Four-time Emmy winner Todd James (B.A. ’97) makes movie magic on Sesame Street p.14

Armed with the largest grant in university history, researchers explore the health risks of e-cigarettes p.22

Head Basketball Coach Ron and star player R.J. Hunter have a father-son, coach-player relationship p.28

Cracking the Concrete

Downtown Atlanta’s most significant property owner isn’t paving paradise and putting up another parking lot, it’s tearing down a parking garage (Kell Hall—gasp!) and creating a cleaner, greener campus.
WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS
CRACKING THE CONCRETE
BY BLOOD AND BASKETBALL

7 The Sporting Scientist Chris Locandro has found remarkable success on the pitch and in the lab.
9 Secrets of the Sphinx Melinda Hartwig goes on Discovery Channel’s ‘Treasures Decoded’ to demystify the Great Sphinx.
13 Freedom Defined Alex Robison (B.A. ’11, M.A.T. ’13) poses the question ‘What does freedom mean to you?’

GEORGIA STATE RESEARCHERS INVESTIGATE THE HEALTH RISKS OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS.

GEORGIA STATE IS SET TO UNVEIL A NEW MASTER PLAN THAT WILL FOREVER CHANGE THE “CONCRETE CAMPUS.”

BIG-TIME BASKETBALL SCHOOLS RECRUITED R.J. HUNTER. HE CAME TO GEORGIA STATE TO PLAY FOR HIS DAD.

“DOWNTOWN IS ABOUT TO GET A WHOLE LOT GREENER.”
—Atlanta City Councilman Kwanza Hall

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From the President

Our faculty and researchers are pushing back the boundaries of what is already known, and discovering new pathways to breakthroughs that will change the world.

A Home for Research

GEORGIA STATE IS BREAKING GROUND AND BREAKING THROUGH ON ITS WAY TO BECOMING AN EMINENT RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

We’ve broken a lot of University Records in our Centennial year, records in freshman applications and enrollment, number of graduates and graduation rates, fund-raising and more. Another important record we set was in research as we pursued our goal of becoming one of the nation’s premier urban research institutions.

Georgia State University researchers received $75.5 million from external funding agencies in fiscal year 2013, marking the second straight year of record-setting research funding. This outstanding achievement, during a time of diminishing federal research funding, is a testament to the premier urban research institutions.

In our Centennial year, records we set were in research as we pursued our goal of becoming one of the nation’s premier urban research institutions.

One of 14 Tobacco Centers of Regulatory Science.

The Center for Behavioral Neuroscience, a research endeavor of seven metropolitan Atlanta colleges and universities, has been elevated to the newest University-level research center at Georgia State. This new designation elevates the University’s position as a home for the best researchers in neuroscience and allows the center to continue its work in research and neuroscience education from kindergarteners to the college level.

Perhaps the most visible component of our research portfolio growth in the expansion of our Research Park. We will soon break ground on the second tower of the park, which will be dedicated to science research and will be adjacent to the Petit Science Center at the corner of Decatur Street and Piedmont Avenue. It will provide a flexible space and design that encourages collaborative and interdisciplinary research and will be a transformative facility that drives economic growth by supporting groundbreaking discoveries.

Our strategy is to pursue leading researchers and put them together in multi-disciplinary teams to address the major problems and issues of the day is clearly paying off. Our faculty and researchers are pushing back the boundaries of what is already known, and discovering new pathways to breakthroughs that will change the world.

Sincerely,
Mark P. Becker, President

PRAISE FOR THE NEW GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

EMAILS AND ONLINE COMMENTARY

GRATULATIONS!

And, as a result, this magazine is something I can display on my coffee table proudly. Go State!

Jude King (B.A. ’81)

Very cool, Charles McNair writes for my alumni magazine.

Lee Tresca (B.A. ’97)

I received my copy of the new Georgia State University Magazine in the mail yesterday and it was really impressed. Very professional layout, writing and content. It reflects very well on the University... great work.

Mimi Breden (B.A. ’95) via Facebook

I just got it in the mail and all I can say is WOW! What a fresh, exciting magazine — just WOW! It is probably the first one I have really “looked” at in years. Congratulations on a job well done!

Allison McHenry (B.A. ’76)

After receiving past issues of the magazine and seeing the layout I am impressed. The articles were written in a way that captured my interest. And even the feel of the ink and paper was attractive. Congrats to the team. Great job!

Lisa L. Dalton (B.A. ’90)

I recently received the new issue in the mail. I love the new look! Very updated and vibrant. Congratulations!

Ruth Sexton, Clinical Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education

Just wanted to say that the beautiful redesign looks! Being a graphic design alum from Georgia State, I’m so happy to see the transformation of this pub. You definitely caught my attention and I’m sure many other! Huge success, and happy to see that print is not dead! Bravo!

Heather Devine (B.A. ’06)

To the Magazine’s Editorial and Creative Staff. The magazine looks fantastic. This alum is seriously impressed. Keep it up.

