

The WHISTLE

Trees moving in and out of campus per Master Plan

Michael Hagearty
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

As Georgia Tech advances implementation of its 1997 Campus Master Plan (CMP), the State Street Improvements Project that will begin construction next week requires some thinning of Tech's urban forest.

The Office of Capital Planning and Space Management has released a report detailing a tree mitigation plan for the project, which will create a major entrance on the north side of campus. It has marked a total of 16 large shade trees for removal and numerous smaller, ornamental trees to be transplanted to other parts of the campus.

To offset this loss, the Technology Square project provides an opportunity to transplant trees from that site to the main campus, adding more than will be lost at a cost-benefit of more than \$250,000.

Paul vander Horst, the master planner in Capital Planning, prepared the report. In it, he cites the administration's "concern for the environment" in the planning stages of the Master Plan and its "continuing vigilance" over the course of the Plan's implementation.



Photo by Michael Hagearty

This water oak is one of 16 shade trees to be removed in the coming months.

"Sustainable development is an overarching principle of the Campus Master Plan," vander Horst said. "Every effort is being made to

preserve the integrity of the campus in implementing the CMP to achieve its objectives in support of the Institute's Strategic Plan."

Among the trees slated for extraction, the most significant is a water oak, measuring 48 inches in diameter, at the northeast corner of State Street and Ferst Drive. According to Arboguard Inc., a tree specialist company hired to protect trees designated to remain, this 80-90 year-old tree is near the end of its normal urban lifespan of 80-100 years. As with most of the trees to be removed or transplanted, this became necessary to allow for the construction of a main north campus entrance as defined in the CMP.

The Landscape Plan for the redesigned roadway specifies planting 59 new shade trees. In addition to the new trees that will be planted on State Street, 34 shade trees and 16 ornamental trees from Technology Square will be transplanted to sites on the main campus, creating a net gain of 77 new shade trees for the campus.

vander Horst also pointed out that many of the mature deciduous trees along State Street located near the construction limit lines will not

Trees continued, page 2

Physics student awarded prestigious Truman Scholarship

Richard Hermes
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

Don't tell the math department, William Roper says, but he loved his work as a freshman calculus teaching assistant so much, he would have done it for free. Now, as Georgia's only 2001 Truman Scholar, the senior physics major is on his way to a lifetime of teaching and mentoring in a career as a professor.

Roper, from Madison, Ga., is one of 80 scholars selected from 600 national candidates nominated for the award. Each scholarship provides \$30,000 — \$3,000 for the senior year and \$27,000 for two or three years of graduate study. A mere 21 years old, Roper's life is rich with stories that seem tailor-made to the criteria that the Truman Scholarship Foundation looks for — outstanding leadership potential, communication skills,

academic achievement, and a commitment to public service.

He's taken trips as a missionary to the impoverished Blue Mountain region of Jamaica, for instance, where, as he describes it, "the mosquitoes are as big as birds." He saw a need for help in an after-school program at the local Morgan County Middle School, so he provided it, organizing high-school students to serve as tutors for everything from science to the saxophone. As the vice president of the Georgia Future Business Leaders of America, he stood before the State Legislature and asked for funding to take his program statewide. Roper administered the growth of the program, called GUIDE (Guiding Underclassmen in Directions of Excellence), to more than 400 Georgia schools, logging thousands of miles along the way. He's also a Tae Kwon Do black belt, a member of the Georgia Tech

Chamber Choir, a state public speaking contest winner, a volunteer with the Techwood Tutorial Project, and a published scholar with a near-perfect academic record.

Most remarkable, say those who know him best, is his sense of service. Roper points out, however, that he didn't always wholeheartedly believe that one person can make a difference in the world. He credits his experience as the founder of GUIDE with providing the spark that allowed him to embrace a sense of idealism.

"Even great ideas have inertia," Roper said. "It takes a lot of force and energy to get them moving on



Photo by Daniel Uhlig

their own, and the bigger they are, the more you have to push. But if you can just get them moving, they have the potential to keep momentum for a long time."

"If you love what you're doing," he added, "you want to see it come to fruition so badly you'll give everything to make it happen."

At the same time, Roper says

Roper continued, page 2

Architecture students help West End design master plan

Sean Selman
Institute Communications
and Public Affairs

A group of senior design students eager to apply their architecture skills to a real-world urban revitalization project are working closely with city planners and neighborhood stakeholders to develop a master plan for historic West End in the southwest corner of the city.

The 12 students are led by College of Architecture Instructor Herman Howard. He has structured a design studio that works in conjunction with efforts of the West End Neighborhood Development Group, the City of Atlanta Planning Department and the Atlanta Regional Commission to study West End and the possibilities it might hold for future development.

Among their goals are to develop alternatives for underused or vacant property; encourage infill and redevelopment; develop streetscape and pedestrian/bicycle linkages to a range of travel modes; connect the transportation center to other centers; create civic space and focal points; preserve the historic characteristics of the center; and to improve the community identity.

