

## STUDENTS SPEAK OUT ON . . . . . BUDGET REDUCTIONS

By Chris Russell  
Online Editor

As the University System of Georgia (USG) continues to balance its budget, students have been left wondering how much their schools will be changed and, perhaps more worriedly, how much they will have to pay to continue their educations.

In a proposal submitted to the Chancellor of the USG on Feb. 27, the public universities of Ga. submitted outlines of how they would make cuts to total \$385 million across the system, assuming no tuition increases were made.

Overall, Tech's share of the deficit comes out to \$38 million. In order to make this up, several changes were proposed by the Institute. Among them were the elimination of 452 full and part time positions, the elimination of 540 course section offerings and reducing library hours by 42 percent.

In order to completely make up the deficit without making cuts, a 77 percent increase in tuition rates would be necessary across the state. For out-of-state students, this amounts to an increase from the Fall 2009 rate of \$24,480 to a new rate of \$42,975 per year.

Students are, understandably, concerned over how an increase in tuition would affect their school, their studies and their wallets. On Monday, Mar. 15, students from Ga. Universities converged on the capitol to protest education budget cuts and tuition hikes, and in the following weeks students voiced their opinions about the proposed budget solutions.

The event was originally organized by SGA President Alina Stastikevicius and SGA presidents from the other 34 schools in the USG. While at the protest, student government associations met with legislators to discuss their concerns over the proposed cuts.

Michael Hodgson,

second-year AE, said "If the tuition had been higher, I would have had a very different educational experience with more stress and less focus...I would, almost without a doubt, have chosen to attend one of Georgia Tech's competitor schools."

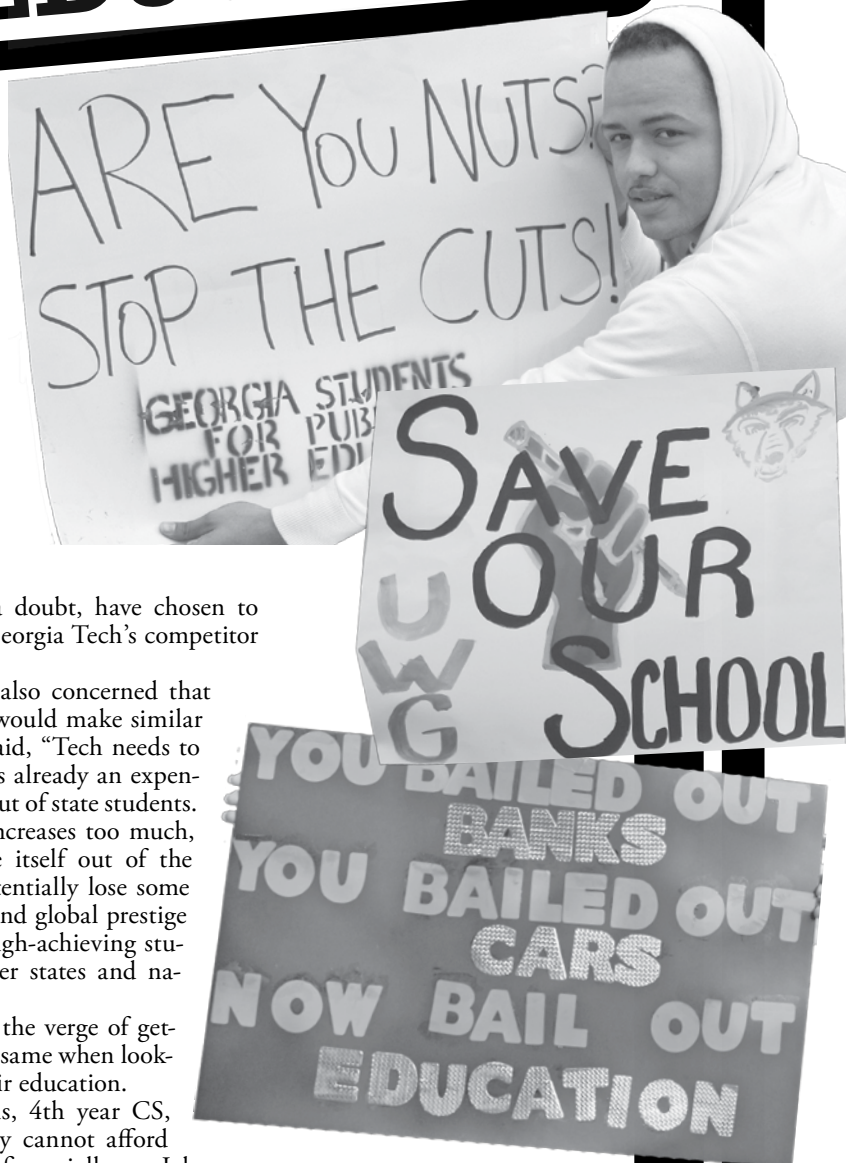
Hodgson is also concerned that other students would make similar decisions. He said, "Tech needs to be careful—it is already an expensive school for out of state students. If the tuition increases too much, Tech will price itself out of the market and potentially lose some of its national and global prestige in the loss of high-achieving students from other states and nations."

