Confucius Institute opens at Georgia State

Georgia State University celebrated the opening of a newly formed Confucius Institute, a partnership with the Beijing Language and Culture University, in a dedication ceremony at the Rialto Center for the Arts on Oct. 15.

Housed temporarily in the Citizens’ Trust Building, Georgia State’s Confucius Institute is the only one of its kind with a specific focus on promoting Chinese language and culture to the broader business community in Atlanta and in Georgia.

“The Confucius Institute at Georgia State will not only strengthen the university’s course offerings in Chinese language and culture but strengthens our commitment to create global citizens,” said GSU President Mark Becker, who oversaw the creation of the GSU Confucius Institute and whose connections helped secure it for the university.

Formally approved for GSU by the Office of Chinese Language Council International (or Hanban) in July, the Confucius Institute will provide comprehensive services for promoting Chinese language and culture to foster intercultural exchange between China and the U.S. Georgia State joins nearly 300 Confucius Institutes in 75 countries worldwide that provide Chinese language and cultural teaching resources and services.

The Confucius Institute will offer targeted classes in business Chinese and culture instruction and will build on GSU’s existing programs related to China.

In addition to regular credit courses for GSU students, the Confucius Institute will also offer non-credit courses geared toward the general public, as well as courses and workshops on special topics in Chinese culture and business practice intended for corporations and organizations interested in expanding business connections with China.

The institute will also host events that aim to give American audiences a direct sensory experience of various aspects of Chinese culture, such as singing, dancing, calligraphy and other art forms.

For more information, contact the Confucius Institute at 404-413-5298.

Five Minutes with:

Farrah Bernardino
director of Georgia State’s Office of Study Abroad Programs

What is International Education Week at Georgia State?

International Education Week at Georgia State runs Nov. 15-19 and is filled with fun events designed to convey the importance of adding a global dimension to the student experience. The week is a joint initiative of the U.S. departments of State and Education to celebrate the benefits of international education. This is Georgia State’s 11th year joining in the celebration, and our events have grown tremendously. We are delighted to see more units show greater interest in collaboration each year.

What are some of the highlights of the week?

“Crossing Paths, Crossing Cultures” is a photo contest for both international students and study abroad students. International students submit photos of their experiences here in the U.S., and study abroad students submit pictures of their experiences abroad. A ceremony is held at 5 p.m. on Nov. 16 in the Student Center Ballroom to recognize contest winners and faculty involved with study abroad programs.

GSU receives more than $9 million in NIH funding

Georgia State has been awarded three significant federal grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to pursue projects impacting research and learning.

“The recent strong support from the NIH is significant and represents continued evidence of our advancement in state-of-the-art research and learning activities here at Georgia State,” said Robin Morris, vice president for research. “The funding will allow GSU to address pressing public health concerns, as well as to train the next generation of scientists.”

Georgia State received $6.7 million to establish the Center for Excellence in Health Disparities Research, which will investigate health in disadvantaged neighborhoods, the role of religion in reducing drug use and the transmission of HIV, and the testing of a computer-based intervention to reduce child abuse.

The center will be based in the Institute of Public Health and will include departments from both the College of Health and Sciences and the College of Arts and Sciences.

Kyle Frantz of GSU’s Neuroscience Institute has been awarded $1.7 million in partnership with Emory University, Agnes Scott College and Spelman College to encourage students from diverse backgrounds to pursue neuroscience-related careers.

Economics Professor James C. Cox of the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies in partnership with Emory University received $1.2 million from the NIH to study discharge decisions at hospitals, focusing on the length of hospital stay as an important factor in health care quality and costs.

The International Thanksgiving Feast is scheduled for noon on Nov. 19 in the Rialto Center lobby. The annual event gives international students who don’t have a family in the U.S. the chance to experience an American holiday. There will also be study abroad workshops and student panels, discussions on global careers, and workshops for international students throughout the week.

How will the GSU campus community benefit from International Education Week?

International Education Week events create a university-wide excitement for international exploration. Attending an event is often the catalyst for students to study abroad. The events can also spur a language exchange on campus with an international student or influence a faculty member to lead a study abroad program for the first time. We encourage everyone on campus to get involved because, undoubtedly, they will learn something new about the world we live in.
In observance of National Diabetes Awareness Month and the Great American Smokeout, Health and Wellness Services is co-sponsoring programs and educational events during November in partnership with Blue Cross/Blue Shield and the College of Health and Human Sciences.

There will be two special Wellness Wednesdays Lunch ‘N Learn seminars at noon on Nov. 3 and Nov. 10 addressing tobacco cessation and diabetes awareness. At noon on Nov. 17, Michael Enkisen, director of the Institute of Public Health at GSU, will be speaking to raise awareness about hazards of tobacco use and discussing issues related to going smoke-free in the workplace.

Another upcoming educational session is the “Forum on Civility,” from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Nov. 15 at the University Center; Room 460/465. This program will address commonplace issues that revolve around race discrimination, sex discrimination, freedom of speech and Greek organization diversity.

Students, faculty and staff will receive information on available outlets to report incidents.

Open Enrollment for benefit eligible faculty and staff will run through Nov. 5. You may make any changes or additions to your benefits by going to https://portal.gsu.com. A confirmation statement of your changes will be sent to your home address on record the following week. If, upon review, you wish to make additional updates, you may do so the week of Nov. 15-19. Complete open enrollment information and materials concerning benefit choices at GSU are available online at http://www.gsu.edu/hr/44743.html.

For more information on these and other HR activities and services, please visit the GSU HR website, www.gsu.edu/hr.
Call for nominations for MLK convocation awards

Georgia State University's Office of Student Affairs/Intercultural Relations is now accepting applications for the 2011 Martin Luther King Jr. Torch of Peace Awards. The awards will be presented during the 28th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Convocation on Jan. 16 at the Student Center. The deadline to submit nominations is Nov. 28.

