

Regents' Teaching Excellence Award for Department or Program

Nominators and contacts

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MS-HCI Program Director and Professor of the Practice

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MS-HCI Assistant Program Director and Principal Research

Program

**Georgia Tech's Master of Science in Human-Computer Interaction (MS-HCI)
Program**

<https://mshci.gatech.edu>

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December 3, 2025

Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia

270 Washington Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30334

Re: Nomination of the Master of Science in Human-Computer Interaction for the Regents' Teaching Excellence Award for Department or Program

Dear Regents' Teaching Excellence Awards Selection Committee:

I am pleased to nominate the **Master of Science in Human-Computer Interaction (MS-HCI)** program at Georgia Institute of Technology for the Board of Regents' Teaching Excellence Award for Department or Program. This professional standalone STEM program impacts approximately 120 students annually through an interdisciplinary model that spans four schools (Interactive Computing; Industrial Design; Literature, Media and Communication; and Psychology) and emphasizes collaborative teaching, industry integration, and continuous curriculum improvement.

The MS-HCI program is a consummate example of Georgia Tech's Strategic Plan "Big Bet #1" to be a national leader in outcomes and value for all students. Specifically, the program aligns with efforts to prepare students to be globally engaged leaders who define and solve problems to improve the human condition and develop globally minded leaders ready to navigate an interconnected world through cross-cultural competence, interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, creativity, and adaptability.

The program's approach relies on several foundational pillars. The curriculum is structured such that all students take the same three core courses in user interface design, research methods, and professional practice. The curriculum balances depth through electives in their chosen specialization area and breadth through electives taken outside of their specialization area, culminating in a two-semester capstone project. This interdisciplinary structure is supported by weekly coordination meetings among core course instructors who align topics, deliverables, and project teams to create a cohesive student experience. Faculty demonstrate commitment to teaching excellence through systematic assessment practices, including weekly student surveys, mid-term feedback, and annual curriculum reviews that directly inform instructional decisions. When assessment data indicated students would benefit from more team-based learning, the program responded—team projects grew from 19% in 2017-2018 to over 90% today, resulting in higher-quality work and stronger faculty mentoring relationships.

////////////////////////////////////
Raheem Beyah

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

225 North Avenue, NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30332-0700 U.S.A.
Phone: 404.385-2700

The program employs creative pedagogies that extend beyond traditional classroom instruction. Over the past 10 years, students have engaged with over 600 industry and community partners learning practical approaches and gaining real-world experience while applying research methods. They have worked with professional improvisational theater actors to develop public speaking skills, participated in annual mock interviews with alumni and UX professionals, and contributed to a "Giving Back" culture through an elected Graduate Advisory Board, peer mentoring, and portfolio reviews. This approach cultivates both technical competence and professional identity.

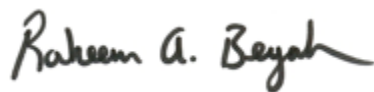
The program's success is built upon contributions from over 50 faculty members across campus who teach courses and advise student research. Between 2020 and 2025, MS-HCI faculty collectively received 12 Course Instructor Opinion Survey (CIOS) Honor Roll selections, five Student Recognition of Excellence in Teaching Awards, and three Center for Teaching and Learning Faculty Awards. Since 2014, an average of over 20 faculty advisors per year have supported more than 460 capstone projects involving 650+ students.

The results demonstrate the program's effectiveness. The MS-HCI program maintains a 99% graduation rate and consistently strong student satisfaction, averaging 4.2 out of 5.0 over 10 years with a Net Promoter Score of 58.6. Graduates secure positions at leading organizations, and several pursue doctoral studies at top-tier institutions each year. Alumni offer strong endorsements of the program's impact. As one graduate noted: "This program gave me the confidence and fundamentals to make an impact and demonstrate UX knowledge as soon as I entered the professional world... this program stands out for creating truly competent professionals with breadth and depth of knowledge."

Beyond these outcomes, the program has earned significant recognition. The 2017 Academic Program Review committee noted that "the MS-HCI is a top program in the field, known internationally as one of the top five." MS-HCI students have won Georgia Tech's Institute for People and Technology's (IPaT) Foley Outstanding MS Award eight times in eleven years. Program leadership has received the GVU/IPaT-sponsored IMPACT award, and the program continues to be regarded as a leader in professional HCI education. With an admission rate of less than 10%, the program is in high demand by students interested in graduate study in Human-Computer Interaction.

I am confident in the quality of the MS-HCI program and am pleased to submit it for consideration for the Regents' Teaching Excellence Award for Department or Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raheem A. Beyah". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Raheem" being more prominent.

Raheem A. Beyah
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Georgia Institute of Technology

Narrative Statement: MS in HCI Program

The multidisciplinary MS in Human-Computer Interaction (MS-HCI) degree at Georgia Tech provides students with the practical skills and theoretical understanding they need to become leaders in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the next generation of human-computer interfaces. Students apply to enter this 4-semester, standalone Master's Program through one of four participating Schools: Interactive Computing (IC), Industrial Design (ID), Literature, Media, and Communication (LMC), and Psychology (PSYC).

Program Philosophy

The MS-HCI degree program prepares students to design, research, and build systems that are effective, efficient, and satisfying to use. We believe that creating human-centered systems requires empathy, rigorous user research, thoughtful design, and deep technical expertise. Achieving this work is only possible through a strong culture of interdisciplinary collaboration and design innovation. Our students learn to bridge people and technology to make a measurable difference in how the world interacts with information and devices. We put this philosophy into practice through six key strategies:

S1. Integrate real-world practice with academic rigor - Students engage with industry practitioners and applied design challenges while grounding their work in the theories and research methods that define the academic discipline of HCI.