Sarah Levine (B.A. ’09, M.A. ’12) via Facebook

CORRECTION

In our last issue, the article “Life Academic” incorrectly reported that John Knapp, president of Hope College, was Georgia State’s student body president in 1981. Knapp was student body president in 1979-80.

The Georgia State University Magazine welcomes letter comments and notification of errors that warrant correction. Email the editor at winman@gsu.edu

You should be able to find it.

The Georgia State University Magazine welcomes letter comments and notification of errors that warrant correction. Email the editor at winman@gsu.edu

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ANOTHER MARCH ON WASHINGTON
Fifty years later new history is being made

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom signaled a major turning point in the civil rights movement. It was a seminal moment not just for African-Americans but for the entire country, one in which a group of 16 Georgia State students helped preserve. In August, the students attended the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington, met with United States Rep. John Lewis and recorded the stories of some of the original marchers as part of the “I Was (T)Here Exchange Oral History Project,” an effort by the National Center for Civil and Human Rights.

“It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” says senior Charis Hanner. “One woman told me she was denied admission to Georgia State 50 years ago because the schools were still segregated then. And the reason she said she marched was so that students of all races could go to Georgia State today.”

FINANCE 101
Georgia State helps middle schoolers learn money skills

Georgia State recently opened shop in Junior Achievement’s Finance Park, a new educational facility focused on teaching middle school students about financial management in Atlanta’s World Congress Center. About 30,000 students from the Atlanta Public Schools, DeKalb County Schools, and other systems across the metro area, have experienced the facility.

PANTHER TRACKS: According to the Signal, the first parade route was a short one: It ran from Gilmer Street, down Piedmont Avenue, right on Decatur Street and right on Peachtree Center Avenue — just two city blocks.

TWICE IS NICE: In 2010, when Georgia State kicked off its football program, homecoming moved to the fall but that didn’t stop the university from properly celebrating its last wintertime homecoming. Georgia State had both a basketball and football homecoming and the parade ran twice that year.

GOLF CART CARAVAN
GEORGIA STATE’S QUIRKY HOMECOMING PARADE TURNS 10

START YOUR CARTS: The first blue and white festooned golf carts took over the streets of downtown on a chilly Saturday morning in February 2004 before tipoff of a 2 p.m. basketball game. The parade was the brainchild of the Spotlight Board Homecoming Committee.

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THE SPORTING SCIENTIST
Chris Locandro’s extraordinary biography has more than one title.

LAUREN MONTGOMERY (B.A. ’14) PHOTOS BY ADAM KOMICH
Last fall, the senior neuroscience major in the Honors College, who has a grade-point average over 4.0 and has earned President’s List honors twice, put what he learned over those long hours to work on a study that could be a breakthrough for those who suffer from epilepsy.

Pretty impressive, especially considering that when he’s not in pursuit of a cure, he’s the captain of the soccer team and working toward his goal of becoming a neurosurgeon.

“Put simply, we discovered that neurons in the brain cells of mice that had a normal gene became more active than normal neurons,” he said. “This means we know exactly what Locandro learned over those long hours to work on a study that could be a breakthrough for those who suffer from epilepsy.”

Locandro has presented his findings at a study that could be a breakthrough for those with this mutation.

For Brett Surrency, his head coach, this is one of the hardest working, most disciplined athletes he has ever had the pleasure of coaching.

“I can’t believe it. He’s the best kid I’ve ever coached,” he said. “But once things get hectic, like in the spring when we practice two times a day and I have to prepare for an upcoming season, I can really see the value of higher education and the distinctive qualities of Georgia State. They also can personalize a simulated dormitory room and take a photo of it.”

NEW INSTITUTE FOR BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES OPENS EARLY 2014

Despite huge advances in recent years in biological and medical research, significant gaps still exist between basic laboratory research and clinical applications. To address this challenge, Georgia State will open the new Institute for Biomedical Sciences on Jan. 14.

The institute will be a leading research and degree-granting institute advancing biomedical research that improves human health and trains professionals in the field.

“This multidisciplinary institute will educate and train future generations of leading biomedical scientists and health professionals,” said Georgia State President Mark Becker.

Becker said the institute will bolster Georgia State’s existing strengths in areas such as oncology, therapeutics and diagnostics — where the university has made strategic investments.

Jian Dong Li, head of the university’s Center for Inflammation, Immunity and Infection, will be the founding director.

Fulton County Schools and Marietta City Schools will participate in the program this academic year. It is part of the mandatory curriculum in the schools’ districts.

Georgia State, the only university in Finance Park, joins major corporations such as Delta, Bank of America, PricewaterhouseCoopers, AT&T and Aurrant in the facility. In the Georgia State shop students will learn about the value of higher education and the distinctive qualities of Georgia State. They also can personalize a simulated dormitory room and take a photo of it.

