

FOCUS

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WHAT'S YOUR BEEF?

Just north of Engineer's Bookstore, Fat Louie's offers up a variety of franks and burgers. See if the food is worth the walk. Page 15

HOME FROM HAWAII

The golf team is swingin', having won the Puerto Rico Classic last week over Florida and No. 1-ranked Oklahoma State. Page 27



Eye on HOPE from behind government lines

Legislative interns share firsthand perspectives on some of this session's controversial bills



By Jamie Howell / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

By Joshua Cuneo
Senior Staff Writer

If there is anyone who ought to know the ins and outs of this year's Georgia legislature, it's the International Affairs and Public Policy majors interning at the Capitol downtown.

This semester's members of the Georgia Legislative Intern Program are at the Capitol daily, watching events unfold on closed-circuit television.

"I think there's a lot of misconception about where most of the debate goes on with legislation," said Douglas Gladden, a third-year Public Policy major and a legislative intern this semester. "Most of what the public sees on TV and in the newspaper [are] speeches from the floor...but a lot of the debate really does go on behind closed doors."

The busy session means the interns get to work more closely with the representatives themselves. Both Gladden and Jessica Golding, a third-year Public Policy major, have spent time on the Congressional floor, though they're usually performing office work for the representatives' secretaries.

"You're actually there, and you hear other people talking [about] all these bills...What does the secretary think about it?"

You know, that kind of thing," Golding said. "You get other people's reactions as it's going on right then, and then you're more interested."

This year's session features a number of significant bills that could have potential ramifications for college students statewide.

Gladden and Golding sat down with the *Technique* to give

everything has been accounted for.

"When I first came across [the bill]...I thought, 'Well, they haven't thought this out because of engineering degrees,'" he said. "[But] the more I looked at it, the more I realized they had thought it through, taking into account these certain procedures and the fact that schools are...using HOPE for something it wasn't intended."

Specifically, many universities in Georgia offer joint programs that allow student to earn both a bachelor's and a masters degree while remaining under HOPE, but such programs often require well over 127 hours. This year's assembly agreed that HOPE was not designed to pay for graduate degrees, since it was unfair to other students who would receive HOPE funds only for their bachelor's program.

The potential detriment to engineering students was one of the primary points in the debate over the bill, but Gladden pointed out that students will still receive HOPE for an additional semester if they fall just short of the requisite hours.

"You're given a one-semester grace period that is paid for," he said. "So if the student...finished

"A lot of the debate really does go on behind closed doors."

Douglas Gladden
Third-year PUBP major

an insider's look at the hottest issues of the moment.

The HOPE Hours Cap

Bill 299, a proposal to cap the allowable number of HOPE-funded course hours to 127, led the news when it passed the House last week. The issue caused alarm at Tech, where many engineering degrees require more than 127 hours for completion.

Gladden, however, said that

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Brilliant idea? You've got 60 seconds to explain it

By Narendhra Seshadri
Contributing Writer

Maybe while you are staring aimlessly at your physics notebook, a brilliant venture pops up in your brain. What if you were given the chance to launch that product? Or perhaps even get funding and possible investors?

Last Friday, Feb. 25, several students from all facets of campus were given that opportunity during the final round of the Business Plan Competition, sponsored by the College of Management. Five student and alumni teams competed for thousands of dollars in prize money as well as the chance to turn their start-up ideas into reality.

The five finalists were narrowed down from several other teams in a preliminary competition held a week earlier on Feb. 18.

The annual competition, sponsored by local technology firms, is open to any student, alum or professor of Tech (excluding management professors) that would like to see their new technologies or ideas taken to the next level.

"Even though the business plan has to involve new technology, it does not have to be developed within Georgia Tech, and does not have to be a technological product," said Ismael Martin, a Tech alum and a participant's in last year's competition. "It could be a service using high tech, [such as] GPS technology

2005 BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION WINNERS

1st Place (\$10,000)

ImmersiTech
Technology that assesses the severity of head injuries among athletes

2nd Place (\$3,000)

ViraSURE
Commercializing technology that allows for early detection of viral pathogens such as HIV

3rd Place/Most Fundable (\$2,000)

Frontier Sensors
An R&D venture in the linear displacement sensor market

to track rental cars."

One of the motivating factors behind the success of this annual competition is the dedication of the

"[We] hold the 'elevator pitch' where one team representative has 60 seconds to make their best pitch."

Pat Dickson
Management professor

competition's organizer Pat Dickson, an assistant professor in the College of Management.

Dickson said that the competition was often a natural extension for many of the classes the College of

Management offers. "We have two courses at the undergraduate level and three courses at the graduate level that provide direct help for students interested in competing," he said.

