Touchdown!

It’s official — football is coming to Georgia State

By William Inman • winman@gsu.edu

Georgia State President Carl Patton announced today (April 17) that the university will begin football.

“President Carl Patton and the Panther cheerleaders look on as Pounce strikes the Heisman pose during the April 17 announcement that Georgia State will begin a football program.

The Panthers, who will play at the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision Level, will kick off their inaugural season in 2010 and will play their home games at the Georgia Dome.

“I know that many former and current students have dreamed of a day when there would be football Saturdays at Georgia State, and while that might have looked like third-and-long for many years, I think today is a great time for an end-zone celebration,” Patton said.

The long process to bring football to the downtown Atlanta campus began early in Patton’s tenure at president.

“When I became president of Georgia State 16 years ago, one of the first questions I received was, ‘When are we getting football?’” he said. “I have to admit that my answer was, ‘not in my lifetime.’ But, I also have so admit that my lifetime here lasted longer than I thought it would.”

Shortly after joining the Colonial Athletic Association in 2005, Georgia State conducted a feasibility study that showed that alumni, students, faculty and staff were in support of football.

In April of ’07, the school hired Dan Reeves as its football consultant. Reeves has helped secure more than $1 million in pledges for a football program.

Last October, the Mandatory Student Fee Committee unanimously approved an increase in the student athletic fee, and shortly after that the Fiscal Advisory Committee to the President also endorsed the proposed increase. Thus, with overwhelming campus support, Patton forwarded the request to the Board of Regents for approval, which officially came April 15.

Now, Athletic Director Mary McElroy will begin putting together the pieces.

“Building a football program from scratch is a tremendous challenge, but it’s also an incredible opportunity because there is no question that Georgia State football has the potential to be very successful at the FCS level,” she said at the announcement.

With the start of our first season about 29 months away, we’re now officially on the clock,” she said. “Our plan is to hire a head football coach and a director of football operations this summer. The head coach will then hire up to four assistant coaches to begin recruiting this fall.

Women’s lacrosse, which will help Georgia State meet its Title IX gender-equity eligibility, will likely begin in the fall of 2010, McElroy says.

Employees and students honored with Sparks Awards

By Liz Babiarz • lbabiarz@gsu.edu

The Georgia State University Alumni Association honored 10 exceptional employees and students April 22 with Sparks Awards in recognition of their dedication.

The Sparks Awards were first presented by the Alumni Association in 1983. Named after George McIntosh Sparks, the university’s first president, the awards were designed to recognize those who exemplify Sparks’ willingness “to go the extra mile” with good humor and perseverance.

“They are the ones who make Georgia State a great place to work and to learn,” said Susan Toovey, executive director of the Alumni Association.

The Sparks Awards ceremony is just one part of Employee Appreciation Month at Georgia State. On April 10, the Alumni Association sponsored the annual appreciation luncheon for Facilities Management and the Police Department. The Office of Employment Relations on April 21 recognized faculty and staff celebrating milestone anniversaries with the university.

Out of many nominations, the 10 Sparks Award winners were selected by a committee of previous winners. The 2008 recipients include:

• Charles “Karl” Adams, College of Business
• John T. Brittain, Jr., public relations student
• Meg Buscema, University Relations
• Sylvia B. Cahay, College of Law
• Heath Housley, International Student & Scholar Services
• Annette Harris Johnson, Counseling & Psychological Services
• Gary M. Longstreet, Office of Undergraduate Studies
• Charlotte M. Petrek, Andrew Young School of Policy Studies
• Subhash C. Tiah, Facilities Management Services
• Shelly-Ann Williams, College of Arts & Sciences, Office of Graduate & Scheduling Services

What causes fear of flying?

Sometimes people have had a scary experience on a plane. Sometimes seeing something on television or hearing someone talk about a bad experience can cause it. And sometimes, even if they haven’t had a traumatic experience, a person might get on a plane and have a panic attack out of the blue.

How did you treat patients to overcome their fear?

First, they learned skills for coping with their anxiety, such as addressing fearful thoughts. Then they used those skills to face their fears in exposure therapy. To overcome a fear, you have to face a fear, but in a therapeutic way. Our instinctive response to anxiety is to fight or flee, but for it to work, you have to stay in a situation until your anxiety decreases naturally. In this case, we also tested whether using a virtual reality model of flying on an airplane could help them face their fear of flying in the real world.

