Striving for a more sustainable State

By Liz Babiarz • lbabiarz@gsu.edu

Imagine a university where we use less and recycle more, conserve water and energy and take advantage of public transportation. Many students, faculty and staff believe Georgia State can be that university. Momentum for more sustainable campus practices is building thanks to the efforts of several groups—the Staff Council’s Green Issues Committee, Georgia State’s Building Services Department, the student-run Sustainable Energy Tribe and a faculty and staff group, Greening Georgia State.

“The key is creating awareness and changing the culture of the campus community,” said Christopher Jackman, director of Georgia State’s Building Services. “We need to focus on sustainability.”

The first priority is to step up recycling. This academic year, Building Services wants the university to recycle 400 tons of paper products, plastic and aluminum containers, and wooden pallets. Look for posters and a new Web site, prepared by the Green Issues Committee, explaining recycling services available on campus. If your office doesn’t have a recycling bin, simply call Building Services at 404-413-0600 to have one delivered.

A similar education campaign for energy conservation, with tips on how to reduce power use, will begin soon. Alternative energy sources will be showcased as a solar-panel powered concert and energy fair in the Library Plaza from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Oct. 14, hosted by the Sustainable Energy Tribe.

Water conservation is a focus as well. Building Services recently purchased eight 250-gallon water collection tanks to capture rainwater runoff for pressure washing projects and irrigation. Similarly, the new Science Center will have a condensate recovery system, saving 2.8 million gallons of water each year. Water-saving toilets and fixtures are being installed in the Student Recreation Center now and are planned for other facilities.

The groups are looking for more partners with “green minds.” Greening Georgia State is hosting a Green Bag Lunch Series from noon to 1 p.m. on Nov. 4 and Dec. 2 in room 218 of the Natural Sciences Center, focusing on recycling, conservation, transportation and curriculum. For more information, go to http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwsen/staffcouncil/news/recycling_faq.pdf.

Georgia State launches into iTunes U

By Liz Babiarz • lbabiarz@gsu.edu

Early every student these days seems to have white buds stuffed in their ears and an MP3 player in their pocket. And now, along with playlists of their favorite songs and episodes of must-see TV shows, students can download podcasts related to Georgia State—lectures from their professors, videos of events on campus, updates on university news, student music and much more.

Georgia State was the first public institution in Georgia to join iTunes U, an area of the Apple iTunes Store that enables users to easily search, download and play educational materials, just as they would music, movies, and TV shows. “Instead of charging 99 cents for content, Georgia State’s downloads are free.”

Georgia State on iTunes U went public in July and has been averaging about 5,000 downloads every month, and nearly 400 podcasts have been posted by students, faculty and staff. Georgia State was the first public institution in Georgia to join iTunes U, an area of the Apple iTunes Store that enables users to easily search, download and play educational materials, just as they would music, movies, TV shows. ‘Instead of charging 99 cents for content, Georgia State’s downloads are free.’

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As the November election draws closer, voters are weighing the information they’ve received about the candidates in preparation for the voting booth. But what happens when the information they’ve been given is wrong?

Jason Reifler, an assistant professor of political science at Georgia State, and Brendan Nyhan of Duke University set out to examine the effects of political misinformation and attempts to correct that information on the public. They gave news articles containing slightly misleading information to a group of volunteers. Half of that group then received corrections to the misleading information. The results were surprising.

“We started this research actually trying to figure out what strategies would best enable the media or other sources to be able to try and correct misperceptions that people hold,” Reifler said. “And what we found instead was that giving people a slightly misleading statement as part of a newspaper article and then giving some people corrections, that some people actually ended up believing the thing that was wrong even more fervently after being given the correction.”

Given their findings, Reifler and Nyhan will now shift their focus to examine why media corrections don’t work and what can be done to make corrections more effective. One possible explanation is that voters feel their sense of self is being threatened when they receive information that runs counter to their beliefs.

“We’re looking at interventions that increase people’s self-esteem or sense of self, and that if you reinforce those, are people therefore more open to counter-atitudinal information?” Reifler said. “The long-term hope is that we’ll actually be able to give strategies to the media, to politicians, so that we’re able to have a better political debate.”

Diet may hold some aspects of aging at bay

By Chris Rosenbloom • dietitian@ajc.com

When I ask students what age is “old,” they might say 60 or 65 years, but they are surprised to hear that by 25, most of our body systems begin to age and decline in function. They all want to know what supplement they can take to prevent the decline, and my answer is fourfold:

• Despite claims on the Internet, there is no supplement that can stop or reverse the effects of aging;
• Choose your calories more carefully (we have less room for empty calories like soft drinks, alcohol and high-fat snack foods as we age);
• Eat more fruits and vegetables (and I don’t mean French fries, fruit roll-ups or fried onion rings);
• Be active every day, including aerobic activities for endurance and weight training for strong muscles and bones.

