

Microsoft puzzles Tech students

Tech students compete in nationwide challenge

By Andrew Nelson
Staff Writer

Does 381SAFETY964 mean anything? One must be slightly familiar with pigpen ciphers and pop culture icons, or else the annual College Puzzle Challenge might be a little traumatic.

On Nov. 6, students at Tech and 26 other American and Canadian universities, such as M.I.T and the University of Waterloo, competed to solve as many of Microsoft's 27 puzzles as possible in 10 hours. Yes, that is a straight 10 hours, and many contestants like fifth-year CE major Daniel Frank's team may take the full amount of time or not even have time to finish.

"I did it last year, and it's different. Last year, we got all the puzzles in waves, and this year we got them all at the same time. We only have like four or five done [after about 3 hours of competition], but there are fifteen or twenty teams in the country that are finished already. We didn't finish last year, but we do it for fun," Frank said.

Students in teams of up to four—or individuals like Tech's winner Karl Jiang, a CSE PhD student—solve the puzzles that range from coding to word puzzles—like deriving the phrase "safety in numbers" from the code 381SAFETY964—to solving Kakuro, a Japanese number game, and then determining the answer to the pop culture question derived from completing said puzzle.

"Some of them are coding, but one of them had pictures of actors

in zombie movies, and we had to find who the actor was, find another zombie movie that they were in and then plug those movies into blanks and pull out random letters to make a new word, and that was the answer," Frank said.

What makes the challenge interesting is that each puzzle's instructions, if there are any, are little more than obscure clues. For example, one puzzle was eight pictures of birds on an otherwise informationless page. What the groups had to realize was that each bird's name, which they also had to determine, had a stressed letter. After all the stressed letters were found they spelled out another word, which was the solution to the puzzle.

Finally, after all the puzzles are completed, each solution to the 27 puzzles is used to solve a final meta-puzzle, although not all solutions are necessary to solve this final puzzle.

"It's a really neat experience and creative process, and it's a really good break from studying. My team is a bunch of math majors, so we're really excited about using stuff we've used in classes and applying creative thinking to solving real problems," said Michelle Delcourt, a fourth-year MATH major. "We did this last year. The server [was] not crashing for quite as long and the puzzles are actually more entertaining and more engaging than last year."

The objective of the competition, created and run by Microsoft, is to challenge students' skills in problem solving and prepare them for real problems in education and industry,

according to their website.

"We did okay, we were somewhere in the middle of Tech people. I expected to be able to approach this a lot faster the second time around, but I guess experience doesn't really have that much of an advantage," said Michael Slaughter, a fifth-year CS major. "Last year was a lot more intense, a lot less people solved the final puzzle. I think they lessened the difficulty, which made it a little more fun."

CS and MATH majors are the target demographic of the challenge, but Microsoft invites all undergraduate and graduate students. For example, Frank's group consisted of his friends, two CS majors and two CE majors.

Microsoft's college recruitment department funds the challenge, and their employees who are alumni of the participating colleges organize each event.

During the event, the two organizers from Microsoft at Tech answered students' questions and coordinated the pizza, milk and cookies logistics.

"I actually wrote a couple of the puzzles, and today we went around and made sure the teams were having fun. We have a beta on the Microsoft campus a few weeks before the actual event to make sure all the puzzles are fun," said Katie Flinn, a Microsoft software developer and CS and PSYC '08.

This is the third iteration of the College Puzzle Challenge at Tech since the fall of 2008 and the seventh competition overall.

Richardson seeks to represent Atlanta



Image courtesy of Jerica Richardson

Richardson, a Miss Georgia candidate, networks with people across Georgia to promote her social projects.

By Chris Russell
Online Editor

Jerica Richardson, a fourth-year BME major, is currently participating in the Miss Georgia USA Pageant, one of the subsidiaries of the Trump Miss USA Pageant.

Richardson said her bid for Miss Georgia USA occurred at the end of the Spring 2010 semester. She made and announced her decision to run on the final day of exams.

From the start, Richardson's bid has been community-driven.

"At the beginning, I put together a website, and it tracks from beginning to end how the pageant is actually going," Richardson said.