IN THE CITY

SECRET OF THE SPHINX

GEORGIA STATES RESIDENT EGYPTOLOGIST MELINDA HARTING GOES ON DISCOVERY CHANNEL’S ‘TREASURES DECODED’ TO DEMYSTIFY THE GREAT SPHINX

What are some of the mysteries of the Great Sphinx?

The Sphinx is always at the center of some theory or another. Some geologists think the weathering patterns of the stone in the Sphinx is older than currently believed. Some people believe there are mysterious passages in the Sphinx, left by a 10,000-year-old civilization. There are, in fact, some passages, but they were carved by later treasure hunters. How old is it, and what do experts believe is its purpose?

Good question. The Great Sphinx on the Giza plateau was never inscribed so there are a lot of theories concerning its date, purpose and symbolism. The lion was always associated with the king, in fact, very early kings had lions attached with their burials.

Lions are also guardian figures, which suggests the Sphinx is guarding the royal burial on the Giza plateau.

What was revealed on “Treasures Decoded?”

I had the chance to follow through on a hypothesis that the Sphinx was built by the pharaoh Khufu! Some believe it was built by Khufu! Still, the debate will rage on as to who was the builder of the Sphinx.

Melinda Harting is an associate professor of Ancient Egyptian and Ancient Nubian art at Georgia State. She recently appeared on a PBS documentary on Discovery Channel’s “TREASURES DECODED” to demystify the Great Sphinx.

CONT’D ON P.10

WHAT IS THE SPHINX?

To understand the impact of the research led by Professor Irene Weber, it’s important to know how anti-HIV drugs are designed. Scientists start by mapping out the structure of the proteins produced by the virus itself.
Once they understand that, they can design drug molecules that bind to the target virus protein and interfere with its ability to reproduce.

Weber, a professor of biology and chemistry, studies a particular enzyme, called HIV-1 protease. Many existing medicines are aimed at this enzyme, binding to it so it can’t do its reproductive job. Until now, scientists have used highly intense X-rays to study it. The problem with this method is that hydrogen atoms are a key part of the enzyme’s functioning, but hydrogen atoms are also almost invisible to X-rays. Weber and her team used a different technology, using beams of neutrons that can clearly show the position of hydrogen atoms within the enzyme. They looked specifically at a drug called Amprenavir, which was first approved for the treatment of HIV/AIDS in 1999. What they found went against earlier understandings of how the drug and the enzyme interacted. Once the researchers could see the hydrogen atoms, they could also see that hydrogen bonds were much less important to the functioning of the drug than anyone had previously thought. The study presents drug designers with a whole new set of sites where drugs can potentially bind to the enzyme. If these designs work out, it could mean a new generation of drugs that perform better at lower dosages.

“This provides important new insights into the chemistry of how drugs bind HIV protease,” Weber said.

CARE MANAGEMENT
Researcher discovers way to block morphine tolerance and increase the drug’s results

Morphine is one of the most commonly used pain medications, but the pain-reducing effects of morphine diminish as the drug is taken over an extended period of time, resulting in the need for higher doses to produce the same analgesic effect.

The lab of Anne Murphy, associate professor of neuroscience and assistant director of the university’s Neuroscience Institute, discovered that by blocking a specific receptor in the brain, it could eliminate the development of morphine tolerance.

More important, the results show that by blocking the receptor, it increases the pain-relieving effects of morphine, which could change the way chronic pain is managed.

“Our results have exciting implications for the clinical treatment and management of chronic pain,” Murphy said.

Lori Eidson, a senior graduate student who worked on the project, added that the receptor has also been implicated in morphine addiction and dependence.

“Patients could receive pain relief with reduced concern of negative consequences such as addiction,” she said.

WASHINGTON

200,000+

You Tube subscriber fans following Georgia State Marching Band rock drummer Casey Cooper.

See him in action at magazine.gsu.edu.

RESEARCH


people.

WE MIGHT SAY, ‘YOU CAN FORGIVE THE LOUDMOUTH BEHIND HIM ON THE PLANE. AFTER ALL, IT’S JUST HIS NORMAL SOCIAL INTERACTIONS.”

according to Wilczynski, exploring social behavior at the molecular level has important medical implications. “Many neurological disorders from autism spectrum disorders to schizophrenia can severely impair a person’s ability to engage in normal social interactions,” Wilczynski said. “Understanding how social behavior is regulated at the molecular level will help us understand these disorders.”

The grant is part of the National Science Foundation’s Research Coordination Network grant program. Wilczynski’s network will bring together researchers from several prominent universities who are focusing on the genomic mechanisms underlying social behavior.

SOCIOGENOMICS

Sociogenomics, Wilczynski said, can provide insight into the genetic mechanisms responsible for “behaviors as diverse as social bonding cooperation and aggression that are common in many organisms — including humans — and how these have evolved.”

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Human are 99.9 percent in the same genetic material and differ in only 0.1 percent of it.

