THE WHISTLE

Campus emergency procedures get dusted off, revised

Bob Harty
Institute Communications
and Public Affairs

In order to respond to situa-tions akin to the recent winter storm, the Hazardous Weather/ Emergency Conditions Plan — whose purpose is to set forth policies, pro-cedures, lines of responsibility, authority and communications neces-sary to effect a rapid and orderly process for either canceling classes or closing the campus — has been amended to incorporate all available technologies.

As with the Jan. 3 incident, weath-er or other emergency situations may make it necessary for Tech to declare either "classes cancelled" or "campus closed" conditions. Which declaration is made will determine which employ-ees are required to come to work.

When a "classes cancelled" condi-tion is in effect, all classes and instructional laboratories are affect-ed; students and instructional faculty are not to report to campus. Administrative and research activities not directly tied to the instructional function will generally continue as normal, unless otherwise instructed

by a supervisor. Other support employees may also be instructed not to report to work at the discretion of the administrator responsible for each major division.

When a "campus closed" condition is in effect, no employees are to report to work, except those previ-ously designated as "emergency essential" by their department, or otherwise instructed by a supervisor.

When the decision is made by the senior vice president for Administration and Finance to declare either "classes cancelled" or "campus closed," the executive direc-tor of Institute Communications and Public Affairs will immediately notify local radio and television stations (see list) and place the campus status decision on the Institute's main web page. The executive director will also contact the Office of Information Technology (OIT) to place a message on the main campus phone line, 404-894-2000, noting the status of the campus. Employees may call this number to hear a pre-recorded mes-sage.

The Georgia Tech Police Department will notify senior adminis-trators. Each administrator will then

notify appropriate people in their own departments. Every attempt will be made to make decisions and notifi-cations by 5:30 a.m. on the day the condition is to be in effect.

Tornado Safety Information
In the Atlanta metro-politan area, the period from March through May is nor-mally the peak sea-son for tornadoes. Tornado "watch" and "warning" information is announced over radio and television stations and weather alert radios that are automatically tuned to the national weather broadcast frequency.

It is recommended that each vice president, dean, director, department head and lab director obtain a weath-er alert radio and have it located in an area that is occupied at all times during normal Institute working hours. These radios broadcast

Media contacts regarding inclement or emergency weather conditions	
Phone: 894-2000	**Radio:** WGST (640 AM/105.7 FM)
Web: www.gatech.edu	WKHX (101.5 FM) WNNX (99.7 FM) WPCH (94.9 FM)
TV: WAGA (Channel 5) WGCL (Channel 46) WSB (Channel 2) WXIA (Channel 11) GTCN (campus cable)	WQXI (790 AM) WREK (91 FM) WSB NewsTalk (750 AM) WSTR (94.1 FM) WAOK/WVEE (V-103 FM) WZGC (92.9 FM)

information on all hazardous weather as identified by the National Weather Service for the metropolitan area.

If a tornado warning is issued for the Atlanta area, faculty, staff and students should seek shelter in the basement or in the interior corridors, stairways or rooms of the lowest floor of the building.

For more information...
Georgia Tech Virtual Response Center www.gatech.edu/response/

From punchcard to PPP: exploring the future of voting

Jane Sanders
Research News and Publications

Elections of the future may be more convenient, accurate and faster for both voters and elec-tions officials if researchers can improve the technology for voting via the Internet.

Also a factor is whether elections officials can entice voters to use the technology and make it accessible to them.

With interest increasing in voting reform and modernization since the 2000 Presidential election, researchers at the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI) have begun studies of the social and technical issues related to voting via the Internet.

Last month, these researchers hosted a workshop to share informa-tion with their colleagues in acade-mia, government and industry. The group agreed that Internet voting will provide some major benefits —

convenience for voters and a more efficient and accurate elections process — but added that its wide-spread use is many years away.

"People wonder why they can't vote over the Internet if they can buy things over the Internet," said Betty Whitaker, a principal research engi-neer at GTRI. "But then they consider the possibility of a security breach and its effects. We believe that over time, as the Internet evolves and the research and the hardware and soft-ware evolve, researchers will be able to resolve some of the concerns about Internet voting."

