Petit Science Center to be dedicated

Building will be new home to biology, nursing, neuroscience and more

By Jeremy Craig • jcrag@gsu.edu

Georgia State will celebrate the dedication of the new, much-anticipated Parker H. Petit Science Center March 29 at 10 a.m.

The new 350,000-square-foot, $150 million facility, located at the intersection of Decatur Street and Piedmont Avenue, features state-of-the-art laboratories, offices and classrooms and will be home to the university’s continuing research and education programs in biology, chemistry, nursing, nutrition, physical and respiratory therapies, and public health, as well as the Neuroscience Institute.

“We’re excited to open the new Petit Science Center, which is the culmination of years of planning and construction,” said Robin Morris, vice president for research. “The center will serve as home to numerous Georgia State scientists and instructors who will make a significant impact in research that will improve our understanding of science, and who will educate future generations of health professionals.”

The facility is named in honor of Parker H. “Pete” Petit, Atlanta philanthropist and Manna Healthcare chief executive, who donated 55 million to launch the science complex. Construction on the facility began in 2007.

The new science center will also include teaching labs for training future health professionals, including nurses, dieticians, respiratory therapists and physical therapists, in patient care.

The new labs will give biology and chemistry faculty more and better facilities for furthering research in molecular and cellular biology, investigating the molecular basis of disease, and advancing drug discovery.

The building will also house the new Neuroscience Institute, which conducts interdisciplinary study for brain research and education, as well as public health researchers who will further investigate the epidemiology of infectious diseases.

New University Senate policies on calendar, student grades

By Elizabeth Kopp • ekopp@gsu.edu

The Georgia State University Senate, the institution’s governing body of faculty, staff and students, passed several important policies recently that will affect the academic calendar and student grades.

First, the Senate voted to amend the academic calendar to include a fall break. A day will be added to the existing Thanksgiving holiday, giving students an entire week off at Thanksgiving. The change will take effect this coming fall.

The Senate has not yet decided if or how the new fall break will affect the administrative calendar for faculty and staff.

The Senate also voted to implement a “Repeat to Replace” policy. This policy will allow undergraduate students completing their first degree at Georgia State to repeat a course, replacing the lower grade with a new, revised grade. The first grade will not factor into the student’s GSU grade-point average, although it will appear on the student’s transcript and affect the HOPE grade-point average. This policy will go into effect fall 2011.

George Rainbolt, chair of the Senate Committee on Admissions and Standards, said the “Repeat to Replace” policy was a student-generated idea and was supported by the Senate to give students a second chance to overcome unforeseen circumstances that might impact academic performance.

“These happen in life and we’re trying to make sure the GPA is an accurate reflection of a student’s performance,” Rainbolt said.

In a similar vein, the University Senate supported a policy allowing students to enroll in courses with a pass/fail grading condition. Taking effect fall 2011, the policy would not apply to courses required for a major or minor or those that are needed to satisfy college requirements.

For more information on these and other policies, visit www.gsu.edu/ods.

What are some of your goals and plans for the Alumni Association?

To engage more alumni and increase membership specifically by touching more alumni through newsletters and other publications about university news, events and opportunities with the alumni association, as well as by providing more membership options. Also, I’d like to become a more recognizable organization to students before they become alumni by introducing a Student Alumni Association open membership and the Official Maverick Ring.

You earned your graduate degree from Georgia State. How has the university changed since you attended school here?

It has grown! It seems to have a lot more to do on campus for students, and it definitely has become an even more accomplished university overall.

What are you most excited about getting involved with at GSU?

Definitely football. I received my undergraduate degree from a school with an established football program, so I know it will definitely provide a great new opportunity for students and alumni.
For the children

Law professor fights injustice locally and globally
By Renee DeGross Valdes • rvaldes@gsu.edu

A defining moment in Jonathan Todres’ life came at a very young age. The associate professor in the College of Law remembers seeing signs of human rights abuses as young as 4 years old while visiting Cape Town, South Africa, where both his parents had grown up.

“Beyond the signs that read ‘Whites only,’ it was obvious even to a small child that people were treated differently based on their skin color,” Todres recalled. That early exposure to the injustices of apartheid left an indelible mark and influenced what later would become the central force of Todres’ law career – human rights and child advocacy.

“Human rights issues were thrust upon me at a very early age,” Todres said. “I remember being bothered by injustice. Now, I write and do research about those injustices, especially against children.”

His expertise includes children’s rights law, human trafficking and children at risk of exploitation. He is co-editor of “The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: An Analysis of Treaty Provisions and Implications of the U.S. Ratification,” a book that examines the convention’s potential impact on the nation. Recently, it was the subject of a book review wherein President Barack Obama was urged to read the book and call upon the U.S. to join the treaty.