The new field of sociogenomics examines ways in which the social environment influences how an individual’s genes are expressed.

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“Patients could receive pain relief with reduced concern of negative consequences such as addiction,” she said.

in the CITY

Big Data

Georgia State’s Centennial Year has been a good one. The university broke records in a number of areas this year, including research funding, fundraising, freshman size, applications and graduation rates. Perhaps most impressive is that as the university continues to grow it just keeps getting better. With the most recently graduated class, Georgia State set a record of a 53 percent six-year graduation rate, up a staggering 21 points in only a decade.

“We are helping our students to succeed at levels never before seen in our history,” said President Mark Becker.

The new field of sociogenomics examines ways in which the social environment influences how an individual’s genes are expressed.
ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT

Georgia State's Kay Beck honored for contributions to state's film industry

For nearly 40 years, Beck, associate professor of communications and director of Georgia State's Digital Arts and Entertainment Lab, has worked to build the state's film industry. In acknowledgment of her efforts, Beck was awarded the prestigious Governor's Award for the Arts and Humanities for her contributions to Georgia's film, media and digital arts industries.

The Georgia Production Partnership and the Georgia Film Commission, organizations with which Beck is a member, lobbied in 2005 to pass a tax incentive as part of House Bill 358, making it more attractive for television and film production in Georgia. Now, the film commission estimates the direct economic benefits of film production in Georgia came to nearly $3.5 billion in 2012. “This is a terrific accomplishment and a wonderful honor,” said David Cheekler, chair of the Department of Communications. “Countless people working in the industry consider her a valuable mentor.”

Beck has previously worked at Georgia-Pacific Brunette, a woman in Film and Television Atlanta, and has held a position on the Executive Committee of the Georgia Film Board. She is a co-founder of the Atlanta Film Festival and is its chair.

ALL THAT JAZZ

Georgia State’s all-time leading tackler, he’s ready to make a difference off the field

When Georgia State began its inaugural football season in 2010, the No. 10 was often applied to the football. The students didn’t know who to credit or what to call it. Now, the bookmore back then,” Ferguson said. “I took it to task to try to do something major since Pounce and I were both wearing the number 10.” Ferguson succeeded. Not only is he Georgia State’s all-time leading tackle, he can say that he’s the only player to play in every Georgia State football game.

“When football, a lot of people don’t even make it one full year,” Ferguson said. “I take a lot of pride in that accomplishment.”

ATHLETICS

PANTHERS INTERNATIONAL

Georgia State boasts athletes hailing from every continent except Antarctica

Georgia State’s international student-athlete population numbers 37 this year with 6,932 George State alumni living in Florida, according to the Georgia State Alumni Association. The states send only to Georgia’s 128,695 Panthers. South Dakota has the lead with 19.

Todd James (B.A. ’97) has won four of television’s top awards behind the scenes on Sesame Street.

A sk Todd James to name his favorite “Sesame Street” character and he’s quick to respond: “Grover. He’s very funny, and when I watch him, I know it is going to be something funny.”

James, post-production supervisor for the children’s show, has, alongside Grover, Cookie Monster, Big Bird and the rest of the “Sesame Street” cast, won four Emmy awards for outstanding achievement in the multiple camera editing category. His most recent came June 14 when the Emmys were handed out in Los Angeles.

“I can’t believe that I won an Emmy,” James said. “To win once is great but to have won four, I mean, who does that? It’s very exciting.”

After graduating from the film and video program at Georgia State, James made the jump from Decatur Street to Sesame Street, but not before working behind the camera on a handful of Atlanta productions.

“I worked on a couple of game shows and I worked on the second Cosby show,” James said, “then I finally landed a job as the central room production assistant on ‘Sesame Street.’”

Not only does James get to rub elbows with the Muppets on set, he gets to mingle with the children around the rest of the “Sesame Street” cast, won a picture with her. You’d be surprised. They’re all very great guys. I also met Alicia Keys the other day. She was a great guy. I also met Alicia Keys and got a picture with her. You’d be surprised. They’re all very happy to be on Sesame Street. ’They get here and they see Big Bird, Elmo, Bert and Ernie and become kids again.’

Ten years ago, with her children grown and her home in Atlanta well established, Donna Brazeill (M.P.A. ’05) decided she wanted to re-enter the working world.

“I have a bachelor’s degree in chemistry,” she said, “so I went back to the lab for a job interview. And I looked at it and said, ‘This isn’t me anymore.’”

Browsing through a Georgia State course catalog, Brazeill realized just how many options were open to her — some of which, such as a degree in public administration and non-profit management, didn’t exist when she went to school the first time around.

“I started off in the certificate program but I didn’t have been back in school for 25 years and I wasn’t real sure about things,” she said, “but once I was in there, I knew I loved it. And within a couple months I switched over to the graduate program.”

The classes were challenging, Brazeill remembers, and the work wasn’t easy. But thanks to a classroom atmosphere that emphasized the sharing of ideas over rote learning, she says she was never bored.