S2. Provide a curriculum that emphasizes breadth and depth - Students build depth through advanced coursework in their home discipline while gaining breadth by completing additional courses in areas outside their core field. This structure ensures that every graduate understands multiple perspectives on human-computer interaction and can collaborate effectively across domains.

S3. Cultivate a strong foundation in evidence-based user research – Our students acquire the skills to gather and interpret user data, using research findings to inform and improve design.

S4. Emphasize teamwork and collaboration – Through project-based learning, students learn to collaborate effectively in diverse, interdisciplinary teams, reflecting the collaborative nature of professional HCI practice.

S5. Encourage students to give back to the program and to one another – Through mentoring, peer support, and participation in program and community activities, students contribute to a collaborative culture that strengthens the program and fosters lasting professional relationships that translate into a strong alumni network.

S6. Prepare students for professional careers in HCI – Students build practical career competencies, including creating compelling portfolios, presenting work effectively, and communicating with diverse audiences. These experiences ensure graduates are ready to pursue and succeed in their chosen HCI roles.

C1. Commitment to Teaching and Learning*

Our program's commitment to teaching excellence stems from collaboration of faculty across four Schools, each bringing distinct disciplinary expertise while sharing a unified

* Award Criteria are referred to by C1, C2, and so on.

vision for student success. This commitment is immediately evident in our three core courses that all entering students take together in the Fall semester, forming the foundation for everything that follows. The instructors of these courses meet weekly to coordinate topics, timing of deliverables, and even project team composition and dynamics, demonstrating our dedication to teaching and learning at the most fundamental level. Faculty collaboration is formalized through meetings with four Associate Directors, where we discuss curriculum alignment, student needs, and pedagogical practices. We ensure currency and relevance in our large list of approved electives through yearly reviews that curate our course offerings to reflect the latest topics in HCI. These reviews reflect the program's awareness of current trends in technologies and methods through our various forms of contact with industry best practices. For faculty new to the program, we provide orientation and ongoing guidance, particularly for those advising capstone projects.

C2. Pedagogical Innovation and Student Engagement

The MS-HCI Program employs creative teaching methods designed to foster academic excellence, community engagement, and professional identity. Students work on real industry-sponsored projects co-led by practitioners and faculty, connecting theory to professional practice through guest lectures, site visits, and career panels. Our "Giving Back" culture positions students as active contributors to the learning community—they lead portfolio critiques, organize birds-of-a-feather sessions focused on UX Design and UX Research, facilitate peer "Teach-and-Learn" sessions, and manage the program's social media presence. This approach cultivates students' sense of belonging to both the program and the broader HCI community. Experiential learning strengthens collaboration and communication skills through public speaking workshops led by professional improvisational theater actors and team-building activities like a campus-wide Scavenger Hunt and the Georgia Tech Leadership Challenge Course. Most of the program's coursework reflects the interdisciplinary nature of HCI: students are required to take electives both within their specialization area and outside of that area, ensuring exposure to diverse perspectives and methods while building expertise in their chosen field.

C3. Program-Level Collaboration and Integration

Teaching excellence extends beyond individual courses through program-level integration. Our core courses (HCI Design Foundations, User Research Methods, and HCI Professional Preparation and Practice) involve instructors who co-design course content and share teaching responsibilities, modeling interdisciplinary collaboration. The required two-semester Master's Project serves as a capstone integrating learning across all courses and disciplines, with students working on real-world problems in partnership with industry or nonprofit organizations. Outside of the classroom, many students engage with HCI-aligned faculty on campus through funded lab work. Further, students attend the weekly Institute for People and Technology's interdisciplinary seminar. We maintain ongoing partnerships with external organizations who contribute through sponsored projects, guest lectures, and mentorship, with feedback gathered to improve our integration of external perspectives.

C4. Use of Assessment to Improve Teaching

We employ a multi-method assessment approach that directly informs teaching. Course-level feedback is integrated into instruction: HCI Professional Preparation and Practice

uses weekly surveys to guide the following year's planning; User Research Methods employs mid-term surveys modifying both current and future semesters; and HCI Design Foundations uses weekly notecards for immediate integration. At the program level, we track satisfaction through 5-point scales (ten-year average: 4.2 across 750+ responses) and Net Promoter Scores (ten-year average: 58.6, exceeding the 50+ benchmark for excellence). We gather feedback from industry partners on student performance, undergo formal Academic Program Reviews and Annual Assessments, and maintain informal channels including student check-ins and a physical suggestion box. We close the assessment loop: weekly feedback shapes immediate instruction, semester surveys inform next-year planning, and longitudinal data drives curriculum restructuring.

C5. Support and Recognition of Good Teaching

The program actively supports faculty through financial resources for capstone projects (materials, supplies, participant costs) and student conference stipends for collaborative research presentations. We recognize teaching excellence through annual Outstanding Project Awards presented at our graduation celebration, which honor both the students and their faculty advisors. Faculty new to capstone advising receive comprehensive orientation and ongoing guidance. Our 5-Minute Madness sessions create opportunities for faculty to share research innovations, and team-taught courses provide built-in peer support where instructors observe and learn from one another.

C6. Student Success Outcomes

The program maintains exceptional retention and completion rates, with close to 100% of enrolled students finishing their degree within the expected four-semester timeframe. We previously noted strong student satisfaction metrics, plus our graduates consistently secure positions across a diverse range of organizations, from leading technology firms like Google, Meta, and Amazon to innovative startups, working as UX researchers, product designers, front-end developers, product managers, and content specialists. Several graduates each year pursue doctoral studies at top-tier institutions, including Georgia Tech. A recent survey of alumni revealed that nearly 90% agreed the program successfully achieved its strategic goals.