Richardson has maintained the site with updates on the status of the competition, keeping her supporters in the loop as much as possible. In addition, she created a Facebook page called "Jerica for Miss Georgia USA," where supporters can keep track of her progress. At the time of writing, the group had 526 fans.

"All in all, it's been fun. A couple weeks ago, we had the pageant seminar and got to meet who was organizing the whole thing and the other contestants...People affiliated with pageant came and told us what it took to win, followed—of course—by saying that we're all winners. Really, it's just supposed to get everyone in one place so they can understand what they're signing up for," Richardson said of the pageant process so far.

Richardson said the interview process can be intense. According to her, the interviews take place in an almost assembly-line fashion, where contestants pass through a gauntlet of judges in rapid succession. Contestants have 10 minutes to present themselves to each judge, and they then move to the next judge in line while another contestant takes their place.

The judges come from a variety of backgrounds, so candidates cannot rely on the same method of presenting themselves working for each judge.

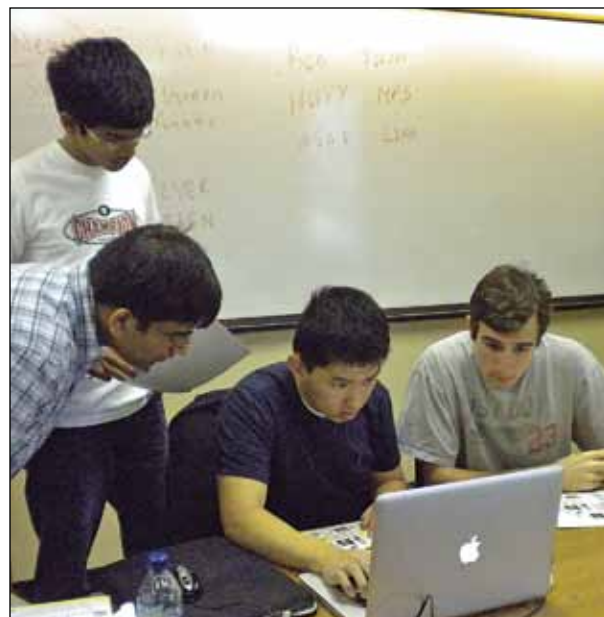
"There are different personalities. I remember when I did Miss Teen Georgia, one of the judges was an engineer, and another was really involved in her community. They had two very different approaches to trying to figure out who I was," Richardson said.

Richardson said the pageant is good reinforcing self-confidence in the contestants.

"You're going on-stage and displaying every aspect of yourself while getting judged on each one, so you really have to develop thick skin. And you still have to smile the entire time," Richardson said.

As judges pay an excruciating amount of attention to each detail of the pageant, contestants have to put an equally excruciating amount of attention into their preparations. Richardson says she is currently trying to find a suit that walks the line between being lady-like and professional.

In the pageant, Richardson is running as Miss Metropolitan to reflect her involvement in the Atlanta area. If she wins,



Photos by Sho Kitamura / Student Publications

Microsoft hosted a nationwide Puzzle Challenge to encourage teamwork, collaboration and problem solving by presenting a day's worth of brainteasers to students at Tech, MIT, Harvard and other universities.

Tech celebrates half century of integration

By Sara Rogovin
Contributing Writer

For many students, the wealth of ethnicities and cultures among students, faculty and staff becomes almost inconspicuous a few short weeks after a freshman takes his first step onto campus. However, Tech was not always the diverse community it is today.

Until the early 1960s, Tech, like many southern universities, was totally segregated. It was not until 1961 that the first African American students enrolled at Tech. This school year, the Institute celebrates the 50th anniversary of the matriculation of black students on campus.

Lawrence Williams, Ralph A. Long, Jr. and Ford C. Greene were the first black students to enroll at Tech. To honor these men and the path they put in place, Tech is hosting a series of events throughout the school year.

Even though the emotions surrounding the anniversary are ones of happiness and admiration, the road for the first three men—and for many minority students afterward—was long and trying.

"We are very proud of the fact that we integrated without violence, but we shouldn't oversell that because I think those three guys were going through a very stressful period," said Dr. Gary May, Chair of the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, '85 EE alum.

When May was a freshman, he was one of about 700 African American students out of 11,000 total students.