Five for 50
If you are older than 50, include these top five foods for good health:

• Fish: fatty fish such as salmon and tuna (canned salmon and tuna count, too) contain omega-3 fats to help lower blood pressure and blood fats such as triglycerides and reduce development of blood clots;
• Nuts: just handful a day is all you need but they provide fiber, B vitamins, vitamin E, magnesium and protein.
• Yogurt: Dairy foods pack a protein and calcium boost but also contain vitamin D to better absorb calcium and the B vitamin riboflavin. Look for yogurt with active cultures. These probiotics help your digestive system;
• Whole grains: Look for the word “whole” as the first ingredient on a label. We should get three servings or 48 grams of whole grains a day. Whole grains contain plant compounds in addition to vitamins and minerals that help reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers.
• Cruciferous vegetables: Broccoli, cauliflower, kale and cabbage are packed with healthy plant nutrients, as well as vitamins, fiber and water. Frozen or canned can be a good substitute when fresh is not in season or is too costly.

Calcium: A bit at a time
Your bones love calcium, whether from foods or supplements, but foods get the edge because they contain other nutrients needed for strong bones. If you take a calcium supplement follow these rules:

• Calcium is better absorbed in smaller doses throughout the day instead of in one whopping dose;
• Elderly adults should choose calcium citrate instead of calcium carbonate — the citrate form is better absorbed as stomach acid production declines with aging;
• If you are taking a bisphosphonate drug for osteoporosis (Fosamax or Actonel), don’t take calcium in the morning with the drug. Take your calcium later in the day so it doesn’t interfere with the drug’s absorption.

The College of Health and Human Sciences announces the sixth annual

J. Rhodes Haverty Lecture

Sudhir A. Venkatesh, Ph.D.
William B. Ransford Professor of Sociology
Columbia University
Author of Gang Leader for a Day

Thursday, October 23, 2008
at 7:00 p.m.
in the Speaker’s Auditorium, Student Center

A reception will immediately follow the lecture in the Senate Salon.

Please RSVP to 404-413-1100
or cchs@gsu.edu
by October 16, 2008

Georgia State University
College of Health and Human Sciences

Political science experiments show media corrections could backfire

By Lisa Jordan Spires • lspires@gsu.edu

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Professional development courses offered to Georgia State employees

- "Conversations with Your College Bound Teen," "Conducting Performance Evaluations," and "Art of Exceptional Customer Services," are just a few of the seminars the Department of Human Resources is offering Georgia State employees this fall.

- The seminars will run now through Dec. 10 in the areas of management, leadership, team building, process improvement, customer relations and wellness. Three types of seminars will be offered: certificate courses consisting of multiple sessions for which there is a fee to attend, professional development courses that are free or have a small fee attached, and customized workshops that can be tailored to a specific department or college.

- For a fall 2008 course catalog, contact Employee Development and Wellness Services within the Department of Human Resources at 404-413-3342. To register for courses online visit www.gsu.edu/hrd and click on "Training and Development.

For more information, contact Alesia Wakefield, instructional service coordinator, at 404-413-3292.

Miller Lecture to focus on Bush legal strategy

- Discussing the Bush administration's legal strategy in the war on terror, law professor John O. McGinnis will deliver the Georgia State University College of Law's 43rd Distinguished Henry J. Miller Lecture.

- McGinnis is the Stanford Clinton Sr. Professor of Law at Northwestern University's School of Law. He spent four years as deputy assistant attorney general in the Office of Legal Counsel at the Department of Justice, and specializes in constitutional law, anti-trust law and international trade.

- The lecture and lunch will be from noon to 1:15 p.m. Oct. 23 in the State Ballroom of the Student Center. The event, supported by the Charles Loridans Foundation, is free and open to the public, though reservations are required by Oct. 15. To make reservations, contact Vickie Dye at 404-413-9024.

- For more information, visit http://law.gsu.edu/events/index.php?list=2/14/.

Flu vaccines available for Georgia State community in October

- The Health and Wellness Nursing Collaborative and the Bryndle E Lewis School of Nursing will offer flu vaccinations this October in the Urban Life Building for Georgia State students, faculty and staff over the age of 18.

- The vaccine will be administered from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Oct. 14 and 16 in the second floor atrium. The cost is $20 by cash or check, and supplies are limited.

- Officials especially encourage vaccination for all persons over age 50, health care personnel, pregnant women and those with chronic diseases including ailments that suppress the immune system.

Rialto events celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month

- In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, the Rialto Center for the Arts will host two upcoming events celebrating Hispanic culture.