Howard said the West End Community recently earned a grant from the Atlanta Regional Commission to study transportation patterns and

land use possibilities in the area. The City of Atlanta would like to study infrastructure improvements that would encourage live, work and play environments in the area around the West End MARTA station, he said. The grant is intended to help the community plan developments that promote pedestrian activity and smart growth.

“With this grant, the West End community has a great opportunity to become a strong transportation hub that can support the type of mixed-use development that city officials see as

Activity Node to its fullest potential. Students examine urban design as architectural theory and practice. They also research and analyze the West End area, study the design of its urban framework and then come up with specific design proposals within that framework.

“Student design studios like this provide a great synergy of benefits,” said Ellen Dunham-Jones, director of the Architecture Program. “The input from the community helps the students reflect deeply on the real-life ramifications of their design

decisions. At the same time, the students’ fresh ideas and visualizations can be a terrific vehicle for discussion for the city and community alike to better plan for their future.”

Howard said that West End is ripe for development, especially due to its rich past. The area began its history as a traveler’s rest stop at Charmer Humphries’ Whitehall Tavern and pre-dates the settlement of Atlanta by two years, he said. A community that developed around the tavern became

known as West End in 1867. It was annexed into the city in 1894. By the 1920s several prominent Atlantans called West End home. The area began to lose residents and turned towards commercial development when Interstate 75/85 and Interstate 20 were built in the 1950s and 1960s.



Photo by Stanley Leary

Instructor Herman Howard, left, discusses a senior’s design project recently developed by students working to study West End for improved live, work and play environments.

key to improving the metro area’s air quality while keeping the economy strong,” Howard said.

The architecture students have divided into several teams that focus on different study areas within the neighborhood as part of their project. The purpose of their study is to formulate strategies to develop the West End



The Whistle

Editor: Michael Hagearty

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

The Whistle can be accessed electronically through the Georgia Tech web page, or directly at www.whistle.gatech.edu.

E-mail Whistle submissions to michael.hagearty@icpa.gatech.edu, or fax to Michael at 404-894-7214 at least 10 days prior to desired publication date. For more information, call 404-894-8324.

Cost/\$675

Copies/5,200

Institute Communications and Public Affairs
Wardlaw Center
177 North Avenue
Atlanta, Georgia 30332-0181

Georgia Tech is a unit of the University System of Georgia.

Roper, continued from page 1

he’s grateful for the lessons he has learned about pushing too hard. After a low point when he exhausted himself to a state of illness during a stretch of exams in 1999, he was forced to “remember that I did have limitations,” an important step in his maturation.

Vice President for Student Affairs Lee Wilcox knows Roper well; he counseled him during that stressful time and he runs with him regularly. “Will has developed a very healthy balance in his life. He’s brilliant and creative, but he’s also a fundamentally good person with a strong sense of service. He has a lot to

give and a genuine desire to do that.”

This summer Roper will graduate after only three years, a feat almost unheard of at Tech. He plans to stay for his master’s — on his advisor’s recommendation, he has taken graduate-level physics classes since his sophomore year, and he is now two courses short of a graduate degree.

“I received a lot of support from the physics department,” Roper said, “and I would not have gotten the scholarship without Paul Hurst [director of Special Programs]. He believed in me.”

As grateful as he is for the Truman, Roper also has his sights set on another milestone: in October he’ll apply for the

Rhodes Scholarship, hoping to be the first ever recipient from Georgia Tech since the 1950s. In the end, he says, he “would like to leave something of lasting impact” to his alma mater, perhaps by returning to teach if the opportunity arose.

That sounds like a good idea to President Wayne Clough.

“Will is the kind of student that illustrates the best of what tomorrow can hold,” Clough said. “It is exciting to see an extremely bright young person who aspires to teach. Georgia Tech is tremendously proud of his accomplishments, and we know he has a wonderful future ahead of him.”

Trees, continued from page 1

be removed. Rather, these trees will receive special treatment defined by Arboguard in order to protect them from the effects of construction.

“The value of trees to our campus cannot be overemphasized,” he said. “From pollution filtration to noise abatement to temperature reduction in Atlanta’s urban heat island, they provide an invaluable service to us. Effective management of

our urban forest is paramount.”

Divided into two phases, the overall project calls for a widening of State Street, creating a median and separate lane for cyclists. The State Street Improvements Project is the latest priority for the Campus Master Plan, a multi-phase development package emphasizing the physical transition of the campus, land and building use, vehicular and pedestrian circulation and infrastructure.

Master’s student grateful for Tech’s support during difficult first year

Michael Hagearty
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

Graduate students expect certain hardships when they choose to pursue advanced degrees. The workload will undoubtedly be greater, personal time will be reduced to nil, and the financial strain can be considerable.

Now factor in being a single mother in a new city, 1,200 miles from a familiar face. Then add a robbery and a house fire. It begs the question: how does school remain a focus?

Michelle Mondragon, a graduate student in the School of Public Policy, can relate, for it pretty well sums up her first year at Tech.