The GTRI Internet Voting Research Team envisions that Internet voting will occur in phases during the next decade. Within the next few years, military personnel casting absentee ballots probably will be allowed to vote via the Internet. The Federal Voting Assistance Program conducted a pilot project in November 2000 involving 84 overseas voters. The success of this project provided

Selected residents of Decatur and Lithonia participated in November's Direct Record Electronic (DRE) Voting Systems Pilot Project, which tested this machine built by Diversified Dynamics (above). Instead of paper ballots, voters receive a "smart card" that acts like an ATM card, unlocking the terminal for vote casting.

photo courtesy Diversified Dynamics, Inc.

encouragement for researchers in Internet voting, yet pointed to some problems in the system, such as lost passwords, researchers said.

"We are working to re-engineer the voting part of the elections process, while understanding its impact on the other parts of the process, including the training of poll workers and the tallying of votes," explained Bob Simpson, a GTRI principal research scientist. "Things are more complicat-ed than they appear on the surface."

Tackling social, technical issues
One of the primary social science issues related to Internet voting is access. "It is the 'Digital Divide,' which we define for now as those who have Internet access from home or work and those who don't," said GTRI researcher Marlit Hayslett-Keck.

Current estimates indicate that half of Americans do not have Internet access, and a much smaller percentage have high-speed broad-band access. The question of whether citizens are comfortable with Internet use is an even more

North Campus Parking Deck 'open for business'

Michael Hagearty
Institute Communications
and Public Affairs

Tech's notorious parking squeeze just got a little breathing room.

This month, the North Campus Parking Deck, located on Atlantic Drive, was turned over to the Office of Parking and Transportation from the design team and engineers. Despite a nine-month delay, Tech now has its first new parking structure in five years.

Some facts...

Cost: The price of a B07 (North Campus Parking Deck) permit will be $238, valid until July 31. The refund price of an A or R permit on Jan. 7 was $181, and it will cost an A or R permit holder $57 to move to B07.

Access: Elevators are located on the southeast and northwest corners of the deck. Stairs are located on the northwest, northeast and southeast corners of the deck.

Security: Emergency call boxes are located in the elevators and at the entrance to each stairwell on every level.

Visitor parking: Visitors pay an attendant when they exit. The current daily rate is $8.

Rod Weis, director of Parking and Transportation, said the lot is nearly full, with more than 500 permits issued to employees who placed their name on a waiting list.

Of the 850 available spaces, 700 are set aside for permit users, with those remaining reserved for visitors.

"They're going fast," he said. "Obviously, there's a lot of pent-up demand for parking spaces."

Parking spaces in other lots are expected to open up as employees try to improve their situation. Weis anticipates the bulk of the newly opened spaces to be in the areas around the deck.

Though online registration is closed, Weis said it is important to get onto a parking lot wait list. "The preferred method is by e-mail so we can get (employee preferences) into our system," he said.

The deck was built in cooperation with the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC), which financed the construction of the facility for Tech. Gary Phillips, a project manager in Facilities who oversaw the project, said, "I am very happy we have been able to resolve the remedial work that had to be done to bring the parking deck to completion. A great deal of effort was made by all the parties involved to meet the January 1 target date and to resolve the problems in a manner that would provide Tech with a durable, structurally sound and aesthetically satisfying parking

North Campus Parking Deck

facility. It is a much needed parking resource and is now officially open for business."

The delay in the opening of the North Campus Parking Deck occurred when an inspection in March revealed cracking in the structural columns and beams. The contractor went back to work over the summer, reinforcing the structure's columns with a jacket consisting of six inches of concrete and steel ties to strengthen the intersection where the columns and beams meet.

To enter and exit the deck, permit holders will use their Buzz Cards. According to Weis, this is for two reasons: to help prevent illegal entry into the deck and to facilitate the mixing of visitor and permit parking. Gates in front of entrances will always be down.

For more information...
To join the wait list for a particular lot, e-mail your top 3 choices to **info.parking@parking.gatech.edu**

No more checks? Payroll shifts to e-deposit

Michael Hagearty
Institute Communications
and Public Affairs

Before long, Tech employees will no longer be receiving paychecks.

Everyone will still be paid, of course, but the Payroll Office is working to increase the percentage of faculty, staff and students who authorize their salary to be deposited directly into a designated bank account. Doing so, they say, will cut down on the administrative costs associated with printing and distributing paychecks, and paves the way for future improvements to the system.

Currently, roughly 70 percent of monthly payroll employees use direct deposit — a low number in comparison with other state schools. Maryann Fogarty, director of Payroll, noted that both Georgia State University and the University of Georgia have mandated the procedure.