Students on the verge of getting out say the same when looking back on their education.

Katie Collins, 4th year CS, said "My family cannot afford to support me financially, so I have relied on a combination of many scholarships and grants to get me through school...I'm not comfortable funding education entirely through loans, so I would have been forced to attend more affordable community college or a potentially sub-par college that would award me a full scholarship."

Collins also feels that these increases would severely limit Tech's ability to help students with financial needs. She said, "If tuition was increased, I would be concerned about the ability of programs like the HOPE scholarship and Tech Promise to help students with financial needs. If these programs didn't exist, or were severely reduced,

See **Opinions**, page 16



Students from all of the state gathered at the capital on March 15 to protest the proposed cuts to the University System of Georgia budget.



Photo courtesy of CULC peeps

An interior rendering of the CULC shows how the space could be used by students.

## Student vote on CULC nicknames

By Kate Comstock  
Focus Editor

Students now have a chance to put their own mark on the Clough Undergraduate Learning Center (CULC) that is currently under construction. Students can vote for their favorite nickname for the building by clicking on the link when logging in to T-Square.

"We want students to feel a sense of ownership and we want them to recognize that this is a different building on campus. We thought it would be great to have the students name the building," said the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Dana Hartley.

Hartley stressed that it is important for students to feel like they have an input on the building that is designed around the needs of the student.

She also mentioned that because almost every other building on campus is named after a significant donor, it would be nice for students to leave their own mark on campus by choosing their own name for the new building. She hopes that the nicknaming process will create a presence and personality for the building on campus.

Some of the options on the survey site included: The Hive, The Node, The Interface, The Forum and The Port.

In a description of the building's uses, Hartley said, "All student-based academic services will be right there and it is meant to be an inspiring, comfortable place to be."

Because the building was designed with the use of the student body in mind, there are several unique aspects to the building that aim to make the space a more comfortable and inviting area with spaces that hope to create an optimal work and learning environment.

In addition to featuring the new labs for the science departments, the building will host a

See **CULC**, page 16



# GT Observatory lets students, public to see stars

**Andrew Nelson**  
Staff Writer

Atlanta may outshine all but a star or two on most nights, but atop the Howey Physics Building both students and the general public may bring celestial bodies into focus with Tech's first observatory.

Taking the elevator to the top floor of Howey, a flight of stairs to the roof and then a second shorter flight, the observatory is an enclosed space slightly smaller than an average classroom with a retractable roof.

Prior to construction, the platform the observatory now stands on hosted an old rusted crane; however, with funding from Northrop-Grumman the observatory was completed by April 2007, and Tech's technology fee paid for the centerpiece of the space: a 16" Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope on a computer-controlled mount connected to a big-screen high-definition TV.

"Groups of at least 15 can reserve an evening [at the observatory] for free, including residence halls, sororities, fraternities or the fire marshals," professor Dr. James Sowell, senior academic professional with the physics department and unofficial director of the observatory, said.

Groups are often much larger, attracting school field trips and Atlanta-area groups; in fact, the total combined space on the roof has been able to accommodate up to 556 people, as with the largest event two years ago during the alumni sponsored Family Weekend. Sowell also suggests using the observatory during a half-moon, but Oct. and April are usually the clearest and best times.

Public nights are monthly events at the observatory open

to students and the general community, hosted by the Astronomy Club—headed by David Zimmerman, fourth-year CS, and sponsored by Dr. Sowell—hosts most of the events at the observatory such as public nights, where they sell snacks and drinks as well.

"There is one public night left this semester on April 22, where we'll be looking at Saturn, the moon, the Orion Nebula and Mars. We will have a special two-hour radio show with WREK a couple of days before that. It's going to have astronomy-related music, and we're going to answer questions about astronomy," said Nicole Cabrera, a '09 PHYS alumni currently working with the physics department.