Coming to Tech from Colorado last fall with an 11-year-old son in tow, Mondragon recounted her excitement at the opportunity to work toward her master’s but concern for whether she was going to be able to balance the aspects of her new routine. During the fall semester, it was classes and work during the day and home with her son at night. This was a manageable arrangement, she said, but the transition was difficult.

“I never realized how much I needed my family and friends when student meetings and schoolwork kept me from caring for my son. Knowing nobody [in Atlanta], I couldn’t entrust anybody to watch him for me.”

They headed home to Colorado during the holiday break. When they returned, Mondragon and her son found that their Chamblee apartment had been burglarized.

“They literally went Christmas shopping through our house,” she said, noting that the violation was especially traumatic for her son.

Additionally, she realized that evening classes were unavoidable, and faced the added guilt of leaving him to fend for himself three nights a week.

Her confidence low, she admitted, “it was at this point that I thought about going home.” Mondragon’s eldest son, now 27 and living in California, offered to come to Atlanta and assist.

She had hoped this new living situation would relieve some of the burden, but before her son could make the trip east, more adversity was yet to come. While on her way home from class one Monday night back in January, Mondragon found several fire trucks outside her complex, blocking her entrance. Running inside the complex, she saw that the two-alarm blaze was located on the roof of her unit’s building.

“My heart fell to my feet,” she said, as she thought of her son alone in the apartment. Soon after she received word that her son was safe, the fire fell through into her apartment, consuming all their possessions. With a voice that still shakes in recounting the evening, Mondragon lamented, “it took everything but our car.”

A notice that went out to faculty and staff shortly thereafter brought attention to her misfortune. She called the response “overwhelming.”

“It was phenomenal. Every day I was sorting through clothes, china, pots and pans — I was getting things I had never been able to obtain for myself. My priority had always been with my kids.”

Most of all, she found a peace she had not had since she left the familiar surroundings of her home state nine months ago.

“What I’ve come to understand [about Tech] is that while people are wrapped up in their own lives, there is a community here that is ready to help when someone needs it. Most of the people who gave were strangers who had no idea who we were.”

True charity, it has been said, is anonymous. Still, Mondragon wants the community to be aware of the depth of her gratitude.

“Those people who don’t wish to be known should know that I wouldn’t be here today, continuing my education, if it weren’t for them,” she said. “I gave up a lot to be here, but they have given me more than I’ve ever had before, and that really means a lot to me.”

Then, in true Tech fashion, she emphasized her new resolve.

“And I’m damn sure going to stay.”



At far right, Michelle Mondragon with her family. She plans to use her master’s degree to get involved with congressional research on environmental legislation and lobbying.

Got kids? Summer enrichment programs offer respite

Michael Hagearty
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

The students may be leaving for the summer, but that doesn’t mean that activity will wane. In some cases, it may get even more lively.

That’s because a number of academic, artistic and athletic endeavors are being offered during those months, bringing hundreds of children — from elementary school to high school — to campus in lieu of lounging poolside. Parents looking for summer enrichment programs for their kids will find that Tech has no shortage of options.

Institute Partnerships promotes the most comprehensive listing of summer courses, listing events by grade levels. In addition, they have compiled a list of programs geared for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as for K-12 teachers looking to supplement their methods.

“It was born out of a need for teachers who were involved [in community outreach] to know exactly what was available at Tech,” said Teressa Warfield-Francis, assistant director of

Institute Partnerships. “But we’ve seen that it’s been helpful to the community and to our partners as well to have all this information in one brochure.” The Georgia Tech home page offers a link to the summer programs brochure.

The Robert Ferst Center for the Arts will offer its annual drama camp, a course that introduces children aged 8-13 to all of the major areas of study: acting, playwriting, directing, musical theater, improvisation and technical. The four-week day camp is capped with a final play, conceived and produced entirely by the students.

Of course, one of the most popular summer programs each year is Camp Wreck-A-SAC, weeklong day camps in which children from 6-12 participate in field trips, athletics and arts and crafts. In addition, a new 12-day adventure camp was designed, as Outdoor Recreation Program Director Will Marble put it, “for the kids who are getting too old for Wreck-A-SAC.” Students aged 12-16 will find that the Adventure Camp is modeled after the Outward Bound program, which develops social and environmental attitudes through recreational activities such as hiking, camping and white-

water rafting.

More traditional athletic camps are held during the summer as well. Members of Tech coaching staffs will be providing students with instruction in football, basketball, swimming, golf and tennis, among others. All are day camps, typically lasting for one week.

For more information...

K-12 & Beyond
http://www.copp.gatech.edu/K-12_Broch_FINAL.pdf
Jocelyn Thomas, 894-5187

GTAA summer camps (dates vary)
<http://www.ramblinwreck.com/local/camps.html>

Drama camp (July 9 – August 3)
Sarah Prince, 894-2787

Camp Wreck-A-SAC (dates vary)
<http://www.campusrecreation.gatech.edu/camp/GeneralInfo.htm>
Nancy Williams, 894-5437

ORGT Adventure Camp (June 17 – June 28)
Will Marble, 894-6267