C7. Shared Philosophy and Definition of Quality

Our six program strategies serve as a shared framework that is formalized through multiple mechanisms. New HCI faculty members receive a letter outlining expectations for being listed as an "HCI Faculty Member"—a designation held by over 50 Georgia Tech faculty—and we have established Memoranda of Understanding with each participating school that define expectations for course offerings, enrollment, and admissions policies. The instructors of our three core courses meet weekly to maintain shared understanding of content and coordination. We promote quality through Associate Director meetings, interactions with Industry Advisory Board members, team-teaching structures, and faculty showcase sessions, while assessing it through student satisfaction surveys, course-specific feedback, alumni surveys, partner feedback, and formal annual reviews. We view quality not just as individual instructor effectiveness but as collective program impact on students' interdisciplinary competencies, research skills, and professional readiness, sustained through our interdisciplinary structure and systematic improvement cycles.

Fact Profile

Program History. Established in 1996, Georgia Tech's MS-HCI Program was one of the world's first master's-level programs dedicated to HCI. More than 900 alumni hold primarily industry-based positions in HCI and UX fields. In 2014, the Board of Regents redesignated the Program as a professional degree and appointed Prof. Richard Henneman (with 30 years of industry experience) as Program Director and Dr. Carrie Bruce as Assistant Director. They refocused the Program on developing well-rounded HCI professionals.

Students. The two-year program typically enrolls around 60 students each Fall (total annual enrollment around 120). Admission is highly competitive, with an acceptance rate of less than 10%. About half enroll through the School of Interactive Computing, with the rest approximately divided among Industrial Design, Psychology, and Literature, Media, and Communication. Rare for a STEM program, about 2/3 of enrolled students are women. Since 2021, about 20% (total 61) of admitted students graduated from USG institutions.

Personnel. The Program is administered by a full-time Program Director (Prof. Henneman) and Assistant Director (Dr. Bruce), and a part-time Academic Program Manager (Ms. Theresa Nash). Each participating School provides a faculty Associate Director for academic advising and admission decisions. Over fifty Georgia Tech faculty members are identified as "HCI Faculty" who advise students and teach in the curriculum.

Curriculum. The MS-HCI curriculum includes: a 9-credit common core taken in the first semester (HCI Foundations, Psychological Research Methods, and Professional Practice Seminar); specialization courses (9-12 credits) within the admitting school; general electives (9-12 credits) from across campus; and a Master's Project (6 credits), often completed with industry sponsors. The core courses are coordinated to provide shared understanding of fundamental theories and methods through team-based projects.

Partnerships. Our students benefit from partnerships with research labs across campus, including those affiliated with GT's Institute for People and Technology (IPaT), the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI), and the Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation (CIDI). Through these collaborations, students engage in research, secure Graduate Research Assistantships, and work closely with faculty and research scientists. Further, many of our students work as GTAs in courses in schools across campus.

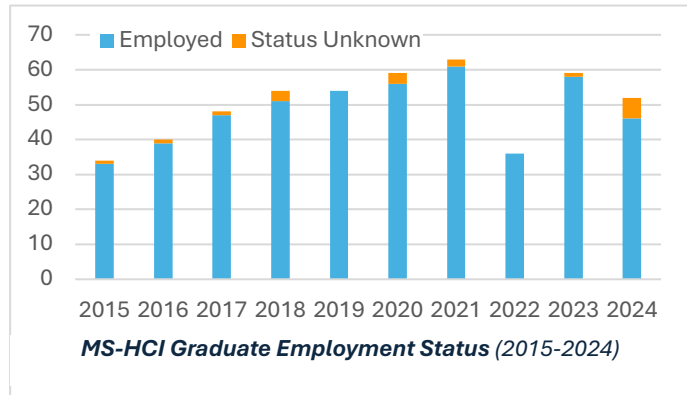
Beyond research, the Program has cultivated an extensive community of HCI practitioners and alumni who co-advise Master's Projects and course projects, deliver guest lectures, participate in the annual mock interview event, mentor students, and help facilitate job placements. The annual Interactivity recruiting event further connects students to this professional network, strengthening their pathways into industry.

Recognition. The Program has received strong and consistent recognition. Its most recent Academic Program Review (2017) noted that "the MS-HCI is a top program in the field, known internationally as one of the top five." Over 11 years of the IPaT-sponsored Foley Scholar Awards, MS-HCI students have won eight times and been finalists 27 times. Program leadership and staff have also been honored: Drs. Henneman and Bruce received GUV's 30th Anniversary IMPACT Awards in 2022; Dr. Bruce earned the College of Computing's "Outstanding Research Scientist" Award in 2016 and "Outstanding Research Faculty Leadership Award" in 2023; and Ms. Nash received the College's "Outstanding Academic Advising" Award in 2024.

Student Success Data

Graduation Rates. The program has a very high graduation rate. The total number of students who entered the program between 2013 and 2023 was 581. Of these, 574 graduated with MS-HCI degrees, resulting in a graduation rate of over 99%. A handful of students have taken longer than 4 semesters to complete the program, primarily due to completing more than 1 internship or by working in off-campus jobs while enrolled.

Job Placement. Despite recent AI-driven shifts in corporate hiring, our graduates maintain strong job placement rates. We track alumni employment through direct outreach and LinkedIn monitoring. This chart demonstrates robust employment outcomes among our graduates. Note that "Status Unknown" indicates missing data rather than unemployment.



Top employers. Our graduates work in a variety of companies, from large technology firms to start-ups. The adjacent word cloud provides a visualization of employers of our graduates (font size correlates with number of alumni; figure includes only firms with two or more alumni). Most of our alumni work in careers with job titles like “User Experience Designer”, “User Researcher”, and “User Interface Developer”. Between 2021 and 2025, almost 20% of our alumni have remained in Georgia post-graduation.