Was the treatment effective?

The main finding from this study is that people got better and they stayed better, even when we talked to them after Sept. 11. The most effective method was continuing to fly, even in the face of feeling fearful. And that was the most powerful thing people did. We’re currently enrolling for a new treatment study on public speaking anxiety using virtual reality. Participants receive free treatment. Anyone interested can learn more by contacting speakingstudy@gsu.edu or by calling (404) 413-5077.
Restricting calories could add years to your life

By Chris Rosenblom • dottietjscp.com

Everyone wants a long, healthy life. We all know that generic makeup is one key to longevity, but what if you didn’t choose your parents carefully and are looking for another way to live longer?

Enter caloric restriction (CR), an idea that has been around since the 1930s when scientists discovered that mice fed about half of their calorie needs lived longer than the mice given standard lab chow. Studies have shown that other animals, including apes, can extend life by eating less. How does that apply to humans?

After perusing the Web site of the “Caloric Restriction Society,” www.caloricerestrition.org it’s clear that some people are performing their own experiments by voluntarily restricting calories by 30 to 40 percent of what is recommended by the Dietary Reference Intakes for healthy adults. CR also reduces the production of free radicals — those pesky side effects of metabolism that some think trigger aging effects. CR also helps lower the amounts of insulin that your body produces — which could prevent diabetes — and is also linked to maintaining healthy brain cells that could retard neurological diseases like dementia and Parkinson’s disease.

Unanswered questions about CR include how severe does the caloric restriction need to be to see the benefits shown in animals? How long do you have to follow the diet to increase longevity? Are the effects only seen during the calorie restriction phase or are they long lasting benefits? One researcher, writing in the Journal of Gerontology, developed a mathematical model on CR and predicted that CR would only extend life by one to two years.

The best strategy is to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, be active every day, and eat more fruits and vegetables, especially those with deep, rich colors. And, if you are tempted to try CR, remember that the oldest known human lived to 120 years, and she didn’t live a CR lifestyle.

By Chris Rosenblom, Ph.D., is a nutrition professor and associate dean for academic affairs in the College of Health and Human Sciences. Her columns appear regularly in Villager courtesy of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.
First football scholarship honors Gretchen Patton’s father, John “Bulldog” West

For his tenacity on the high school football field, John West earned the nickname “Bulldog” and a scholarship to play at the college level. But because of hard times during the Great Depression, he had to pass up college and take a factory job to help support his family. “He led a good life, but he was nobody’s fool,” said his daughter, Gretchen Patton, wife of Georgia State University President Carl Patton. “He recognized the value of education and knew what you needed to get ahead.”

To ensure another student receives the college education West missed out on, Gretchen and Carl Patton recently pledged $25,000 to create Georgia State’s first endowed football scholarship in his memory. West died three years ago at age 84.

The Patton’s football gift is one of many given to the university in recent months. Since Georgia State started examining the possibility of a football program, supporters have contributed $1.17 million for the sport.

Robinson College partners with Russian university

The J. Mack Robinson College of Business has partnered in a joint degree program with Lomonosov Moscow State University to offer the first American Executive MBA entirely on-site in Russia.

Russian students will be able to pursue an executive master’s in business administration from Georgia State in conjunction with a master of science in management from Moscow State. The Executive Leaders program was announced April 11 in Moscow, along with several accompanying initiatives, including a leadership forum and roundtable working group for Russian students.

Jim Senn, the managing director of Robinson’s Center for Global Business Leadership, will co-direct the program with Moscow State’s Vladimir Echenique, vice-dean of the economics faculty there. “As Russian companies have expanded, they have experienced a distinct need for executive-level talent,” said Senn. “The unique Robinson/Lomonosov Moscow State program will fill a much-needed demand for practical information on effective leadership and provide a quality of education never before available in Russia.”

Classes are expected to begin next January.

Faculty, staff and students urged to give blood

The Office of Civic Engagement is hosting an American Red Cross blood drive from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday (April 23) in the University Center; rooms 460 and 465. The blood drive allows students, faculty and staff to give the gift of life by donating without leaving campus.

The process is simple and takes about an hour, with the actual donation lasting six to 12 minutes. The need for blood is constant and, although the Red Cross has donor centers across the southern region to help collect blood on a daily basis, regular blood drives at sponsor organizations are still the most effective way of recruiting donors. Blood drives are especially needed around holidays and during the summer when inventories dip to critically low levels.