“My of my classmates were working at Atlanta nonprofits,” she said. “Their practical experience, merged with the professors’ theory- and knowledge-based teaching, led to some phenomenal class discussions.”

After earning her master’s degree in 2006, Brazeill realized just how many options were open to her — some of which, such as a degree in public administration and non-profit management, didn’t exist when she went to school the first time around.

“I really enjoy my job every single day,” said James. “I’ve got to meet a lot of people,” he said. “Robert Or Del Rio was on the show, and he was a great guy. I also met Alicia Keys and got a picture with her. You’d be surprised. They’re all very happy to be on Sesame Street. They get here and they see Big Bird, Elmo, Bert and Ernie and become kids again.”

A CAREER 180
Donna Brazeill (M.P.A. ’05) went back to school and discovered a new calling.

“While made in response to a particular place in Atlanta, the work took on new meaning presented in this location post-Hurricane Sandy.”

ART ON A GRAND SCALE
Video artist Micah Stansell’s (M.F.A. ’09) massive moving images took over Manhattan’s Archway as a participant in the renowned DUMBO Arts Festival in New York.

Stansell installed his project called “An Inversion (with water),” which consisted of three large, synchronized circular projections each more than 30 feet in diameter on the side and in the archway of the famous bridge.

“While made in response to a particular place in Atlanta, the work took on new meaning presented in this location post-Hurricane Sandy,” Stansell said.

“With the hurricane moving through the city, all of the events got canceled. A lot of artists in the area were really upset with it. I had to make something for the people of Atlanta to see.”

After earning her master’s degree in 2006, Brazeill realized just how many options were open to her — some of which, such as a degree in public administration and non-profit management, didn’t exist when she went to school the first time around.

“I really enjoy my job every single day,” she said.

A zoopraxiscope, Stansell explained, uses a rapid succession of images to produce the illusion of motion. The Stansells won $10,000 and a trip to Miami during Art Basel, a massive art showcase in December, where they will represent Atlanta in a competition to bring home a $100,000 prize.
In its 100th year, the university has unveiled an ambitious new master plan to create a greener urban campus and change the landscape of downtown Atlanta.
AN ODE TO KELL

"Her face is not pretty, she has ramps for stairs, and her classrooms are made of odds and ends from war surplus materials, but she can hold her head high, for she has served a great purpose: she has played a part in educating leaders of tomorrow."

Those words, written by the staff of The Rampway of the Atlanta Division, the University of Georgia — as Georgia State was known — back in the 1950s, still ring true today as the countdown to Kell Hall’s demolition begins.

For Stephanie Young (B.S. ‘91), business manager in the Department of Chemistry, bidding adieu to Kell is bittersweet.

“I started at Georgia State in 1984 and took all of my chemistry, biology, physics, geology, etcetera in Kell,” she says. “I’ll miss the old girl … the smell, the history, the feeling … walking past the cadaver labs on the 7th floor.”

Young, who has been with the department since 1992, (“I practically lived in Kell for 23 years!”) says she applauded the president’s announcement the old building will be replaced with a lawn. “I understand the time has probably come to put the old dog down,” she says.

“The green space concept is great, but I do hope some sort of monument or memorial to ‘Hell’ Hall, possibly built from some of the existing materials, will be erected,” Young says. “Kell is the original building, the old mother, and hopefully will be remembered long after she is put to rest.”

LIKE MOST GEORGIA STATE ALUMS, JERRY RACKLIFFE CONSIDERS KELL HALL WITH A MIX OF AFFECTION AND CONSTERNATION.

“It’s the only place where you’d find a room numbered in the 100s next to one in the 300s,” he says of the parking garage-turned-classroom building. “You’d walk up and down the ramps trying to figure it out. That building made no sense.”

However, unlike other Georgia State grads, Rackliffe (B.A. ’83, MBA ’88, J.D. ’05) built a career working at the university while earning his degrees. Today, as senior vice president for finance and administration, his job involves masterminding budgets and logistics as Georgia State continues to expand and update its campus. Building on work already done over the past decades under the direction of former President Carl Patton, the development is accelerating following the 2012 finalization of a new campus master plan under current President Mark Becker.

And for the coming five years, a key priority of the master plan is creating a greenway to connect Woodruff Park to the courtyard at the Parker H. Petit Science Center. This central green space will weave through campus, tracing a path that includes the land where Kell Hall now stands. Simply put: for the greenway to become a reality, Kell Hall will have to be demolished.
KELL HALL: A Symbol of Can-Do Spirit

At first that demolition sounds almost like sacrilege, Kel has been an important symbol for the Georgia State community. The 80-year-old former parking deck’s real reconfiguration into the university’s first permanent building speaks to a scrappy ability to thrive in an urban setting and creatively repurpose downtown real estate. The university’s yearbook, The Rampway, pronounced the greenway during his “State of the University” address in October. “There is a campus, but what’s happened is that we’ve been able to build and adapt building as we’ve gone along over the past 100 years, but we were not able to do it in such a way that creates a welcoming and friendly campus, a place where students have the opportunity to interact,” Kel notes.