PhD Enrollment. Although a professional degree program, a small number of MS-HCI graduates pursue doctoral studies each year. Between 2021 and 2025, twenty-eight students entered HCI-related PhD programs at institutions including Georgia Tech, UC Berkeley, Carnegie Mellon University, UC Irvine, the Royal College of Art, University of Washington, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. At least four of our alumni have gone on to academic faculty positions.

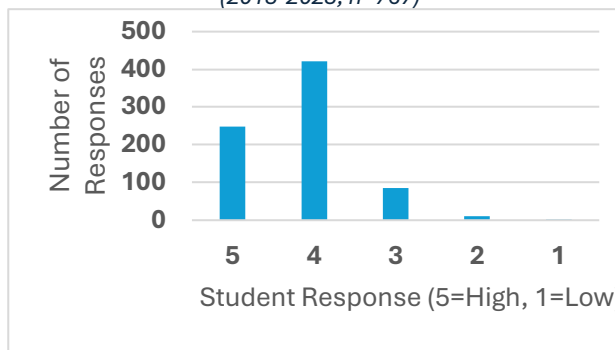
Evidence of Excellence

This section presents evidence of the MS-HCI Program's teaching excellence across all seven award criteria. For each criterion, we provide documentation and data that demonstrate our commitment to innovative pedagogy, collaborative teaching practices, assessment-informed improvement, and student success. We begin with longitudinal data on alumni career outcomes that illustrate the positive impact of the MS-HCI curriculum and instruction by Georgia Tech faculty and researchers.

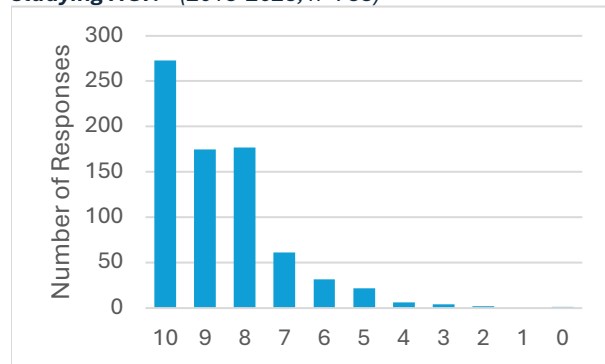
Evidence of Student Impact

Annual Satisfaction Survey. Across 10 years of data, 87% of students rate their satisfaction as Very High or High, rating the program at an average of 4.2 out of 5. Scores are remarkably stable across cohorts (range: 4.1-4.3). This sustained excellence across student populations and program iterations demonstrates that core program strengths reliably meet student expectations and needs.

"Rate your level of satisfaction with the MS-HCI Program"
(2015-2025, n=767)



"How likely is it that you would recommend the MS-HCI Program to a friend or colleague who was interested in studying HCI?" (2015-2025, n=753)



Net Promoter Score (NPS). We also measure students' likelihood of recommending the Program to their friends and professional networks. As a widely recognized indicator of satisfaction and perceived value, NPS reveals whether students view their experience as worth endorsing to others. Our average score of 58.6 over ten years exceeds the 50-point threshold often recognized for excellence in higher education, with annual results ranging from 47.2 to 73.4

C1. Commitment to Teaching and Learning

The MS-HCI Program demonstrates commitment to teaching excellence through faculty leadership development, systematic curriculum review, and investment in instructional resources.

Faculty Leadership in Teaching. Dr. Carrie Bruce has served on the Georgia Tech Graduate Transformative Teaching and Learning Working Group for several years and is part of the current cohort of Leaders in Teaching and Learning with GT's Center for Teaching and Learning. This year-long program develops faculty leaders to foster effective teaching within disciplinary units across campus through regular professional development, community building, and mentorship.

Curriculum Innovation and Review. Program Associate Directors conduct annual reviews of the MS-HCI curriculum, identifying courses to retire and proposing cutting-edge courses for approval. For example, our CS 6756 course (HCI Applications) was added in Spring 2021 because of student feedback and curriculum review that suggested another industry project course would enable closer ties to professionals and their evolving practices. All curriculum changes require approval from curriculum committees at each participating school—ensuring interdisciplinary collaboration—before advancing to the Institute Graduate Curriculum Committee. This multi-layered review process maintains quality and relevance across the program. In addition, the Program has funded new courses for MS-HCI students, including an HCI Project Studio, Visual Design and Paper Prototyping for HCI.

Instructional Support. The Program provides additional teaching assistant support for core courses, giving faculty richer resources for instruction and students enhanced learning support. The Program also purchases materials for hands-on learning activities and provides software licenses to ensure students have access to industry-standard tools.

C2. Pedagogical Innovation and Student Engagement

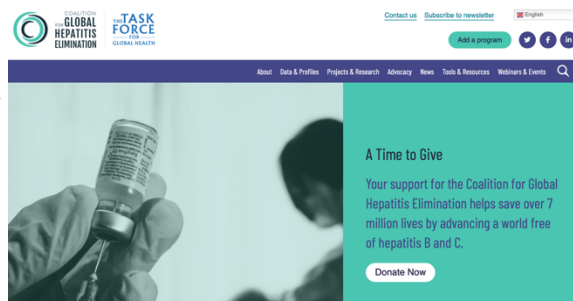
Industry Integration & Professional Partnerships

We maintain strong engagement with industry professionals, enriching the student experience and ensuring curriculum relevance. Since 2014, the program has partnered with over 600 industry and community professionals, connecting students with practical experiences and mentorship. The following chart shows the number of **connections by organization** across the years as they participated in project advising, guest lectures, panels, and job skills workshops (many connections involved multiple individuals).