The competition has steadily grown over the years. Interested groups had to demonstrate commitment early on by participating in a series of workshops that began in the fall and spanned several months.

Eligibility has also been extended to all current Tech students and any Tech alumni who are within five years of graduation. The competition also attracts participants from far and wide, including a group of UGA students who recruited a Tech student in order to be eligible.

In the future, Dickson said he sees even more expansion, such as adding a "Social Responsibility" award for the plan that has the most public good associated with it and even broadening the scope of the



By Jon Kaye / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Delfi Krishna, a graduate student in Chemical Engineering, presents the business plan for ViraSURE, a company specializing in early detection of viruses such as AIDS, at the Business Plan Competition.

competition internationally.

Radatec, an Atlanta-based company, is one of the competition's success stories. Radatec took part in the competition in 2001, taking first place. Many other technology start-ups are housed in the Advanced Technology Development Center at Technology Square.

This year's winning team was ImmersiTech, a company that would market a technology used to assess

head injury among athletes.

Jeff Ramsaur, one of the members of ImmersiTech, explained that their venture took shape only after he found the rest of his team.

"We all wanted to work together and decided we would find the right project later," he said.

In fact, the right project took a little while in coming. "The Im-

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RHA, Housing establish committee to examine collective liability policy

By Jennifer Lee
Focus Editor

Jumpstarted by recent vandalism in residence halls such as Eighth Street and Center Street Apartments, the Residence Hall Association and the Department of Housing are forming a committee to address the issue of collective liability.

The existing policy, which is outlined briefly in the housing handbook and contract, states that the Department of Housing reserves the right to pass on damage charges to a group of residents when they cannot pinpoint individual residents who are responsible.

The policy is one of the most controversial in the handbook, especially among students who have experienced its impact firsthand.

"I think that collective liability is not fair...Why should the other 120 or so people have to pay for the damages that only one person did to the building?" said Will Evans, a fifth-year Aerospace Engineering major. Evans, who

lived in Hemphill during summer 2003, was fined \$50 when someone stole a golf cart from a utility office and destroyed landscaping.

As a result, the committee, which consists of housing staff and RHA members, plans to meet through March and April to come up with recommendations and changes for the current policy.

"Collective liability has always been on our plate," said Andrew Howard, RHA president. Last year Howard received 85 emails from residents of Woodruff who were upset when the policy was invoked to cover damage to the Woodruff elevator. Similar incidents this year, such as repeated damage to the planter's pots in Eighth Street, has prompted another backlash.

"We're getting a lot of complaints, and they are centered around two things: the policy in general, and [how] Housing enforces it," Howard said.

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Andrew Howard
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a semester with 126 hours, they can still reach their 135 hours under the HOPE scholarship tuition degree. That's not in the bill, but it is standard practice."

Minimum Wage Reduction

Another bill going through the legislature proposes to reduce the minimum wage to \$4.25 an hour. According to Golding and Gladden, there's a solid logic behind it: the legislature wants to prevent businesses from losing money on unskilled teenage labor.

The reduced wage, which only applies to employees 20 years old or under and only for the first 90 days of employment, is designed to be a "training wage" while new employees are still learning the ropes of the job.

"A lot of kids will just start working, decide they don't like the job and then leave after the employer spent all that time...and all that money to train them," Golding said. "So it's to save the employers money and maybe give them incentive for kids to actually stay there and work."

Once the 90-day training period is over, teenage workers are considered regular employees with a full wage.

In addition, businesses who do employ teenage workers cannot reduce the benefits or hours of other employees.

Nevertheless, Golding and Gladden admitted the bill may have some potential downfalls.

"I know one argument is a lot of teenagers have to rely on after school jobs as their only means of financial support due to family issues or other

things," Gladden said.

"Teenagers already have restrictions on how much they can work, like...you can't work more than so many hours a week," Golding said. "So this is adding more restriction to their earning capability. But I guess the thought is that their parents should be taking care of them and providing for them."

"Whether it's good or bad I guess will be best seen when it's put into practice if it passes," Gladden said.

"I think [the underage drinking bill] is specifically targeted for college campuses."

Douglas Gladden
Third-year PUBP major

The bill is currently under discussion in the House.

Curbing Underage Drinking

Every college student knows that preventing customers under 21 from purchasing alcohol doesn't stop them from consuming it, but a new bill introduced into the legislature aims to fix that.

The idea is simple: anyone under 21 caught drinking gets a suspended driver's license, with similar penalties falling on the alcohol's supplier.

"I think this is specifically targeted for college campuses. So that's probably something that...if it's actually enforced, will be a big deal here on campus," Gladden said.

In addition, the bill has been pushed by alcohol companies that

fear liability issues.

