ins, those with an appointment will be served first.

Organizers expect the incentives to make this blood drive the most successful one at Georgia State. Previous drives averaged 68 pints a day.

“We hope people understand that there is a need, not just now, but also through-out the year,” Santiago said.

Preliminary response to the drive has been strong. “All the student organiza-tions have been great. We also have a lot of people who just want to volunteer on the day of the drive,” Santiago said.

To schedule a time online, visit www.givelife.org, and enter georgiasu as the spon-sor code.

What is the Georgia State University Reading Program?

This five-year, $2.8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education will evaluate the ef-fectiveness of reading interventions for students with mild intellectual disabilities. The program will focus on students with an IQ below 70 in grades 1 through 5 and will teach 240 kids over the five-year period. It will be taught in groups of four by cognitive development specialists hired by Georgia State who have special educa-tion teaching experience.

What is the program’s goal?

We’re hoping this program will give the children an academic boost that will allow them to take advantage of all the educational opportunities available to them — to be more mainstream and even aspire to higher-level courses. Eventually, after school, we hope a better education will help them land higher-paying jobs and provide them with more stability and security in life.

How is it different from traditional reading education?

No one has tried to teach the comprehensive skills required for reading. They tried one set of rules and the children either made it or not. If they didn’t, they were set aside and often times labeled as “can’t learn.” But we know they can learn. The interventions will teach sound-symbol relationships and build vocabulary and comprehension to maximize students’ reading achievement.

How do local educators feel about the program?

We’ve had a tremendous response from local schools, and the number of schools involved should grow. We’re currently working with schools in Gwinnett and Fulton counties. We started with 13 kids at Grayson Elementary. We’ll start soon at Brookwood, Mimsom, Con- nally and Liberty Park elementary schools.

Sound BITE

“Too much had to go through Washington in the response to Katrina. It slowed response time way down.”

— William L. Waugh Jr., professor of public administration and urban studies, as quoted by the Gauntlet News Service on the federal government’s response to Hurricane Katrina

By Joe Schulman
joe.schulman@gsu.edu

You don’t have to be an athlete to compete in the Colonial Athletic Association, thanks to its upcoming Have A Heart Blood Drive Challenge. The competition pits the 12 CAA universities against each other to see which one collects the most pints of blood. Georgia State will participate in the drive for the first time since it joined the CAA in July.

From 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sept. 30, the university will host the CAA Blood Drive Challenge with help from the Red Cross. Faculty, staff and students can donate at the Sports Arena on the fourth floor.

The fiercest competition, however, may not be among CAA universities but rather among Georgia State depart-ments. Blood drive organizers will award a presidents cup to the department with the highest percentage of participating employees. To level the playing field, departments will be divided into four categories: 10 employees or fewer, 11-20 employees, 21-30 employees and more than 30 employees.

Georgia State has set a goal of donating 600 pints and 800 attempts for the challenge, said Cross in rerouting staff here to help us, so we have an obligation to meet our goal."

To encourage donations, organizers will give away tickets to a home basketball game — with the exception of the Kentucky game — to those who donate or attempt to donate. All participants will be entered into a raffle to win tickets for the Kentucky game, in addition to other prizes. Santiago said.

Georgia State also is giving away T-shirts to the first 100 participants who sign up online and schedule a time to donate blood. Though the organizers will accept walk-ins, those with an appointment will be served first.

Organizers expect the incentives to make this blood drive the most successful one at Georgia State. Previous drives averaged 68 pints a day.

“We hope people understand that there is a need, not just now, but also through-out the year,” Santiago said.

Preliminary response to the drive has been strong. “All the student organiza-tions have been great. We also have a lot of people who just want to volunteer on the day of the drive,” Santiago said.

To schedule a time online, visit www.givelife.org, and enter georgiasu as the spon-sor code.
Georgia State responds to Katrina

By Wendy Bigham wbigham@gsu.edu

Since Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast last month, Georgia State University has accepted more than 500 students from schools damaged by the storm. Several university departments — including human resources, College of Arts and Sciences and the office of community service — also are doing their part to help storm survivors.