- The first, October’s installment of the free lunchtime series Feed Your Senses, will feature Peruvian music and dance from Matizas Peruanus from noon to 1 p.m. Oct. 15. In addition to the performance, the Office of Student Life and Leadership and Intercultural Relations will provide Peruvian cuisine.

- As part of the Rialto Series, Son de Madera and Quetzal will perform traditional and contemporary Mexican music in “Mexican Strings, Chicano Vibes” at 8 p.m. Nov. 8. Son de Madera will travel from Mexico to showcase the country’s Son Jarocho genre of music, while Los Angeles’ Quetzal blends Mexican and Afro-Cuban rhythms with jazz, R&B and rock. Georgia State faculty, staff and students receive a discount on Rialto Series shows. For ticket information, call 404-413-9700 or visit www.rialtocenter.org.

Ben Stein comes to Georgia State

- At 3 p.m. on Oct. 20, Ben Stein, actor, writer, humorist and TV personality, will speak about his new book, “How to Ruin the United States of America.” The event is free to faculty, students and staff and will be held in the Student Center Ballroom. Stein will have a book signing after the lecture.

- A political humorist best known for his game show, “Win Ben Stein’s Money,” on Comedy Central and his role in “Terry Nutt’s Day Off,” Stein is also an economist, columnist and lawyer. He worked as a speech writer for Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford and has written 30 books and numerous screenplays.

- For more information, contact Cara Dawn Byford, Campus Events, at 404-413-1895 or cdbyford@gsu.edu.

Georgia State hosts Disability Awareness Day

- Individuals with disabilities face challenges, but they also possess extraordinary abilities. Faculty, staff and students are encouraged to learn more about the lives of individuals with disabilities on campus at Disability Awareness Day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 15 in the Georgia State Student Center.

- The event will include activities designed to simulate disabilities and promote discussion. Also, “Fall Radius Dance,” a modern dance company featuring some dancers with disabilities, will perform works that celebrate technique and physicality.

- Disability Awareness Day is hosted by the Disability Initiatives Committee of the Georgia State Faculty Senate with participants from the Physical Therapy Department, the Educational Psychology and Special Education Department, the Vocational Rehabilitation program and the Office of Disability Services. For more information, contact Susan Easterbrooks, professor of special education and educational psychology, at 404-413-8307 or seasterbrooks@gsu.edu.
Benefits open enrollment period ends Nov. 7

Significant changes to Board of Regents healthcare plans

By Liz Babiarz • lbabiarz@gsu.edu

Georgia State University employees eligible for benefits have until Nov. 7 to make changes to their healthcare coverage before the University System’s open enrollment period ends.

Employees who miss the deadline will have to wait until next year’s open enrollment period to make changes. Faculty and staff members who wish to remain in their current healthcare plan do not need to submit any materials to the Benefits Office.

The Benefits Office wants faculty and staff members to be aware of modifications to healthcare plans, particularly the Board of Regents Indemnity and PPO plans. All changes are effective Jan. 1, 2009.

The Board of Regents capped the employer-paid portion of the Indemnity Healthcare Plan at the PPO rate, causing the employee premium to increase by 98 percent for employees who choose to retain the Indemnity Plan.

“This is a huge change for the Indemnity Plan. Read your benefits booklet this year,” said Lesli Cotton, Georgia State’s benefits manager, reminding employees that they should receive via campus mail an open enrollment packet with detailed information on healthcare plans.

The Board of Regents changed its PPO plan as well. The PPO plan is now using the same network as the Indemnity Plan.

LabCorp is the exclusive lab service for the PPO, and the pharmacy benefits program vendor changed from Express Scripts to Medco. The Board of Regents PPO’s premium will rise by 7.5 percent.

Additionally, the High-Deductible Healthcare Plan (HDHP) will be called HSA PPO, a qualified health savings account plan. The plan’s wellness benefit will change from $750 to unlimited based on national guidelines for age and gender-appropriate services, and the premium will increase by 3 percent.

Other plans will have modifications and premium increases, too. The Board of Regents Dental Plan will be administered by MetLife. The Spectera Vision Plan will be called the United Healthcare Vision Plan.

Also, members of the Kaiser Permanente HMO will see a premium increase of 3.2 percent. Blue Cross Blue Shield HMO will see a 6.5 percent jump in premium.

To learn more, attend the annual Benefits Fair and Employee Information Day, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Oct. 21, in the Student Center Ballroom. The Benefits Office also is hosting informational sessions this month to provide further details of plan options. The sessions will be held 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Oct. 22 and 10 a.m. to noon, or 2 to 4 p.m. Oct. 24 in room 314 of the Aderhold Learning Center. Contact the Benefits Office at 404-413-3303 or benefits@gsu.edu.