Cabrera works on research with Dr. Sowell and works with the observatory, helping with public nights and other large groups.

The Astronomy Club primarily provides an opportunity for Tech students to share their interest in astronomy by forums, lectures and, of course, using the observatory; most members are not physics majors or take any astronomy classes offered by the department and Dr. Sowell, rather the majority and the club's founders are aerospace majors.

The club also provides the same opportunities to the general public, hosting general talks about astronomy on campus and at local grade schools; most recently, they hosted a Montessori school field trip.

"We've been holding a merit badge clinic for the last year, teaching Boy Scouts about astronomy," Zimmerman said, "We give them a basic background about planets, the sun, constellations, tips on using telescopes and careers in astronomy. It's a group effort from all of us."

Outreach programs and events extend even further than Atlanta. The software used in conjunction with the telescope allows what is viewed through the telescope to be broadcasted as far as Australia, where the club interacts with schools; recently, they shared live images with seven elementary schools in Texas simultaneously.

Sowell would like to expand its K-12 school outreach programs internationally and partner with international universities such as Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

He also plans to eventually hire more observatory assistants and decorate the staircase leading to the roof with planetary mobiles, astronomy-related posters and a black-and-white color scheme.

He teaches three astronomy courses: The Solar System, Stellar Astrophysics and Stars, Galaxies and the Universe. The Solar System (PHYS 2021) covers general concepts of our solar system and naked-eye observational phenomena.

Stellar Astrophysics and Stars (PHYS 3021) covers stellar interiors, structure, evolution and nucleosynthesis; Stars, Galaxies and the Universe (PHYS 2022) covers types and formation of stars, general relativity, formation of the universe and extraterrestrial life.

All classes require a visit to the observatory, and all together they comprise the core of the certificate in astrophysics offered by the physics department.

Aside from major events and astronomy club meetings, students and faculty working on astrophysical and astronomical research and several full-time astrophysicists at Tech's Center for Relativistic Astrophysics also use the observatory's facilities.

Tech's telescope is not quite the largest in the area; Emory Univer-



Photo by Kelvin Kuo/Student Publications

**Nicole Cabrera and Dr. Sowell stand next to the Smith-Cassegrain that was bought in April 2007 using technology fee funding.**

sity owns a 24", and Agnes Scott owns a 30".

Barely shorter than the highest point on campus, the patio area is an adjacent open platform slightly smaller than the main observatory space, currently hosting a 12" Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope.

Sowell would like to eventually use the space as a dining or reception space for special occasions; until then, it is a prime sight-seeing point with locations as far as Lenox, Six Flags and Kennesaw Mountain in sight, as well as sunsets.



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# GTPD gets new four-legged bomb sniffing member

By Julia Turner  
Contributing Writer

Lassie...Old Yeller...Marley... American culture is just brimming with the bond between man and dog, and, as it happens, Tech is no exception. We may be the Yellow Jackets, but buzzing around, keeping us safe from nearly all forms of explosive devices are the dogs of the canine unit of the GTPD, which recently received a new member.

For the past several years, Officer Rob Turner has been a handler for the GTPD, working with the department's bomb dog, Hooch, a massive German Shepherd with an overactive salivary gland.

Hooch was trained for finding explosives, including recently discharged guns and patrol work such as suspect apprehension. Thanks to his superb olfactory senses, three murder weapons were found for cases in the Atlanta community. Sadly, his days on the force are numbered.

"He's got a bad hip," said Turner, "You can really tell when he tries to get up on a table or something. He gets his front paws up and then looks back at me like, 'Wanna help me out?'"

While his body may be ready for retirement, Hooch's mind isn't. When Turner took paternity leave for a few months, every time he and Turner went to get the mail, Hooch tried getting in the car to head to work.

Luckily for GTPD, there is a replacement ready and willing. Toby, the seventeen-month old German shepherd and new GTPD recruit, may not be as sizable as Hooch, but he certainly has serious credentials (and of course, plenty of time to fill out in size).

He was picked in Germany

and then shipped to the U.S., complete with passport and all.

"He's got several documents that he had to travel with, that amount essentially to a passport," Turner said, "It doesn't have a picture of him though."

Toby spent his first few weeks in the U.S. being trained at a kennel in Chatham County, Florida, where Turner went to meet him and finish training with about three weeks ago.

While Toby isn't trained for patrol work like Hooch was, he does have the explosive training and of the 30 different odors that are associated with bombs and explosive materials. He can discern twenty-seven.

