



CoS Young Alumni Board Meeting Spring 2025 Agenda & Pre-Reads

Contact: *Leslie Roberts* | 404.308.5333

Thursday, April 17, 2025 | 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

John Lewis Student Center, Peachtree Room

(room3249), 3rd floor at Georgia Tech

351 Ferst Drive NW, Atlanta, GA 30332

Park in Visitor Area 3, Parking Deck W02 - validations provided

9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	Breakfast and Ice Breaker
9:30 - 10:00 a.m.	Welcome, College Updates, and Kickoff Leslie Roberts – Director of Alumni Engagement
10:00 - 11:00 a.m.	Brainstorming Session: Committee Overview Leslie Roberts – Director of Alumni Engagement
11:00 - 11:30 a.m.	Communicating Science: Across Our Communities + Q&A Jess Hunt-Ralston - Communications Director, College of Sciences
11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	New Center: Science for Georgia’s Tomorrow (Sci4GT) Joel Kostka – Patton Distinguished Professor, Executive Director of Science for Georgia’s Tomorrow, Associate Chair for Research in Biological Sciences, and Professor in the Schools of Biological Sciences and Earth and Atmospheric Sciences
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.	Break for Lunch
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Closing Remarks



Spring Advisory Board Meeting Guest Speaker

Joel Kostka - Inaugural Faculty Director, Science for Georgia's Tomorrow

Science for Georgia's Tomorrow will focus on research that lays the foundation to improve life across the state of Georgia – from resilient communities and agriculture, to health and sustainable energy resources. As an expansion of our ten-year strategic plan, Science for Georgia's Tomorrow (Sci4GT, for short) will serve as a statewide fulcrum, fostering research in direct service to Georgia cities, counties, and communities. Through this work we aim to address critical health and climate

challenges throughout Georgia and pave the way for increased public-private partnerships. This new center will also expand access – broadening participation opportunities for Georgia students and communities to engage with research.



Joel Kostka is a jointly appointed microbial ecologist in the Schools of Biological Sciences and Earth & Atmospheric Sciences, and he serves as the Tom and Marie Patton Distinguished Professor as well as Associate Chair for Research in Biological Sciences. Kostka is known for bridging biogeochemistry and microbiology to elucidate the role of microorganisms in ecosystem function. He has emerged as an international leader in ecosystem biogeoscience, providing a quantitative predictive understanding of how ecosystems function as well as determining the mechanisms by which environmental perturbations, such as climate change, alter ecosystem resilience. Kostka's research is closely aligned with the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals, spanning from the fundamental science of soil carbon sequestration to the restoration and adaptive management of ecosystems.

Kostka served as Division Chair and Distinguished Lecturer for the American Society for Microbiology (ASM), editor of *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*, and Mercator Fellow for the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German National Science Foundation; 2018;2022). He is current editor of *mBio*, a premier ASM journal and a recent Chair of the Gordon Research Conference in Applied and Environmental Microbiology. Kostka is a Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology and the American Geophysical Union.



Spring Advisory Board Meeting Guest Speaker

Jess Hunt-Ralston - Director of Communications

Jess leads communications strategy, planning, news and public relations to advance the mission and vision of the College and its schools. She serves as the primary liaison with Institute Communications for media relations and external outreach, brand management and development, interdisciplinary communications and marketing. She also advises and counsels leadership and researchers to help share the impact of science and math at Georgia Tech.



A Georgia Tech alumna, Jess previously led communications for Atlanta BeltLine Partnership and the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Georgia Tech, co-founded Little Otter Skincare (acquired 2024), and has served as a strategic consultant for an international slate of nonprofits, start-ups, and small businesses.



Advisory Board Meeting Pre-Reads

Supplemental resources to review prior to meeting

Institute Relations Overview:

- <https://gov.gatech.edu/about/message-vice-president>

Science for Georgia's Tomorrow Press Release:

- <https://cos.gatech.edu/news/new-center-science-georgias-tomorrow>

Communicating Science in the Classroom:

- <https://wikiedu.org/blog/2019/03/01/why-this-professor-will-never-go-back-to-term-papers/>
- <https://wikiedu.org/blog/2020/03/10/wikipedia-as-a-teaching-tool-that-empowers-students/>
- <https://wikiedu.org/blog/2024/02/21/communicating-the-science-of-groundwater-contamination-by-improving-wikipedia/>

C-PIES & Making Science Accessible:

- Making Science Accessible Seminar - <https://cos.gatech.edu/events/making-science-accessible-communicating-science-public>
- <https://cpies.cos.gatech.edu/>

College of Sciences Communications Team

- Stay up to date with the *Latest News* from CoS here: <https://cos.gatech.edu/news-center>
- Explore our groundbreaking research & discoveries in the most recent issue of *The Sciences* magazine: <https://cos.gatech.edu/magazine>

Links to recent papers featured in Nature magazine

- Will Ratcliff, Sutherland Professor in the School of Biological Sciences and co-director of the Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Quantitative Biosciences at Georgia Tech.
 - <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-025-08689-6>
- James Stroud, lead author and an Elizabeth Smithgall Watts Early Career Assistant Professor in the School of Biological Sciences at Georgia Tech
 - <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-025-08597-9>