The following is an overview of departments’ recovery efforts:

• The human resources department organized a career fair this past Friday for friends and family members of Georgia State employees who were directly affected by the hurricane. Human resources staff helped attendees write resumes, file unemployment claims and find regular and temporary employment at Georgia State and in Atlanta. The department also collected food, clothing and other donations for survivors.

• “Everyone in the department wanted to do something,” said Angela Bouque, payroll supervisor in human resources.

Evacuees also can search jobs posted on the university’s job openings Web site at www2.gsu.edu/~wwwhre/employment/process.htm.

• The College of Arts and Sciences is lending office and lab space to faculty and graduate students who were displaced because of the storm.

The center, located in Alumni Hall, provides child care for children of students, faculty and staff. For information about registration, fees and ages of children accepted into the program, call 404/81-2025.

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

School of Social Work to train child welfare workers

Under the direction of associate professor Peter Lyons, the School of Social Work will use a $3.5 million grant from the Georgia legislature to develop and implement a training program for the state’s veteran child welfare workers.

After examining the state’s use of training resources in the Division of Family and Children Services, Lyons found that because of a high staff turnover rate, the state was spending most of its money training new workers while the core group that stays with DFCS often was ignored.

“Those who conduct the bulk of the agency’s work, handle the most difficult cases and fill in the gaps left by worker turnover have typically received the least amount of training,” Lyons said.

The comprehensive in-service training program will be designed specifically for veteran workers, defined by DFCS as those with at least two years of service. Pilot programs will run from October through December, followed by statewide implementation beginning in January.

COLLEGE OF LAW

Speaker series focuses on ethics in biotechnology

Speaker series features prominent Atlanta business leaders

Other speakers scheduled for this fall include Richard Bowers, president of Richard Bowers and Company; Michael Troy, vice president of human resources for Siemens; and Maria Saiporta, business executive with Atlanta’s top companies and other business leaders.

The first program in the series, held Sept. 13 at Georgia State’s Alpharetta Center, featured Michael Soloromo, chief compliance officer for Scientific Atlanta.

Other speakers scheduled for this fall include Richard Bowers, president of Richard Bowers and Company; Michael Troy, vice president of human resources for Siemens; and Maria Saiporta, business executive with Atlanta’s top companies and other business leaders.

The next event dates are Oct. 25 and Nov. 14 at the Georgia State University College of Law, room 170, Urban Life Building. For details, visit www.lawandhealth.org.
State Charitable Campaign efforts support Katrina recovery

Agencies responding to Hurricane Katrina likely will top the list of worthwhile causes for contributions to the 2005 State Charitable Contributions Campaign. The annual drive began early this year to encourage Georgia State University faculty and staff to give timely support to hurricane relief and recovery in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Contributors also can choose to help agencies that are assisting evacuees in local communities throughout Georgia. The campaign committee is distributing gift pledge forms to each division and unit for university employees to complete. The pledge forms allow employees to designate whether they prefer to donate through payroll deductions or by a one-time contribution. The campaign runs through the end of the year.

Render farm will aid graphics teaching and enhance creative capability

Ying Zhu, assistant professor of computer science, is working with Art Vandenberg, director of advanced campus services for Information Systems and Technology, and his team to build a small-scale render farm using the newly deployed United Devices grid-computing technology. The render farm will explore the under-utilized computing power of university computers, many of which are paid for by student tech fees, to increase the speed of rendering time of 3-D graphics projects. Once built, the render farm will be a useful tool for teaching 3-D graphics and creating multimedia content.

Theses and dissertations available electronically through library

The University Library is making theses and dissertations available to users electronically. The library began development of the Electronic Theses and Dissertation Repository in partnership with IS&T a year ago to provide a gateway to intellectual work generated by graduate candidates at Georgia State. Other universities’ studies have demonstrated that providing electronic access to such works increases use. The university’s repository now contains nearly 40 documents. The ETD database is online at http://etd.gsu.edu and allows users to search by author name, advisor name or keyword. For more information or to submit work, contact Tim Daniels at timdaniels@gsu.edu.