So has Tech. Beginning this month, all newly hired, monthly paid employees will participate in the direct deposit system. The belief is that moving toward 100 percent campus participation will eliminate many of the problems associated with employee paychecks as well as streamline the payroll system.

"It cuts our processing time in half," Fogarty said. "This system guarantees funds deposit, cuts down on our cost of printing checks and the time involved in replacing lost or stolen checks."

The process for direct deposit involves an enrollment form that, along with a deposit slip from a financial institution, allows Payroll to transfer money into employee accounts automatically. For those who don't qualify or do not wish to open a bank account, the Office of Human Resources plans to issue cash card accounts — non-interest-bearing accounts that only permit withdrawals — through a major financial institution that employees may access through an automated teller machine.

Payroll will still print and issue check advisements — commonly

known as stubs — containing tax, deductions and benefits information to each employee on the last working day of the month.

OHR is hoping to have all non-participating faculty, staff and graduate students — both monthly and hourly — on direct deposit by summer. In the coming months, the office also plans to hold town hall meetings to clarify these options.

"Ultimately, our goal is a uniform method of pay distribution that is efficient and ensures prompt, reliable paycheck distribution to all customers," said Chuck Donbaugh, associate vice president of Human Resources.

Further down the road, Fogarty said her office is eyeing a true paperless payroll system, with check advisements available via computer through a program called "E-stubs." But that, she said, is still several years away.

For more information...
Office of Human Resources
www.ohr.gatech.edu

New express line helps donors give blood without the wait

The first blood drive of the new year will be January 22-24 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Student Center Ballroom. Organized by MOVE (Mobilizing Opportunities for Volunteering Experience), the drive will feature Co-op Club members staffing tables in the Student Center to sign-up donors for the new express line, available by appointment only for the first 75 people. E-mail move@gatech.edu with questions or to sign up.

Few fears among Tech's international students after attacks

Alumni Publications

Although about 40 percent of graduate students and 50 percent of doctoral students at Georgia Tech are international students, there has been little effect on the student population as a result of the Sept. 11 incidents, said Harvey Charles, director of the Office of International Education. Of the 2,482 international students on campus, only one returned home because of family concern over the events involving the United States.

"There was concern expressed among the students when Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.) announced her proposal to put a moratorium on the issuance of student visas, but that was the only instance in which the students registered any distress," he said.

"I think the situation has been very well handled at

photo by Caroline Joe

Georgia Tech," he said. "The administration has been on top of it from the day of Sept. 11 and have demonstrated great skill to calm the fears and concerns of the students. My office issued statements that things were under control and that students could come talk if they needed to."

Charles found it telling that a meeting convened specifically for international students to voice their concerns was sparsely attended.

"It shows that our students

felt comfortable enough here not to have to come to that meeting," he said.

Barbara Hall, associate vice president of Enrollment Services, said the withdrawal of the student visa moratorium proposal means there will be little difference in the application process for international students.

"There probably won't be that much difference, time wise, in the processing of student visas. There may be an increased screening process, but that will go on before they get to us," she said.

"We are feeling relatively secure that there will not be a big change at the undergraduate level in recruiting and enrolling international students," Hall added. "If we have an international student we expect to enroll and they don't register, we report it to the INS, but we have always done that."

Encouraging students to stay FOCUSed on education

Larry Bowie
Institute Communications
and Public Affairs

Next week, more than 300 African-American undergraduate students from across the country will travel to Georgia Tech for an opportunity to visit the Institute, receive an overview of the graduate degree programs, and participate in Tech's 11th annual FOCUS and King Week Celebration.

The FOCUS program, held each year over the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, is designed to encourage African-American students to pursue advanced degrees in science and engineering.

FOCUS concludes with Georgia Tech's King Week Ecumenical Service on Sunday, Jan. 20, with keynote speaker Alexis Herman, former U.S.

photo by Stanley Leary

Secretary of Labor. The service will be held in the Robert Ferst Center for the Arts. It is free and open to the public.

"Georgia Tech made it a goal over a decade ago to increase the diversity in its student body and create a campus environment of inclusion, respect and community," said Robert Haley, FOCUS director and special assistant to the president. "We are now reaping the fruits of that long-term effort."