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The torch is awarded to individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to racial and cultural diversity, as well as social justice and service. The award is named in honor of King Jr. who was a civil rights leader and the son of Atlanta native Martin Luther King Sr.

To request a nomination application, please contact Tonya Cook, program specialist for Intercultural Relations, at 404-413-1580 or e-mail tcok3@gsu.edu. For more information, visit www.gsu.edu/interculturalrelations.

Project Healthy Grandparents

A community outreach program for grandparents raising grandchildren

15 years of support through the State Charitable Campaign and the family adoption holiday gift program

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GSU receives federal support to train new psychologists

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has awarded the university a grant to help train new psychologists who will provide needed health services, especially those in underserved areas.

The university, which received $1,195,811 from the Graduate Psychology Education program of the Health Resources and Services Administration, is one of only 19 programs in the country selected for funding in the program, which runs from 2010 to 2012.

The need for more mental health care professionals in the United States is acute. As of June 30, nearly 3,500 communities had shortages of mental health providers, which impacts service for nearly 84 million people, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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GSU to participate in full-scale emergency exercise on Nov. 19

Georgia State University, Grady Memorial Hospital, the Atlanta Fire Department, Fulton County Emergency Management Agency and several metro Atlanta hospitals will conduct a full-scale emergency response to a simulated building collapse on Nov. 19.

Running from 7 a.m. to noon, the response exercise will be focused in and around the former Pawn Shop, located at 242 Edgewood Ave. More than 150 participants, including local law enforcement officers, firefighters, EMS personnel, hospital staff and volunteer “victims” actors, will participate. Emergency vehicles will also be involved.

For questions, please contact Mike Raderstorf, director of the GSU Office of Emergency Management at 404-413-0776 or eoc@gsu.edu.

Undergraduate research conference proposals due Jan. 28

Faculty should start preparing undergraduate students wishing to participate in the 2011 Georgia State Undergraduate Research Conference to write proposals for the conference, to be held March 16 at the Student Center.

The deadline for submitting research proposals is Jan. 28. Every presentation must have a GSU undergraduate student as the primary author or artist and a Georgia State faculty sponsor. Work presented at a previous GSURC cannot be submitted for the 2011 GSURC.

Past winners, forms and additional information are available at www.gsu.edu/gsurc.

Chemistry program in top 10 nationwide rankings

Georgia State University’s master’s program in chemistry recently received high rankings from the American Chemical Society for the number of master’s graduates produced from the university.

The department ranked ninth for 2008-09 and came in first in the Southeast. The numbers were recently published in Chemical & Engineering News.

“GSU’s chemistry master’s degree is the degree of choice of many students who wish to work in the field and remain in the metropolitan Atlanta area,” said Al Baumstark, chair of the chemistry department. “This yields major economic benefits in the state and is a reflection of the quality of the program.”

Full campus construction update

Since opening three new buildings in the past six months, the university’s facilities crew has shifted to improving and expanding existing campus structures.

An addition onto Classroom South began in September and should be finished by July. The $3.8 million project will add four floors to the existing building, consisting of three computer labs with 100 workstations and 12 classrooms with 700 seats. Once completed, access to the G parking deck will be back to normal.

Scaffolding fronts many campus buildings as crews pressure-wash the exteriors, caulk joints and make repairs.

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In Piedmont North, the university’s two recently acquired hotels turned student housing, workers are expanding the dining area in between the hotels to add 200 seats. The project, which includes demolition of the hotel’s swimming pool, should be completed by July.

Starting this month, the university will also kick off its Piedmont Avenue Pedestrian Improvements Project. The four-lane, one-way northbound street will be narrowed to three lanes and a wider sidewalk for pedestrian safety will be installed from Decatur Street to John Wesley Dobbs Avenue.

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All cracked sidewalk will be replaced and existing crosswalks will be repainted for high visibility.

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Panthers ready to tip-off new season

By Williom Inman

Both Rod Barnes and Sharon Baldwin-Tener, GSUs men’s and women’s head basketball coaches, are hoping the addition of more than 70 seats behind each goal at the Sports Arena will create a distinct home court advantage for their teams this season.

“I don’t care how good of a free throw shooter you are, it has to distract you in some sort of way if the pupils are jumping up and down behind the goal,” Baldwin-Tener said.

Entering her first year at GSU, Baldwin-Tener is hoping her team’s up-tempo style of play will bring in more fans to fill those seats, which she hopes will translate into a few more wins. So far, she says, her players have found into her coaching style, and her transition has been a smooth one.

“Tough anytime you come in wanting to push the ball and press, it gets the players excited,” she said.

Barnes, going into his fourth season as head coach, is welcoming eight newcomers to his squad. But, he says, the way the new players have meshed with the veterans has become the team’s calling card.

“I think our strength will be in our team’s chemistry and unity,” Barnes said.

Barnes said he anticipates that the Colonial Athletic Association this year will be the toughest he’s seen since he took the helm at GSU; still, he’s undaunted about the pre-season polls that have the Panthers near the bottom of the conference. In fact, Barnes says, he’s looking forward to flying under the radar.

“We’ve just been telling them, ‘Guys, nobody knows who you are,’ ” he said. “I think as the season goes on, we are going to grow into being not only a good team, I think we’ve got the potential to have a great team.”

The Panthers play their first regular season home game at 7 p.m. Nov. 19 against Troy. The women open the season at Georgia Tech on Nov. 12. Their first home game is Nov. 27 against Alabama A&M during the GSU Thanksgiving Tournament.

Junior guard Jihad Ali is one of Rod Barnes’ team captains this season.