To facilitate that interaction, Rakliffe’s task now is to figure out how to find space for all the classrooms and facilities in Kell Hall before the demolition starts. Sitting at his desk in Dahlberg Hall, he gestures at an enormous map dotted with outlines representing Georgia State’s original or opened facilities. Moving some classrooms will be relatively easy. Other facilities in Kell will be less simple to relocate. Kel has been home to some labs. Those need to be in specialized spaces that are renovated.

“There’s some heavy stuff in Geosciences,” Rakliffe notes, referring not to the challenging subject matter, but to the weighty rock and mineral samples in the Geology Department. Moving some of the offices, he is getting feedback and input from everyone who teaches and works in Kell Hall.

“Everyone is on board,” he says. Not only do they understand the value of the greenway, they’re also eager to move to less cramped space.

CREATING THE GREENWAY will not only make it easier for Georgia State students, staff, and faculty to move through the campus but also will transform several blocks at the heart of downtown Atlanta. Like any major renovation project, this will have an impact on the neighbors. In the case of the university that means downtown businesses, government and nonprofit organizations, and residents. “We got the ink dry on the master plan a little less than a year ago, and the first thing we did was that with key stake-holders,” says Becker. “It’s tremendous to have the major support and the support of city council as well. Keesha Hall (who represents District 2, which includes Geor-gia State) keeps her finger on the pulse of what is happening at the university and is extremely supportive.”

Hall is downright enthusiastic about the greenway.

“It’s removing a parking garage and helping us realize our vision of a greener, cleaner downtown,” he says. “This is a great decision.”

Hall and his staff have worked closely with communities close to Georgia State, such as the Old Fourth Ward and King Plow Arts & Historic Districts, in crafting development plans.

“Every master plan for downtown Atlanta envisions the creation of additional parks and green space for residents and visitors to enjoy,” he says. “Thanks to President Becker’s leadership, downtown is about to get a whole lot greener.”

The initiative also met a positive response from downtown Atlanta’s corporate community.

“Georgia State’s enthusiasm to build a campus that provides attractive green space and pedestrian connections between its buildings and facilities is great for downtown,” says A.J. Robinson, president of Central Atlanta Progress, the business organization that works with the city and other groups on downtown revitalization.

In addition to connecting Georgia State to the businesses and government organizations in downtown Atlanta, the Greenway also will increase interaction between the university and a small—but growing—cadre of non-student downtown dwellers.

As a resident, it’s really exciting to see the level of street activity rise with these developments, particularly at night when the area around Woodruff Park was dead for so many years,” says Darin Givens, who lives in a historic building that fronts the park. “Having more people on the street and more green space will make downtown feel safer and more Braille. Put this greenway together with the surge of student population via the new One at Courtland housing development — bringing hundreds of new student residents here—and downtown is going to end up with more of the kind of college-town vibrancy you see in other urban campuses.”

Givens, who writes about urban development and historic preservation at the web reported blog ATLurbanist, remarks: “I think it’s a great plan and a deceptively significant one. The activity around Kell Hall is fairly cut off from the street level with the pedestrian bridge across Decatur Street and a small courtyard that’s practically hidden from street view. It’s a setup that echoes the “gerbil tube” pedestrian bridge of downtown’s John Portman towers — a 1970s aesthetic that lifted office workers and students off the streets.

The new plan, Givens notes, “opens up student activity to the streets and embraces the urban environment more completely.”

He adds, “As wonderful as Georgia State has been in the past for downtown, this will make for an even better relationship among residents, office workers, visitors and students.”

Mark W. Baker J.B. and A.A. Mooty recently relocated from Albany, Georgia. He is an associate editor of the Signal in the TESL, put together a survival guide for recovering Georgia State students titled “Welcome to the Concrete Campus.”
**THE SAFER SMOKE!**

*Not scientifically demonstrated*

ARE E-CIGARETTES an alternative to "CANCER STICKS?"

FEELS JUST LIKE THE REAL THING

by **SONYA COLLINS**

illustration by Matt Stevens

A GEORGIA STATE RESEARCHER will find out...

JENNY McCARTHY AGREES... E-CIGS ARE SEXY!
fill a shop tucked into an office park off Highway 316 in Lawrenceville, Ga. From the parking lot, a haze is visible inside the shop. On the door, a handwritten sign reads, “We ID! Must be 18+ to try or purchase any e-cig products.”

The haze inside, unlike cigarette smoke, clears as quickly as it rises, taking with it the scent of vanilla. It rises again, followed by baked apples, next cherries, then tropical fruit.

The ex-smokers aren’t sneaking a smoke. They’re “vaping” electronic cigarettes — rechargeable pipes and cigarette-shaped devices that vaporize food-flavored liquid nicotine — at the grand opening of Steam Cigs, a “vape” shop and lounge.