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Project Advisor			2	4	10	11	14	20	22	20	33	22
Job Skills Workshop		27	15	30	19	13	25	32	35	43	37	42
Guest for Lecture/Panel	5	5	6	6	8	12	6	11	11	13	12	6

Industry and non-profit sponsored projects.

Externally partnered projects (especially in our core Research Methods and Design Foundations courses) are among students' most valued experiences. For example, two students recently supported The Task Force for Global Health's Center for Operational Research on Hepatitis B by conducting research and prototyping for their hepatitis B elimination website.





Alumni Panels. Each fall, alumni panels share their journeys in HCI with current students, providing insights into diverse career paths and possibilities students may not have previously considered. In the spring, alumni help admitted students navigate enrollment decisions by sharing their own experiences choosing Georgia Tech. Throughout the year, additional alumni visits enable intimate one-on-one and small group conversations focused on career guidance and personalized advice.

Interactivity. The research showcase and networking event for our students started in 2012 and is focused on facilitating interactions among students and industry professionals for hiring opportunities. It includes a One-Minute Madness activity, poster expo, and guest speakers. The past two events were co-sponsored with GT's Institute for People and Technology.



Experiential & Skills-Based Learning

Public Speaking w/ Improv Theater Company.

We partner with Dad's Garage, a local improv theater group, to help students build public speaking confidence. Through interactive exercises, students develop skills to think on their feet, speak clearly, and present themselves professionally. The sessions blend entertainment with practical communication training that students carry into their careers.



Job Skills Workshop. Each year, alumni and other UX professionals volunteer for our Job Skills Workshop, conducting practice interviews and offering feedback on resumes, portfolios, and LinkedIn profiles. Students gain real-world insights and confidence, while volunteers value the chance to give back. By aligning volunteer expertise with students' career goals, the event has become highly rewarding for everyone involved.

In-class Learning Activities. Many courses feature hands-on practice. The core Research Methods class includes weekly activities like survey design or usability testing, while HCI Project Studio uses a studio format for frequent learning exercises. Students consistently give positive feedback about this practical approach in semester- and year-end surveys.



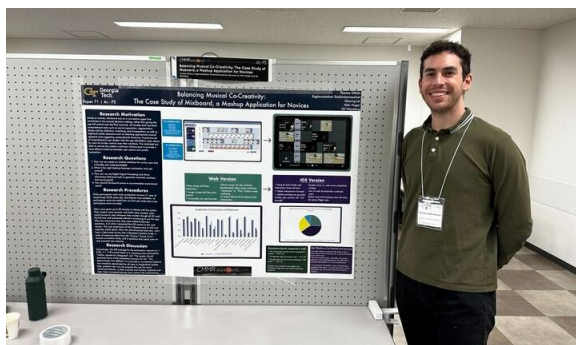
Real-World Applied Learning and Professional Development

Internship program. Students complete paid industry internships between their second and third semesters. Students apply research and design methods in professional settings, explore career directions and organizational cultures, and build industry experience. As the adjacent LinkedIn post demonstrates, students consistently identify internships as critical to their MS-HCI education.



amazing privilege of working with the most positive, wholesome, and inclusive team.

Today closes my chapter at [United Wholesale Mortgage](#)!! Being from Seattle, and spending the last year in Atlanta, I had never heard of Pontiac MI before, but the end of my journey here is extremely bittersweet. I had the



Conference Scholarships. Since 2015, the Program has awarded travel grants to ten or more students annually to attend premier venues such as the ACM SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems. Recipients share their experiences through internal reports and social media, fostering knowledge exchange across the student community.

Peer-to-Peer Learning & Student Leadership Enhance Belonging

Graduate Council is an elected group of students that meets weekly with the Program Director to share student needs, promote professional development, and strengthen our community. Five new members are elected at the end of the Fall semester. The Council supports activities such as the Buddy Program, fall camping trip, Piedmont Park days, international festivals, and more.



Social Media Team. Our student-run Social Media Team manages the program's presence across [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [X](#), [Medium](#), [YouTube](#), and our podcast, [HCHive](#). Each channel has a team of contributors who develop and share content. These platforms have become essential for showcasing our community by helping prospective students learn about the program, keeping alumni and friends connected, and giving current students hands-on experience in managing an organization's online presence and brand.



Since 2019: In 2024-2025, 25 posts | 84,060 impressions | 1,635 reactions



Since 2019: 182 posts | 1373 followers



Since 2020: 50 episodes | 3862 plays



Since 2017: 10 public videos | 26,034 views



Since 2020: 25 posts | 34,192 impressions | 17,491 reads



Since 2020: 170 posts | 523 followers



Leadership Challenge Course. Before classes begin, incoming MS-HCI students tackle Georgia Tech's Leadership Challenge Course, a high ropes experience designed to build community, belonging, and teamwork. Through group challenges, problem-solving activities, and a zip-line finale, students connect with their peers while building trust, collaboration, and confidence for the year ahead.

Buddy Program. The Graduate Council's Buddy Program pairs first-year students with second-year guides who offer support and advice as newcomers adjust to Georgia Tech and the program. Matches are based on shared interests and goals, and most students take part.