Locally, Todres serves on the Governor’s Office for Children and Families’ Task Force on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

“Unfortunately, Atlanta is a center of child trafficking and sexual exploitation,” Todres said. “But fortunately, it is a city with a number of policymakers and child advocates dedicated to doing something about these problems.”

Discussing reports of child trafficking in Haiti after the earthquake, Todres said, “read ‘Whites only,’ it was obvious even to a small child that people were treated differently based on their skin color.” Todres recalled.

It doesn’t matter to the customers. They look for ‘Do I get value for my dollars, or do I get the quality that I’m looking for, or do I get the price I’m looking for’. Plus, this is a factor that customers just don’t remember.

V.K. Kumar, executive director of the Center for Excellence in Brand and Customer Management, to the AJC on the negligible benefits to customers of a business appearing on a ‘best of’ list.

GSU in the news

The number of Georgians without health insurance is likely to increase substantially when the census reports its 2009 figures.

Bill Carter, associate professor in the Institute of Health Administration to the Atlanta Business Chronicle on a report showing that 18 percent of Georgians lack health insurance.

It’s only a matter of time before banks will have to get back into lending.

Vikas Agarwal, associate professor of finance, to Smart Money magazine on President Obama’s proposed legislation to limit the size and risk-taking of large financial institutions.

Research

Chemist investigates DNA replication and repair using supercomputers
Reducing calculation times furthers the study of cancer
By Jeremy Craig • jcraig@gsu.edu

A Georgia State chemist and his colleagues are among just a few teams in the country who have been given access to powerful supercomputers by the U.S. Department of Energy to model the mechanisms surrounding the replication and repair of DNA. This research may lead to further understanding about basic processes underlying cancer and degenerative diseases.

Assistant professor of chemistry and computational chemist Ivaylo Ivanov and his colleagues are part of the Department of Energy’s Innovative and Novel Computational Impact on Theory and Experiment (INCITE) program.

Ivanov’s team, one of 69 teams nationwide named to the program, has been allocated four million processor-hours on a Cray XT supercomputer at the Department of Energy’s Leadership Computing Facility at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tenn.

The processor-hour allocation means that Ivanov’s team can accomplish what a single computer, with a single central processing unit, can accomplish in four million hours – taking decades off of the required calculation time to model biological processes, Ivanov said.

One part of the project investigates the enzymes involved in the duplication and repair of DNA, as well as the cellular responses to DNA damage. DNA repair functions that do not work properly are linked to cancer and degenerative diseases.

Ivanov’s research team seeks to examine the principles governing cells’ responses to DNA damage and the protein/DNA complexes involved in repair pathways.

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Training courses open to GSU community

Georgia State University’s 2010 spring and summer training offerings are now available. Employee Development and Wellness Services, a unit in the Human Resources Department, coordinates and promotes campus learning, personal enrichment and professional programs designed to enhance individual employee skills and competencies.

Courses will be offered throughout the spring and summer and include the professional development series, e-learning online courses, the Wellness Wednesdays program, advanced Microsoft office training and expanded personal financial workshops. To register for workshops, go to www.gsu.edu/hr/31212.html. All workshops are open to GSU faculty, staff and students. For more information, call 404-413-3342.

President and provost to hold meetings on promotion and tenure

Deans, department chairs and interested faculty are invited to two meetings titled “Promotion & Tenure Informational Session: How the President & Provost Evaluate a Case.” The first session is scheduled for March 25 from 10:30 a.m. in the lobby of the Rawlin Center for the Arts, and the second is slated for March 26 from 2:30-4 p.m. in Room 170 in the Urban Life Building.

Department of Student Health Promotion receives grant

For the fourth year in a row, Georgia State’s Department of Student Health Promotion received a grant from the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety. The $5,100 grant provides traffic and pedestrian safety programs throughout the year addressing issues such as speeding, impaired driving, motorcycle safety, aggressive driving, distracted driving and pedestrian education.

For more information on this grant, contact Kevin Modglin, health educator and manager of the Department of Student Health Promotions, at kmodglin@gsu.edu.

College of Law to hold Miller Lecture March 18

Ian Ayres, the William K. Townsend Professor and Anne Urowsky Professorial Fellow in Law at Yale Law School, will deliver the College of Law’s 46th Henry J. Miller Distinguished Lecture at noon on March 18 in the Student University Center State Ballroom.

Ayres will discuss “Legal Barriers to Diversification.” This event is free and open to the public. Reservations are required by March 4 to Vickie Dye at vdye@gsu.edu. Business attire is required for this special event.

Speaker series focuses on Georgia’s water wars

Diverse voices will address the many issues and disputes surrounding Georgia’s water resources during an upcoming lecture series.

The university’s Department of Geosciences will present speakers who have different perspectives on the legal, social and physical aspects of the ongoing water dispute among Georgia, Alabama and Florida over water resources in the Chattahoochee River basin, especially Lake Lanier. The series is free and open to the public.