No law requires that Steam Cigs be hidden from view in an office park. Nor is the shop forbidden to sell to minors. In fact, e-cigarettes and other “novel nicotine products” enjoy much greater visibility than conventional cigarettes do. A relatively new product, e-cigarettes fly under the radar and skirt regulations that conventional cigarettes must follow. But that may soon change. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have begun to explore regulations of the sale, marketing and consumption of these new products.

Researchers at Georgia State will help define those future regulations. In the largest grant in university history, the School of Public Health will receive $19 million over five years from the FDA and NIH to establish one of 14 Tobacco Centers of Regulatory Science. The two entities will award up to $273 million over five years to 14 centers selected to conduct scientific research that will inform federal decision-making on tobacco and nicotine regulations.

Michael Eriksen, dean of the School of Public Health, will lead Georgia State’s portion of the research, which will explore the marketing of tobacco and novel nicotine products. The former director of Centers for Disease Control’s Office on Smoking and Health, Eriksen calls the grant “the culmination of a two-decade effort to put tobacco in the proper regulatory scheme.”

“The grant is also among the first to fund research on the virtually uncharted territory of novel nicotine products, a focus of Eriksen’s work, among them e-cigarettes, dissolvable oral nicotine products, even nicotine lollipops.

“We’re looking at what kind of information people need for improved decision-making. But we’ve got to be sure what improved means,” Eriksen says. “Do e-cigarettes get people to quit smoking or are they just a substitute for smoking?”

Since they hit the market in 2004, e-cigarettes have inspired polarizing debates. “Some people feel that they are just another scam by tobacco companies to keep business. Others feel this is a panacea that could change the epidemic of tobacco use,” Eriksen says. “The two groups are fighting fiercely.”

E-cigarettes resemble conventional cigarettes, cigars, or tobacco pipes. They contain a rechargeable battery, an
E-cigarette users are called "vapers," not smokers. 

As a flavor detective, Cullen tests e-cigarettes and other flavored products for nicotine and other chemicals. 

"Flavor is like magic. Having a parish on your arm doesn't, cheating gum doesn't. It's the puffing, the smoke and doing something with your hands," says Chris Cullen, assistant manager at Steam Cigs. 

"E-cigarettes come in a propanol glycol or vegetable glycerin, food flavoring and an oil-like liquid, typically 10 to 36 milligrams of nicotine per milliliter of juice. Propylene glycol is a thick liquid often used as a carrier of active ingredients in cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, such as cough syrup. The FDA classifies it as a food additive that is "generally recognized as safe." Vegetable glycerin serves roughly the same purpose. 

"There are about nine milligrams of nicotine in each cigarette, the smoker only typically takes one puff in the 90 years. It would take decades for researchers to compare the health effects of vaping and second-hand vaping to smoking," says Eriksen. So far, researchers have not collected enough data to weigh the effects of e-cigarettes on health. 

"The hand motion, the throat hit, the holding of the cigarette, even some of the social aspects. You can smoke with others in a group," says Eriksen. 

A new study published in the journal Tobacco Control 

"We're made all this progress," Eriksen says. "It's a problem to be reminded of e-cigarettes, that's a major public health concern. It could become more socially acceptable and kids would see it." 

"The return of the cigarette girl" 

Playboy centerfold and outspoken anti-vaping activist Jenny McCarthy is the spokeswoman for Blu e-cigarettes. In a television commercial, McCarthy says, "I made it through e-cigarettes, that's a major public health concern. It could become more socially acceptable and kids would see it." 

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The father-son, coach-player relationship of Ron and R.J. Hunter
Ron Hunter quiet by either stripping tape across his mouth, or scaring the heck out of him.

Hunter can chat up a minute, but on a car ride back to Atlanta with top assistant coach Darryl LaBarrie in summer 2011, the Georgia State basketball coach didn’t make a peep. They had just watched a recruit in a 6 a.m. workout, and LaBarrie was thinking the bonus was ticked off because the kid wasn’t worth a 4 a.m. wake-up call.

That wasn’t it. Hunter was seriously scared, which did the work of a strip of tape. He had a conversation at the gym that morning with another college coach and the man’s words from Hunter. The coach told the Georgia State basketball coach of the grave mistake he made by letting his son play basketball for him in college.

Hunter was numb with fright. He was thinking he might have a chance to coach his own son, R.J., at Georgia State and then this load of angst is dropped on his head. The coach told Hunter that coaching his son in college tore apart his family and cost him his marriage. The coach-dad and the son in college tore apart his family and cost him his marriage.

The coach told Hunter that coaching his own son was the grave mistake he made by letting his son play basketball for him in college.

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“Ron Hunter quiet by either stripping tape across his mouth, or scaring the heck out of him.”