Last year, Georgia Tech saw a 61 percent increase in African-American freshmen, while at the same time admitting 57 percent more African-American graduate students. In Tech's Ph.D programs, black enrollment was up 33 percent.

"Georgia Tech has achieved this without affirmative action admissions preferences," Haley said. "Minority students take pride in the fact that their achievements are not diminished by perceptions of lower standards."

> Alexis Herman, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, will give the keynote address at the King Week Ecumenical Service on Sunday, January 20 at 10 a.m. in the Robert Ferst Center for the Arts. For more information, call 894-3350.

complicated issue, Whitaker said.

Another social science issue being researched at GTRI is how Internet voting will affect voter turnout. Will different segments of the population turn out differently? Hayslett-Keck is asking. And legal issues abound. Internet voting would require judicial review for compliance with the Voting Rights Act, as well as other state and federal voting laws. Some laws would have to be changed to enable Internet voting.

Yet another issue is uniformity versus personalization. "The opportunity exists to support

individual needs and preferences in the user interface," Simpson said. "For example, can older voters increase the font size on their ballots?"

Simpson believes Internet voting could allow disabled persons the ability to participate in the same manner as other voters. "It's not uncommon for disabled persons to have to give up their secret ballot to be able to participate," he explained. "Also, any separate equipment for disabled voters is usually less maintained and efficient. So that's another argument to make it possible for them to participate in the same process as other voters."

GTRI researchers hope more

studies of Internet voting will get under way as government and/or private funding becomes available. Meanwhile, they are keeping in mind the many stakeholders associated with Internet voting.

"In addition to addressing the needs of the voter, we must also consider the needs of election officials, candidates, elected officials, poll workers and others," Whitaker said.

Hayslett-Keck theorized, "From a political point of view, some stakeholders are concerned that a new voting technology could possibly change the composition of the voting population, thus significantly affecting the outcome."

IN BRIEF:

Money matters
Joel Hercik, associate vice president of **Financial Services**, announced several organizational and location **changes** within his office designed to enhance service to the campus community as well as to better enable Tech to meet financial reporting changes in the industry. Among the changes:
• The controller is now responsible for the day-to-day oversight of all financial systems operations, including scheduling, system controls and data integrity.
• Surplus Property, which has been a part of Capital Asset Accounting, will remain an office within Procurement Services. This office will coordinate surplus property records with Capital Asset Accounting, which will continue to assist units with moveable equipment record management. The office number is 894-1984.
• Central Receiving and Surplus Property will move from Hemphill Avenue to 711 Marietta Street next week. There are no changes in the telephone numbers. By the spring, Procurement Services, Accounts Payables, Capital Asset Accounting and Risk Management will also be relocated to 711 Marietta Street, the former home of Ziegler Tools.

Star RB jumps to pros
All-ACC junior running back **Joe Burns**, who was academically ineligible for the Seattle Bowl, announced last week he **will enter April's NFL draft**.
Burns was a three-year starter for the Yellow Jackets and rushed for 1,165 yards and 14 touchdowns this fall. With 2,634 career yards, Burns is the fourth-leading rusher in school history. His record of 34 touchdowns is second only to Robert Lavette.
When Burns's grade-point average fell below the school's minimum requirements, he was dismissed from school for the spring semester. In order to return to Tech this summer, Burns would have needed to attend a junior college.

Fringe benefit
The Georgia Tech Faculty Women's Club is offering **scholarships** to the children of Tech employees. Awards of $500 to $1,500 are made to undergraduates of all majors based upon financial need and academic achievement. To receive an application form, call Ann Donaldson at 770-984-8828 or refer to www.gtscholar.itgo.com.

Pension system gets new infrastructure
In November, the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRSGA) announced it had selected KPMG Consulting to implement an integrated pension administration services solution to improve customer service as well as link TRSGA with its members and other organizations via the Internet.
Greg McQueen, project director for TRSGA, said, "TRSGA selected KPMG Consulting to lead this project because of their National Retirement Practice's extensive experience with public retirement systems and large-scale systems integration projects."
TRSGA administers the fund from which public school educators and many employees of the University Systems of Georgia receive retirement benefits. With more than $38 billion in assets, TRSGA is one of the largest public retirement systems in the country, providing retirement services and benefits to more than 250,000 individuals.
Tech's staff members contribute 5 percent of their pre-tax salary into TRSGA. For more information, visit www.trsga.com/.