Open enrollment for benefits begins Oct. 3

From Oct. 3 through Nov. 4, Georgia State University employees will have a chance to enroll in or make changes to benefits plans for 2006. One new benefit in 2006 will be a sick bank to which employees can donate sick days. If an employee uses all of his sick days, he can apply to take time out of the sick bank. Check the Oct. 4 issue of the Villager for more information.

Office of Student Life and Leadership/Intercultural Relations seeks nominations for annual Torch of Peace Award

1. Who is eligible?

Nominations are open to students, faculty, staff, alumni and student organizations that have demonstrated an outstanding ability to facilitate or promote positive intercultural relations in the Georgia State University community.

2. How do I nominate someone or an organization?

For individuals, submit two letters of recommendation, a resume and a statement highlighting character and accomplishments. Students must have at least a 2.5 cumulative grade-point average.

For student organizations, submit two letters of recommendation, a statement highlighting accomplishments, and an organization portfolio. The organization must be chartered. Supplemental materials supporting the nominee’s accomplishments are encouraged.

3. When are the applications due?

The deadline is Thursday October 27.

4. When will the awards be presented?

The award will be presented at the 23rd annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Convocation on Thursday January 19, 2006 at the Georgia State University Student Center in the Speaker’s Auditorium.

For more information, please contact the Office of Student Life and Leadership/Intercultural Relations at 404/463-9031 (office), 404/463-9038 (fax) or Tonya Cook at tcook3@gsu.edu. For information about the intercultural relations initiative at Georgia State, visit the Web site at www.gsu.edu/~wwwicr.
University CALENDAR

- Wednesday, Sept. 21, and Thursday, Sept. 22
  7:30 p.m. on Sept. 21, Lecture by Tom Butler. 9 a.m. Sept. 22, Printmaking Demonstration by Tom Butler. Internationally known artist Tom Butler is best recognized for his large-scale fiberglass sculptures. The events, sponsored by the Art Students Union, will take place at the Student Center's Speakers Auditorium. Free. 404/219-7513.

- Friday, Sept. 23
  2:30 p.m. Chemistry Seminar: J. Chen. Chen is a faculty member at the University of Delaware. 218 Natural Science Center. Free. 404/651-3120.

- Thursday, Sept. 22
  1 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. Dr. Jerry Fodor. 404/651-INFO.

- Friday, Sept. 30
  8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Have a Heart Colonial Blood Challenge. Room 346, Student Center. Free. The event features work from David Smith Jr., a College of Law staff member, who recently completed a dissertation and book on the history of Georgia State University from 1913-2002. 404/651-2062.

- Tuesday, Sept. 27
  4 p.m. Master Class – John Hollo-way, violin, Kopple Recital Hall. Free for faculty and staff with valid ID card. 404/651-3166.

- Monday, Oct. 3
  7:30 p.m. One People Voice. Featuring Grady Cousins, artistic director/founder; Eric Obershider, music director. This Oakland, California-based professional orchestra and chant ensemble blends the mystical sonority of gamelan with global music and theater, even including Indonesian kecak, also called monkey chant, into the mix. Kopple Recital Hall. Free for faculty and staff with valid ID card. 404/651-INFO or www.music.gsu.edu.

The Villager prints select events from the university’s official community calendar, available online at www.gsu.edu/news/calendar.

To submit an event listing, e-mail vbuman@gwu.edu or call Ext. 1-3573.

Applause

Get Involved! Go INTO THE STREETS!

Kick Off – Thursday, September 29, 2005
12p.m – 1p.m
Library Plaza

Blood Drive – Friday, September 30, 2005
8am – 6pm
4th floor, Sports Arena

Hands on Atlanta Pay
Saturday, October 1 2005
8am-12pm
Atlanta Charter School

To Sign Up, Contact the Office of Community Service at 404/463-9043 or visit us on the web at www.gsu.edu/service

Lunch and Learn Bicycling 101 – FREE
Thursday, September 29
Noon – 1p.m
Student Recreation Center

Applause recognizes notable accomplishments of faculty, staff and administrators in the areas of teaching, research and service. E-mail items to mmiladin@gsu.edu.