Ron Hunter kept talking to coaches whose sons played for them. University of Denver Mercy Coach Ray McCullum is one of Ron’s closest friends. His son, Ray McCullum Jr., played at Detroit and was a second round pick in the 2013 NBA draft. Creighton All-American Doug McDermott and his father, Greg, and Valparaiso’s Homer Drew (father/coach) and Bryce Drew have been used as oracles by the Hunters. R.J. talked to George Hill, the Indiana Pacers star, who played for Ron Hunter at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, which was Ron’s previous coaching stop. R.J. asked Hill what exactly it was like playing for a coach so visceral he broke his shin stomping on the sideline. Both Hunters were gatherers of information.

“There are road maps out there and we use them,” Ron Hunter says. “I have probably talked to more father-son combinations than people can imagine. I want to hear everything. I probably haven’t researched anything as much as I have this the last couple years.”

Ron Hunter didn’t worry if he was overequipped. He was taking nothing for granted. The worrywart was sick some days trying to get what he wanted, which was for his son to play for him, while wondering if his selfishness would hurt R.J. His wife, Amy, had the same worry with what she called “the experiment.”

And so R.J. came to Georgia State and... It didn’t start well, but it got better.

R.J. Hunter was a star high school player in Indianapolis. He had offers from Big Ten and Atlantic Coast Conference schools and was considering Georgia State and playing for his father. It would be a good get for the program. R.J. is a slick 6-foot-5 guard, a centerpiece player, somebody so smoking good the Panthers could ride him to the NCAA tournament, maybe a couple of times. But after talking to the coach whose life was turned upside down by father-son drama, being hoopy daddy didn’t seem like such a keen idea. Hunter flashed back to the warnings from his own mother and father a few years earlier not to coach R.J. in college and allow him to find his own way.

Would it end in calamity like it did between Ron and R.J. in youth baseball?

R.J. was one of the top freshmen in the country in 2012-13, averaging 79 points a game. His teammates respect him because he is not a daddy’s boy. There were no father-son confrontations that got out of control. There were no serious husband-wife confrontations with a teenager caught in the middle.

There were moments when Ron the Coach got in R.J.’s face on the practice floor and R.J. still saw Ron the Dad scolding him. There was no leftover resentment. Ron
Hunter could be as hours removed from beating Duke, but nothing can make him more euphoric than how this “experiment” is working.

But, no, it didn’t start well.

The first practice of the 2012-13 season, Ron Hunter walked out on the Sports Arena floor and out of the corner of his eye he saw his son standing among his players. He started to say something really absurd.

“Hey R.J. get off the floor. Practice is start-
ing!”

Hunter was so used to his kid being around his practices, and being underfoot, that his natural reaction was to get him to sideline safety.

“I caught myself just in time,” the coach says. “I said ‘Wait a minute, he’s part of this race!’”

And then they practiced together at the start of Ron’s second season as head basket-
ball coach.

Two hours later, R.J. wasn’t so sure he wanted to be a part of it. He had a miserable practice that first day and his father was not happy with the high school buddy his son had brought to Atlanta from Indianapolis. It was R.J.’s turn to be underfoot, and feeling the vibe. He knew R.J. had crossed when the uniform is on that reveals his dad and son’s closeness.

“Seldom does it happen that the coach is working,” the New York Times, USA TODAY, The Boston Globe, The Miami Herald and CNN, among others.
...until you showed up.

Hundreds of students in the Class of 2013 would not have graduated without the help of private donations. Consider including Georgia State University in your estate plans and give a gift that reaches beyond campus borders.

Contact Laura M. Sillins, JD, at 404-413-3425 or lsillins@gsu.edu, to speak with a Planned Giving Officer today.

College wasn’t in the cards

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2013-14 BasketBall
Georgia State

Women's Home Schedule
Nov. 19 UCF
Nov. 27 Belmont
Nov. 29 Jacksonville State
Dec. 1 George Washington or Georgia
Jan. 1 Troy*
Jan. 18 UALR* (DH)
Jan. 29 South Alabama*
Feb. 1 UT Arlington* (DH)
Feb. 8 Arkansas State*
Feb. 12 Texas State*
Feb. 19 Louisiana-Monroe*
Feb. 22 Louisiana-Lafayette* (DH)
Mar. 8 Western Kentucky* (DH)

Men's Home Schedule
Nov. 9 Southern Poly
Dec. 4 Young Harris
Dec. 14 Old Dominion
Dec. 20 Georgia Southern
Jan. 2 Troy*
Jan. 16 Arkansas State*
Jan. 18 UALR* (DH)
Jan. 30 South Alabama*
Feb. 1 UT Arlington* (DH)
Feb. 13 Texas State*
Feb. 20 Louisiana-Monroe*
Feb. 22 Louisiana-Lafayette* (DH)
Mar. 8 Western Kentucky* (DH)

*Sun Belt Conference game | (DH) indicates men’s and women’s doubleheader
All home games played in GSU Sports Arena | Dates and opponents subject to change