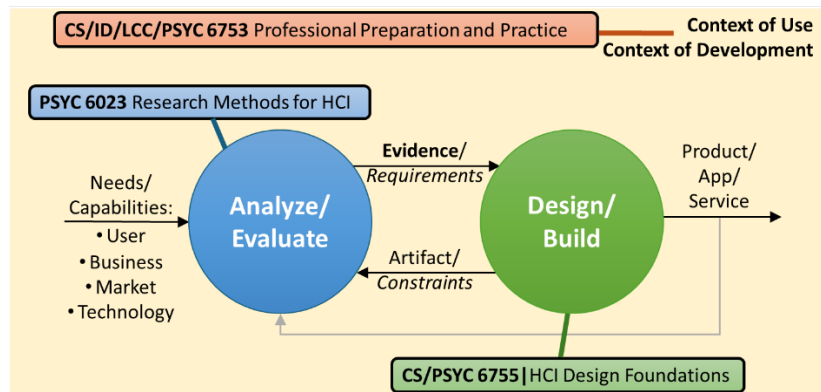


Resume and Portfolio Reviews help students strengthen their professional materials through peer support. The Portfolio Review offers focused time to refine content and presentation, while the Resume Review pairs students as Givers and Receivers to exchange personalized feedback. Together, these sessions build skills and confidence in presenting one's experience and goals.

C3. Program-Level Collaboration and Integration

Our program-level integration is grounded in a conceptual model of Human-Computer Interaction that structures the curriculum and guides coordination across courses.

Conceptual Model Driving Curriculum Design. Our core courses are organized around an Evidence-Based Design framework—the iterative process of conducting research to build evidence and performing evaluation to validate or refine designs. The adjacent figure maps each core course to specific phases of the design process:



- **Research Methods** course (blue) equips students with methods for gathering user requirements and evidence that inform design decisions.
- **Design Foundations** course (green) focuses on interpreting research findings and creating design artifacts that address user needs. These two courses operate in an iterative cycle, with research informing design and evaluation generating new research questions.
- **Professional Preparation and Practice** course (orange) provides students with knowledge of diverse work contexts and development environments, enabling them to navigate different professional settings and chart their career trajectories.

This evidence-based framework directly shapes the learning objectives documented in all three core course syllabi and defines the structure of the two-semester Capstone Project, where students must complete the full cycle from research through design to evaluation.

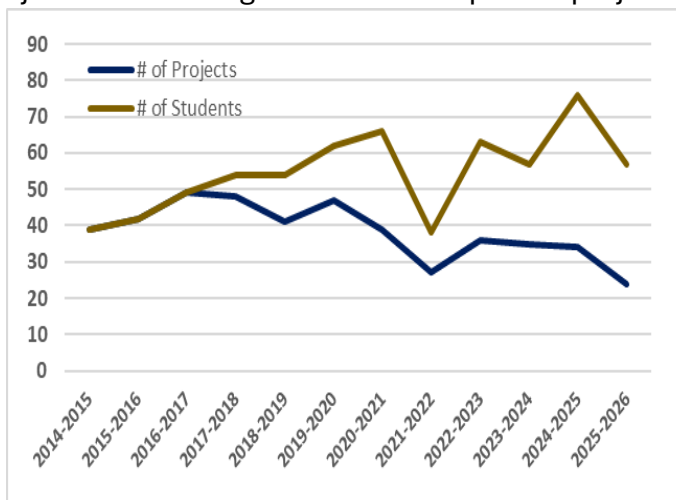
Core course faculty collaboration. Faculty teaching the three core courses formalize their collaboration through summer planning sessions and weekly coordination meetings throughout each semester. These meetings address topic sequencing, deliverable timing, student feedback, and project alignment.

Week/Day	Date	PSYC 6023 MW 3:30-4:20 TR 11:00 - 12:15 Scheller 300	DUE DATES (6023)	DUE DATES (6755)	CS/PSYC 6755 MW 9:30 - 10:45 Paper Tricentennial 109	DUE DATES (6753)	CS/ID/PSYC/LMC 6753 TR 15:30 -- 17:25 Scheller 300	Week/Day	Date
1.1	8/21/2023	Introduction and Class Overview, Project Intro,			Introduction and Class Overview			1.1	8/21/2023
1.2	8/22/2023	Human Abilities and Diversity						1.2	8/22/2023
1.3	8/23/2023	User Research Basics / Research Ethics			A Brief Overview of Sustainability, Equity, and User Experience			1.3	8/23/2023
1.4	8/24/2023	User Research Basics / Project Work	R0 Due				CLASS 1 Introduction: MS-HCI Professional Practice and Preparation Program Highlights + Upcoming Events IPaT Resources -- Tim Trent MS-HCI Graduate Council	1.4	8/24/2023
1.5	8/25/2023							1.5	8/25/2023
2.1	8/28/2023	Existing Evidence; Observations		"D0 Due"	UCD, Frameworks, Design Processes, Identifying the problem space	Survey 1		2.1	8/28/2023
2.2	8/29/2023	Task Analysis - Decomposition and Dissection						2.2	8/29/2023
2.3	8/30/2023	Project Work			Know Your User 1: Abilities, Perception, Action, Cognition			2.3	8/30/2023
2.4	8/31/2023	Interviews					CLASS 2 SCAEPALOOZA! A campus-wide scavenger hunt	2.4	8/31/2023
2.5	9/1/2023		CIT Training due					2.5	9/1/2023
3.1	9/4/2023	LABOR DAY			LABOR DAY		LABOR DAY	3.1	9/4/2023
3.2	9/5/2023	Contextual Interviews - Part 1	Scheller			Survey 2 (Tuesday)		3.2	9/5/2023

C4. Use of Assessment to Improve Teaching

Our program and course assessments drive continuous improvement. Several examples are given below.