"We [African American] students] had our particular share of struggles," May said. "You would be in a big physics or chemistry classroom with 200 students, and



The first three African American students faced so much racial hardship that they never graduated. Tech now graduates the largest number of African American undergraduate engineers in the nation. The first black women to matriculate created new paths as well.

there may [have been] a handful of students like you in terms of their background."

Williams, Long and Greene endured many hardships. They did not have a place to eat lunch, fraternities to join or many social events.

"[African American students] were completely isolated," May said.

In fact, the environment was so difficult that none of the first three men graduated from Tech.

Nevertheless, their legacy has influenced diversity at Tech today.

"[The first African American students] help[ed] break down barriers and make people understand that at our core we are all the same," May said.

Since then, Tech has been a leader in accepting diverse populations of students, faculty and

staff. Today, Tech ranks second in the country in awarding bachelor's degrees in engineering to African Americans.

The environment at Tech today reflects the trail the men blazed.

"There wouldn't have been the first African Americans on various athletic teams, professors, graduates and homecoming queens... All of those things wouldn't have happened without somebody initiating the process, so we owe them a tremendous debt," May said of the way Tech would have been without the first African American students.

"I think sometimes we also forget that there were [other] people at the beginning—not [just] these three. There have...been many—we call them 'heroes'—who made things possible. [Others in the] student body, faculty and staff



Images courtesy of Georgia Tech Communications & Marketing

throughout the 50 years... may not get as large of a recognition because they weren't necessarily the first, but there have been a lot of contributors to the success of Georgia Tech in [terms of] diversity," May said.

A different picture of diversity exists in modern times, as this year's freshman class is the most unique in school history. Minorities make up 40 percent of the freshmen population, whose members hail from 38 nations worldwide.

Tech also continues to be a leading university for minority engineers, ranking second in engineering bachelor's degrees given to all minority students.

"Students today are [more sensitive] to the issues [than] we were because they may have had more experience in their own elementa-

ry and high schools with students of other races and nationalities, which in my generation we didn't have," May said.

The various events to be held in honor of Tech's first African Americans will allow students to participate in forums.

In Spring 2011, exhibits at the Athletic and Alumni Associations will showcase major milestones in African American history. Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed and other celebrities have also been invited to campus.

Despite the strides that the Institute has taken to promote diversity, May recognizes that there is still work to be done.

"Even today, I don't think we're quite there yet in terms of accepting each other. A lot of progress has been made, but there's a long way to go."



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Week of events redefines diversity

By Jinwoo Sung
Contributing Writer

Every year, Tech gathers students from over 100 nations and provides the student population with an ethnically diverse environment. The Office of Diversity Programs annually hosts Diversity Week to recognize Tech's ethnic variety.

Diversity Week 2010, conducted from Nov. 8 to 11, covered several issues from gender and racial discrimination to micro-aggression in the workplace.

"Diversity Week is a strategy to move us from the tolerance and understanding to appreciation, celebration and, last but not least, multicultural confidence," said Stephanie Ray, Associate Dean of Students and Director of Diversity Programs at Georgia Tech.

Entitled "Diversity: A Latitudude Adjustment," the Diversity Week events focused on the issues of discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation and disabilities.

Diversity Week launched on Nov. 8 with the book discussion and film screening of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* by Swedish author Stieg Larsson.

On Nov. 9, an audience watched clips from *Ethnic Notions* to ponder on the dangers in misrepresenting Asians, African Americans and Latinos in the media.

In the "Say My Name Say My Name" event hosted by Indian Cultural Foundation of America (ICFA) and Hindi Vihar, a Tech graduate talked about Indian culture and taught attendees how to pronounce common Indian names.

"It's a creative approach to stir the melting pot," said Gita Mahmoudabadi, a fourth-year BME

major.

In relation to this particular event, Ray stressed the growing prominence of India in the global market share, especially following President Obama's endorsement of India for the United Nations Security Council seat.

Dr. Han Zhang, a College of Management professor, discussed Chinese Nationalism in correlation to its current standing in the world affairs.

The program also included the introduction of recreational activities and equipment adapted for people with physical disabilities.

The Office of the Vice President of Institute Diversity sponsored and recruited a keynote speaker, Tim Wise, author of a recently published book *Colorblind: The Rise of Post-Racial Politics and the Retreat from Racial Equality*.