For more information, call the Office of Civic Engagement at (404) 413-1550.

Athletics receives NCAA certification

The NCAA Division I Committee on Athletics Certification announced April 15 the certification of Georgia State University’s athletics program. This is the university’s second cycle of athletics certification, the purpose of which is to ensure integrity in athletics programs and to assist institutions in improving their athletics departments. NCAA legislation mandating athletics certification was adopted in 1993, and since that time Georgia State’s athletics have been in full compliance.

“Georgia State is pleased that it continues to meet the high expectations of NCAA Division I membership,” said Georgia State President Carl Patton. “Athletics continues to be an important part of the university experience, and it is gratifying to know that our strong relationship between academics and athletics is consistent with and recognized by the certification process.”

A designation of “certified” means that an institution operates its athletics program in substantial conformity with operating principles adopted by the Division I membership.

“NCAA certification is a crucial element for athletics departments across the nation, and we are very pleased and proud to be officially certified for the next 10 years,” said Mary McElyea, director of athletics.

The certification process, which involves a self-study led by an institution’s president or chancellor, includes a review of these primary components: governance and commitment to rules compliance; academic integrity; equity; and student-athlete well-being.

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The following IS&T employees recently earned their certifications:

■ Network Planning Analyst Boris Baeta received the Extraordinary Certification from the Information Security Systems Security Professional Lead. Lead Software Systems Engineer Jeff Johnson received the Novell Certified Linux Professional.

■ Regents’ Professor Tim Barness was named president-elect of The Society for the Study of Ingestive Behavior. He will take office at the society’s annual meeting in July in Paris.

■ Catherine Chang, associate professor of counseling and psychological services, received the American Counseling Association’s Research Award at the national conference in March.

■ Susan Easterbrooks, professor of educational psychology and special education, recently published “Helping Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students to Use Spoken Language,” co-authored by Ellen Bates.

■ “Choosing the Top Candidate: Best Practices in Academic Library Hiring” by the College of Law’s Law Librarian Nancy P. Johnson, Associate Director for Public Services Ron Wheeler, and Director of Information Technology Terrance Mansion, was named an editor’s pick for the month of March by Inform Library Online. The article appears in Volume 100 of the Law Library Journal.

■ College of Education Dean Randy Kamphaus was selected by the University of Georgia College of Education awards committee to receive their Lifetime Achievement Alumni Award. The award will be presented at the college’s annual spring celebration April 28.

■ Georgia State Athletics has named Marvin Lewis as associate director of athletics for finance and administration. Tiffany Lofton, as associate director of athletics for development, and Monique Holland as associate director of athletics for operations and compliance and senior woman administrator Carla O’Brien has joined the development staff as assistant director.

■ Fifteen employees from the Department of Human Resources recently completed the first-ever Management certification program at Georgia State. The program, brought to the university by Assistant Vice President of Human Resources Linda Nelson, focused on a wide variety of topics from employee relations, to recruitment and retention, to compensation and classification.

■ Monique Holland as associate director of athletics for operations and compliance and senior woman administrator Carla O’Brien has joined the development staff as assistant director.

■ College of Education faculty, recent graduates and doctoral students joined together to produce a themed issue of the Georgia Journal of Reading focusing on “Literacy and Literacy Teacher Education.” Joyce Many, associate chair of the Department of Middle-Secondary Education and Instructional Technology, organized the issue.

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■ Chris Rosenbloom, professor of nutrition and associate dean in the College of Health and Human Sciences, was given the Sports Cardiovascular, and Wellness Nutritionism (SCAN) Achievement Award at the group’s annual symposium in Boston on April 11.

■ Robert Thompson, professor of composition and technology in the School of Music, served as composer in residence at the Institut International de Musique Electro-acoustique de Bourges (IMEBB) while on academic leave last semester. There, he composed six commissioned works for octophonic surround sound, including one that will receive its world premiere at the Palais Jacques-Cœur during the annual Synthèse Festival in Bourges, France.

■ The Pediatric Section of the American Physical Therapy Association gave its Hughes Award to Beth Tieman, an associate professor of physical therapy, at the 2008 APTA conference in Nashville, Tenn. The award was for her research into cerebral palsy.