Shift to team-based projects. Feedback from our 2017 Academic Program Review and annual Spring student surveys led to a major shift: allowing team-based capstone projects alongside solo work. In 2017-2018, we piloted four team projects out of 48 total. Team projects have since grown from 19% to over 90% in the past two years (91% in 2024-2025 and 93% in 2025-2026). This shift reduced total projects from a high of 49 in 2016-2017 to 24 in 2025-2026, resulting in more robust work with 2-3 students contributing per project, reduced faculty advising burden, and lower administrative overhead. Students receive better support and produce higher-quality work.

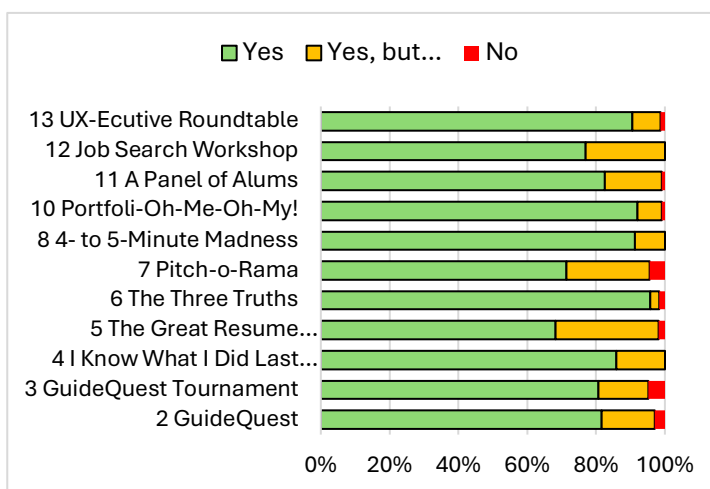


Improvements to core courses. Our continuous improvement efforts focus primarily on required courses. In 2016, we partnered with the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to conduct student focus groups identifying improvements to Research Methods (PSYC 6023) and Design Foundations (CS 6755). Major changes included: 1) replacing PSYC 6023's separated lecture and lab with a coordinated lecture/studio structure incorporating active learning; 2) adding a course project to PSYC 6023; and 3) updating CS 6755 content. We refine these courses annually based on CIOS (GT's course instructor survey), mid-term surveys, and informal feedback. Student perception improved dramatically: the proportion citing required courses as a "Best Part" of the program grew from 20% (2014-2017) to over 35% starting in 2018. The ongoing PSYC 6023 upgrades have proven particularly successful, with 69% of students in a 2025 survey citing it as a program highlight.

Continuous Improvement of HCI

Professional Preparation and Practice (PPP).

MS-HCI students take the required PPP course twice during their program, necessitating ongoing curriculum updates to ensure fresh content and experiences. Each week, students complete a survey asking whether that week's activity should be retained in future course iterations, along with qualitative feedback explaining their response. The adjacent chart shows example results from Fall 2025 (n=114). This student



input directly informs curriculum refinement—guiding decisions to modify, remove, or introduce activities that best prepare students for UX careers.

C5. Support and Recognition of Good Teaching

The Program actively supports and celebrates faculty who demonstrate teaching excellence through multiple mechanisms: teaching awards, financial resources for student research, capstone advising support, and structured opportunities for faculty engagement.

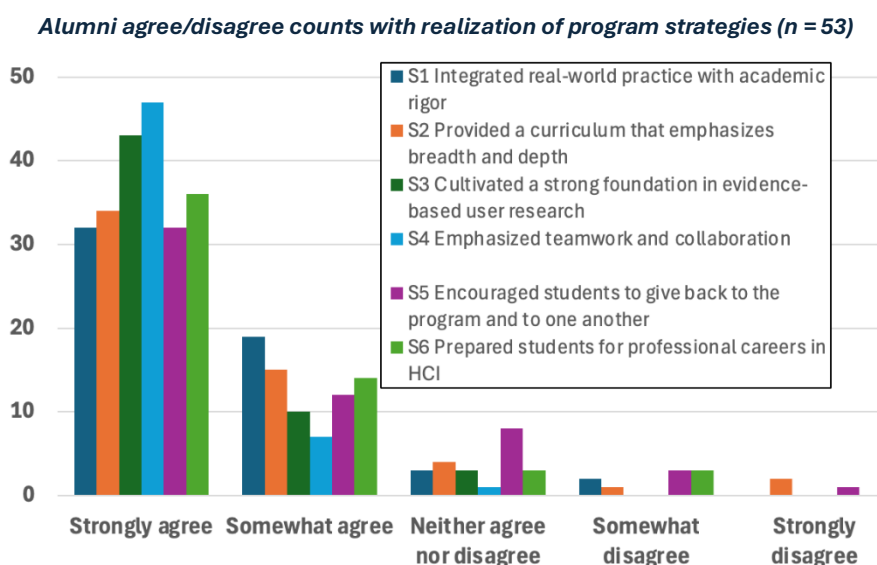
Recognition of Teaching Excellence. Between 2020 and 2025, MS-HCI faculty collectively received 12 selections to the Institute-wide **CIOS Honor Roll** and 5 **Student Recognition of Excellence in Teaching Annual Awards** based on Georgia Tech's Course Instructor Opinion Survey (CIOS). During this same period, faculty earned 3 Faculty Awards from the Center for Teaching and Learning, which honor innovation, evidence-based pedagogy, and contributions that strengthen the Institute's instructional mission.

Faculty Support and Engagement. The Program supports faculty through financial resources and structured engagement opportunities. Each fall, the 5-Minute Madness session connects 10-15 faculty members from across participating schools and Georgia Tech units with 60+ MS-HCI students to share research and course opportunities, helping faculty recruit talented graduate assistants and collaborators.

Capstone Project Support. Since 2014, an average of over 20 faculty advisors per year have supported more than 460 capstone projects involving 650+ students. The Program provides financial resources for conference travel (7-10 students annually), research participant stipends (5-8 projects per year), and project materials and supplies (2-5 projects annually). At the annual Graduation celebration, 3-5 Outstanding Projects are recognized, honoring both faculty advisors and students.