This year, Wise was the first

keynote speaker to be part of the annual Diversity Week program.

Diversity Week also hosted a Safe Space Training Part II to focus on developing tolerance of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Community.

The Lily Cai Chinese Dance Company was also a guest to this year's Diversity Week.

"Diversity Week continues to promote Tech's goal to connect and bond global talents on campus," said Jose Sarmiento, a second-year ISyE major.

Ray said she is excited to witness a new surge in the appreciation of the diversity by the Tech students.

Over 40 student organizations are designed to foster diversity at Tech.

In order to make this program reach more student body, Ray asked active students for the lead.



Photo by Basheer Tome / Student Publications

A week-long event invited Tech students to converse about books and movies to create new forums for diversity discussion.



Image courtesy of Jerica Richardson

Since moving to Atlanta, Richardson has met with prominent members of Atlanta's community to discuss pressing social issues.

Jerica

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she will go on to represent Georgia in the Miss USA pageant. Her responsibilities would include being an advocate for breast and ovarian cancer awareness and research in Georgia. Richardson also hopes to use the position to encourage service projects in education.

Richardson is originally from New Orleans but has lived all over the southeastern US, including North Carolina, Alpharetta and Marietta before moving back to New Orleans. Her family moved to Atlanta when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans.

Richardson got involved in the Miss Georgia Pageant shortly afterward.

"The last move was more unexpected, obviously, but it was time...I came up with the hurricane in '05. The next year I decided, why not do a pageant? I did Miss Teen Georgia. It was very interesting; like I said, I wasn't a Georgia native, so I didn't know too much about Georgia when it came time for the interviews. I still did fairly well; I was in the

top 15, so I went on to the finals night," Richardson said.

In addition to studying BME, Richardson is minoring in Public Policy and pursuing pre-law and pre-med certificates. Her current post-graduation plan is to go into patent law to apply her background in BME. She only plans to do this for a few years, as her long-term plan is to attend medical school and specialize in neurosurgery.

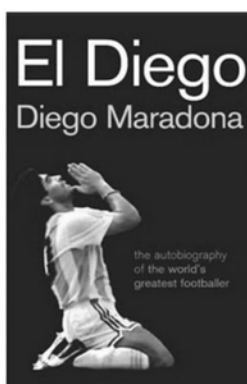
On campus, Richardson is the founder of the Society of Step. Through this organization, she says she has made several valuable connections with Atlanta community service organizations, politicians and celebrities. One of the more prominent connections she made was with Usher, whose service organization Usher's New Look hosted an event at Tech a few years ago and partnered with the Society of Step.

Richardson is in the final stages of preparation, as the pageant is fast approaching. The rehearsal will take place on Thursday, Nov. 18, and the pageant itself will occur on Nov. 19 and 20.

sliver

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all i do is reddit no matter what.
every week is hell week at GT - MZ
I am one of the 4 undoc immigs!
all hail the banana king! and his knights on bike-horses
its like saying murderers are just population controllers
but.. the refresh button is so far...
Gt would win more girls hearts if it stopped having signs like
"please dispose of sanitary products in the outside trash can."
Mystery Machine!
GREEN AND SILVER FLASH DRIVE RETURN TO CRC
front DESK. PLEASE!
cute blonde girl on NAE floor 8/9 who talked about mittens... we
need to meet up on the elevator again.
^ That's what she said.
I love watching the tour guides walk backwards!
my dorm is like a giant freezer. i'm turning into a human popsicle.
Can't wait to see the cute red-head perform at the Infinite Harmony concert!
I have given up chasing girls; you win GT.
Spicy ramen is still just ramen.
I could watch my lavalamp for an hour.
Whats with all the space invaders?
hate hahn
I love SUBNORMALITY, to whoever wrote that sliver last week
im addicted to espnu college town
why do we have class the day before Thanksgiving?
I support snacking in class, but seriously, a baked potato!?!
when's the next pi decimal reciting contest!?!?
way to go woodys, get rid of the vegetarian line and make everything with meat...
Registration had ruined the name Oscar for me
As much as I enjoy movember
You are in NO place to be handing out fashion advice
any particular reason for the two large piles of dirt behind Fulmer?



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