To get their certification, Toby and Turner had to pass in three categories: open areas, buildings and cars. Apparently, the two make a good team because they passed with a one hundred percent score, finding every hidden bomb in the training, a rather unusual and impressive feat.

Training doesn't end at the kennel, though. Turner exercises the dogs by running with them and taking them for swims. Both dogs live at home with Turner.

Some days, he and his partner Officer Jonathon Gibbons, whose black lab, Spike, makes the third member of the canine team, will take the dogs to practice sniffing out explosive odors in buildings and fields. These practice sessions give the officers the exercise equivalent of running about five miles.

Officer Turner allowed the *Technique* to watch one of the dogs' training sessions where the dogs practiced finding and responding calmly to balls traced with explosive odors.

"One of the distinctions between these dogs and pets," said



Photos courtesy of the Georgia Tech Police Department

Top: Toby, the 17 month old German Shephard with Officer Turner. Below: Toby and Hooch, GTPD's K-9 veteran, with Turner.

Turner, "is their prey drive, and the want to please their handler."

Those characteristics, and their clear pet-like love of the ball, became glaringly evident as soon as Hooch got out of the car to show off his skills.

After greeting Turner with the usual dog-love, he was all nose for the game, especially once Gibbons brought the training ball into sight.

The idea is that the dog associates the smells of explosive materials with the ball so that once the ball is thrown, he tries to find it by sniffing out the smell. After the dog locates the bomb or, as in this demonstration, common explosive powder, the handlers give him the ball as a reward.

Toby was just as excited when it was his turn to get the ball. He performed just as well as the experienced Hooch, even sitting on his haunches when he located the powder that Gibbons had placed behind the car tire, a skill which Turner had said earlier he hadn't quite gotten the hang of yet.

The two dogs, and Hooch especially, certainly look the part of police dogs, but their looks and skills too go beyond mere training.

"There have been studies that show that German shepherds have the most smell receptors of all the dog breeds," Gibbons said, "with labs in a close second."

Their prime sense of smell is what makes these dogs the best choice when it comes to police work, so while they may not be Lassie, Tech should feel pretty safe in the capable hands, or paws, of the canines of the GTPD.

As members of the GTPD K-9 unit, the dogs are treated as almost the same status as officers, respected as partners in keeping campus safe.

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**Opinions** from page 13

I would not be at Tech right now.”

Other students worry that, in addition to not attracting out-of-state students, tuition hikes might actually drive Ga. students to colleges outside of the state. Mike Donohue, second-year Public Policy, isn't so worried about how a tuition hike would affect him, but still worries how it would affect education in the state.

Donohue said, “Assuming HOPE remains funded for the next two years, I won't be affected at all by the tuition increases. However, I'm worried that too severe of an increase will cause future in-state students to choose to go out of state, decreasing Ga's skilled human capital, [which] it badly needs.”

Other students seem to be concerned about the potential absence of tools for students' success if the budget cuts are severe.

“I think it is sad that we even consider having to take away from education and our tools for success,” first-year MGT Ryan Yan said.

The legislature will vote on the issue towards the end of the semester, meaning the situation is by no means set in stone. Some students worry that the late nature of these changes will unfairly impact new students come this fall.

As most graduating high school students will have already accepted offers from colleges by this time, some students feel that new college students might be making decisions based off of inaccurate information.

**CULC** from page 13

large space dedicated to one-on-one tutoring.

The CULC will also have several large areas that were designed to facilitate group work and group studying—it will resemble the current group areas in the west wing of the library. There will also be several break-out rooms that students can reserve for group work.

The building will also house services that aim to make students' lives easier, including a concierge that is a trained academic advisor, a new home for the OIT help center, a Starbucks that is open from 7 a.m. to midnight and a communication center that offers tutoring in writing.

There are other nuances that the building boasts that aim to make students' lives easier like a clear signage system that will help students find their way through the building quickly and efficiently. The building will also be open during game days to facilitate tailgaters.

The Department of Undergraduate Studies is working on creating a website that will feature clearly labeled floorplans so that students can preview the layout of the CULC.

Hartley hopes that the website and nickname voting will garner interest for the building that is slated to for completion in the fall of 2011. The official groundbreaking ceremony will be held on Monday, April 5 and students can view the floorplans on Skiles next week.



Photos courtesy of the Department of Undergraduate Studies

The CULC will offer additional outdoor space, like a rooftop deck that will hold seating and green space. The walkway in between the library and Skiles will also be redesigned for better flow.

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