The lectures include sessions with:

• Frank Stephens, program analyst for Gwinnett County’s Department of Water Resources, who represents the county’s interests in the ongoing dispute; 4 p.m., March 18, Room 316 in Kell Hall.

• David Feldman, professor in the Department of Planning, Policy and Design at the University of California-Irvine, who will address similarities between Georgia’s water war with its neighboring states and the famous Los Angeles water grab of the early 20th century; 4 p.m., April 29, Room 718 in the General Classroom Building.

This event is sponsored by Campus Events and the Cultural Competency Conference and supported by student activity fees.
GSU students spend spring break helping communities

By Elizabeth Klipp • sklipp@gsu.edu

Instead of traveling to a beach destination or relaxing at home, about 80 Georgia State students will use their spring break to build stronger communities across the country and touch the lives of those in need.

These trips are organized by Georgia State’s Panther Breakaway program, which is part of the national alternative break movement.

About 30 GSU students are going to New Orleans to help children prepare for the state assessment test, while about a dozen students will head to South Florida to work on environmental projects in the Everglades. Another 20 students will go to Richmond, Va., to help those in poverty and also support the Panther men’s basketball team in the CAA tournament.

And roughly 20 students will stay in Atlanta to volunteer with programs here that help the needy.

“It’s one thing to do service projects here and there and then step away from them and forget,” said Jasmine Shergil, a senior managerial sciences major who is student director of Panther Breakaway at GSU. “But when you spend an entire week in a community and study the larger social issues after your service hours, you will become a part of that community and a part of the solution.”

Georgia State conducted its first Panther Breakaway during spring 2002 and sent 12 students and four staff members to Washington, D.C., to address homelessness and HIV/AIDS awareness issues. Over the years, students have performed short-term, meaningful projects and they have worked to address social issues such as literacy, poverty, racism, hunger, homelessness and environmental awareness.

“The impact of the experience can serve as a catalyst for a life-long commitment to active citizenship,” said Lovell Lemons, director of Georgia State’s Office of Civic Engagement. “Most students will continue to engage in thoughtful action as they recognize and become more aware of social issues beyond their week of service.”


Jeremy Crampton, associate professor of geosciences, was appointed to the editorial board of the journal in the Association of American Geographers and recently authored the book “Mapping: A Critical Introduction to Cartography and GIS.”

Nancy Lee Dally, clinical assistant professor of middle-secondary education, and three MIST students published an article in the January issue of English Journal titled “America’s consum- eracy: No safe haven.”

Kadir Demir, assistant professor of middle-secondary education, had an article accepted for publication in Journal of Research in Science Teaching titled “Views of Inquiry: Mismatches between views of science education faculty and students of an alternative certification program.”

Donald Hamelberg, assistant professor of chemistry, received a five-year CAREER award from the National Science Foundation to study the effects of ionizing radiation on human health. He is currently working on a project investigating the effects of radiation on human health.

Yingli Li, assistant professor of computer science, and his colleagues recently won the best paper award at the Fifth International Conference on Mobile Ad-hoc and Sensor Networks for a paper titled “Processing Area Queries in Wire-less Sensor Networks.”

Jackie Lund, chair of the College of Education’s Department of Kinesiology, was awarded fellow status by the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance’s Research Consortium’s Credentials Committee. She will be inducted at the national convention in March.

Joyce Many, associate dean of academic programs in the College of Education, has been invited to serve on the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education’s Committee on Research and Dissemination from 2010 to 2013.

Vice president of research Robin Morris, associate professors of educational leadership and special education Daphne Greenberg and Mary Beth Calhoon, and recent College of Education graduate Alice Nanda had an article published in Annals of Dyslexia titled “Measuring adult literacy stu-dents’ reading skills using the Gray Oral Reading Test.”

Ulld Perera, professor of physics, has been named as a 2010 SPIE Fellow. Fellows are honored for their significant scientific contributions in the multidisciplinary fields of optics, photonics and imaging.

Cynthia Searcy, assistant profes-sor of public management and policy, served as an interview panelist for the Georgia Charter Schools Commission in its review of 2009-2010 petitions at the Georgia Department of Education in Atlanta.

Andrey Timofeev, a senior research associate with the international studies program, recently was awarded the 2010 Bergson Prize by the Association for Comparative Economic Studies. The award, which included a stipend of $5,000, was for his article “Market-Based Fiscal Discipline Under Evolving Decentralization: The Case of Russian Regions,” which was published in Comparative Economic Studies.

Roger Weed, professor of counsel-ling and psychological services, published an article in Rehabilitation Pro-fessional titled “Clinical Judgment: Working definition for the rehabilitation professional.”

Dennis Young, professor and director of the nonprofit studies program in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies and also the Bernard B. and Eugenia A. Ramsey Chair of Private Enter-prise, served as a commentator in the European Programme in Civil Society (EPICS) Leadership in Dublin, Ireland.