C6. Student Success Outcomes

Alumni Survey. As the following chart illustrates, results from our Fall 2025 survey of MS-HCI alumni show broad agreement that the Program has been successful in achieving its strategic goals. Across all six strategies (described on page 1), nearly all respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed that the Program has realized these objectives. Looking more closely, alumni rated S1 (Integrating real-world practice with academic rigor), S2 (Achieving both breadth and depth of learning), and S3 (Promoting evidence-based research and design) and S6 (Preparing students for industry careers at 89% or higher. S4 (Fostering



teamwork and collaboration) received the highest rating at 98%, while S5 (Encouraging a culture of giving back) was not far behind at 81%. These strong levels of agreement reflect the Program's consistent and balanced impact across all dimensions.

Alongside their ratings, respondents offered thoughtful reflections on their experiences. The comments below capture that feedback and convey the strong satisfaction alumni feel with the Program's philosophy, curriculum, and the overall journey of earning the MS-HCI degree.

S1: *"In the core program, many courses, case studies, and projects built practical skills directly relevant to industry work. Interactions with industry partners, alumni, and workshops further bridged the gap between academia and practice. At the same time, exposure to GVU labs and research opportunities deepened my academic understanding and critical thinking—which is rare for most master's programs and very valuable training."* **(2017, Product Manager, Webflow)**

S2: *"The curriculum is comprehensive, and one can navigate it by selecting the courses that interest them most. For instance, I could take mostly design courses, while my classmates who were more interested in UX research could choose other courses that fit their career goals. The depth is inside each course."* **(2017, PhD Candidate, University of Haifa)**

S3: *"The program gives a very strong foundation of evidence-based research and design... I appreciate the academic standards instilled in me, because now at work, I know the 'ideal' user-centered research process and understand when I need to compromise to meet business needs while still advocating for my users."* **(2024, Product Designer, L3Harris)**

S4: *"Our group projects required me to consider and align with several different people and ideas. There's no scenario in the real world where open communication, discussion, alignment, and negotiation aren't part of any project. This might be the most valuable thing I learned how to do in the MS-HCI program at Georgia Tech."* **(2017, Research Manager, Meta)**

S5: *"I got soooo much help/advice from my alums, cohort and seniors during my two years in the program! I now do regular mentorship sessions for younger designers to pass along the guidance."* **(2024, UX Designer, Duolingo)**

S6: *"It changed the trajectory of my career and opened so many doors. I'm seeing the benefits every day, every interaction, every job application."* **(2018, UX Manager, Autodesk)**

C7. Shared Philosophy and Definition of Quality

The MS-HCI Program is built on the belief that outstanding human–computer interaction professionals emerge through an education that balances academic rigor with real-world practice, couples disciplinary depth with interdisciplinary reach, and is anchored in evidence-based user research. We cultivate collaborative, project-driven learning environments that reflect professional HCI practice, foster a culture of peer support and community engagement, and prepare students with the communication, portfolio, and career-ready skills essential for success in a wide range of roles. Through this holistic approach, the program develops reflective, skilled practitioners who contribute to the field—and to one another—well beyond graduation.

We express this philosophy and our expectations for program quality—rigorous curriculum, excellent teaching, a supportive culture, strong student outcomes, and continuous improvement—through a set of shared agreements and discussions:

- **Core course faculty** meet regularly and determine a shared course schedule (shown previously) that reflects the program's philosophy and expectations for quality and student success.
- **Faculty members**, upon joining the [MS-HCI faculty group](#), receive a confirmation letter outlining core expectations. Faculty members who serve as **capstone project advisors** (nearly 100 academic and research faculty members in the last 10 years) receive documentation describing project requirements that embody the program's philosophy.
- **Program Associate Directors** receive documentation detailing the responsibilities of their position, including regular review of program policies and requirements, curricular oversight, and student support. They also meet annually with program administrators to agree on admissions targets (how many new students they hope to admit through their Schools) as well as to update applicant review criteria and standards to ensure that the four Schools maintain consistent expectations for applicants. Further, Associate Directors evaluate the final capstone presentations via a common rubric that reflects quality expectations.
- **School (Department) chairs** from the four participating units sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the MS-HCI director that delineates expectations for operationalizing the program's philosophy.
- **Program Administrators** (Director, Assistant Director, and Academic Program Manager) communicate frequently—in person and through Slack, Teams, email, and phone—about all aspects of the program. Weekly in-person meetings provide dedicated time for deeper discussion and coordination.

Summary

Georgia Tech's MS-HCI Program exemplifies teaching excellence through its collaborative, interdisciplinary structure and commitment to student learning, professional preparation, and continuous improvement. Across four Schools, faculty deliver a research-driven curriculum integrating foundational theory, hands-on practice, and real-world engagement. This shared instructional model (anchored by coordinated core courses, a rigorous two-semester capstone, and faculty mentorship) ensures consistent, high-quality education. The program's evidence-based approach, from weekly formative assessments to longitudinal student and alumni feedback, demonstrates sustained investment in instructional quality.

For nearly three decades, the MS-HCI Program has been recognized as one of the field's leading graduate programs. Looking forward, the program's philosophy, strategies, and overall quality remain sound. With outstanding faculty from both teaching and research perspectives, and as rapid AI advances offer profound opportunities across process, pedagogy, and market dimensions, we are confident the MS-HCI Program will continue its trajectory of excellence. Its record of educational innovation, student-centered culture, and interdisciplinary collaboration makes it an outstanding candidate for the Regents' Teaching Excellence Award for Department or Program.