"In other states, I know some companies have been responsible when a teenager who [was] drinking got in an accident and died," Golding said.

Golding said she expects the bill to pass.

"I think it is a good idea," she said. "I mean, it's already along the same lines as you can't try to purchase alcohol [if you're under 21]."

The wealth of new bills introduced into the legislature this semester is partly reflective of the new Republican majority.

With both the Senate and the House operating under the same party, the legislature has been able to push issues important to the Republican party through the houses with less dissension.

"Most bills in the session have been passing pretty overwhelmingly, even with a lot of Democrats supporting these measures," Gladden said.

According to Gladden, representative Glenn Richardson (R-Dallas) established that each piece of legislation should meet one of four criteria: reducing the tax burden on the citizens, reducing the scope of the government, reinforcing the traditional family structure, and increasing personal accountability.

In addition, the legislature hopes to use the opportunity to prove that they can govern effectively.

"Their real goal is to show...for the past 150 years [under a Democratic majority], they've had to call special sessions to balance the budget. All sorts of terrible laws have been passed," Gladden said. "Their goal is to come in and say we can do this right, we can do it quick, and we can do it in less than 40 days."

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in Room 137 of the Flag Building**

FACES AT GEORGIA TECH

IE professor's expertise melds research, sports

By Swathy Prithivi
Contributing Writer

For all you skeptics out there who think research has little relevance to the outside world, the work done by this Industrial and Systems Engineering professor might make you think differently.

Professor George Nemhauser is a partner in the Sports Scheduling Group (SSG), a company responsible for scheduling the Major League Baseball games starting this April through 2006.

The company has done athletic scheduling for several college conferences, including the Southland Conference for men's basketball and football, the Colonial Athletic Conference for men's and women's basketball, the Mid-American Conference for men's basketball and last but not least, Tech's own Athletic Coast Conference for the past decade.

Nemhauser's research broadly falls under optimization, and he has worked with Delta and other airlines to develop methods for solving logistic issues like the assignment of particular types and sizes of planes to specific routes, ground plane handling and crew scheduling.

He has interacted with the NCAA and the ACC as Tech's faculty representative. "[I am the] main liaison between athletics and academics and

provide checks and balances for the student athletes," he said.

With his experience with airline scheduling, Nemhauser volunteered to help alongside colleague Michael Trick at Carnegie Mellon's Business School with the ACC scheduling of basketball games.

Nemhauser and Trick worked to balance the increasing demands of important TV contracts, coaches' requirements and other constraints such as the availability of playing fields.

"[We] developed effective algorithms while balancing television demands, school arenas' constraints, fairness and minimization of travel, cost and student athletes' absences," Nemhauser said.

The two also did some part-time work on Major League Baseball (MLB), but they were not the main schedulers.

Last year, however, they submitted a proposal and were accepted to schedule the 2005 MLB season.

SSG consists of Nemhauser and Trick, Doug Bureman, the former Senior Vice President of the Pittsburgh Pirates, and Kelly Easton, a recent Ph.D graduate from Tech who did her thesis on sports scheduling and applied mathematics.

The entire company is virtual, with Easton running the complex scheduling algorithms on supercomputers in her Kansas home.

"The best way to get involved is to become a graduate student, as most research is done at the graduate level," Nemhauser said. Since SSG is an independent company, they do not involve students directly and are not hiring at the moment, but are thinking of expanding by employing more graduating students when more contracts roll in.

At present, Nemhauser is also the advisor for a senior design group that is working with basketball coaches on recruiting, an aspect of sports that he feels is particularly relevant.

"Recruiting directly contributes to how good a team is," he said. "With NCAA's stringent recruit-

ment...rules, like having only three coaches out at one time and budget constraints—industrial engineering could really help with maximizing the efficiency of recruitment trips."

Nemhauser earned his undergraduate degree in chemical engineering, but after doing his master's thesis on optimizing chemical plants, he realized that was where his true passion lay, and went on to get a Ph.D in operations research.

"I don't care what I'm optimizing as long as I'm optimizing," he said.

Operations research as a field was started during World War II by engineers and mathematicians

to solve the problems of complex logistics involving the size of troops to be sent to Europe. After the war ended, the industry picked it up, and it was used first by the petroleum industry to optimize profit.

Nemhauser said that he enjoys being a professor, as "you can pick and choose what you want to do."

An important factor for him in his work is real life application. "I get enormous satisfaction in reaching a large number of people," he said.

He is a strong believer in the power of work being fun yet challenging. "If you get passionately involved with whatever you are doing, you will do well," he said.

"With NCAA's stringent [rules]... industrial engineering could really help with maximizing the efficiency of recruitment trips."

George Nemhauser
IE professor

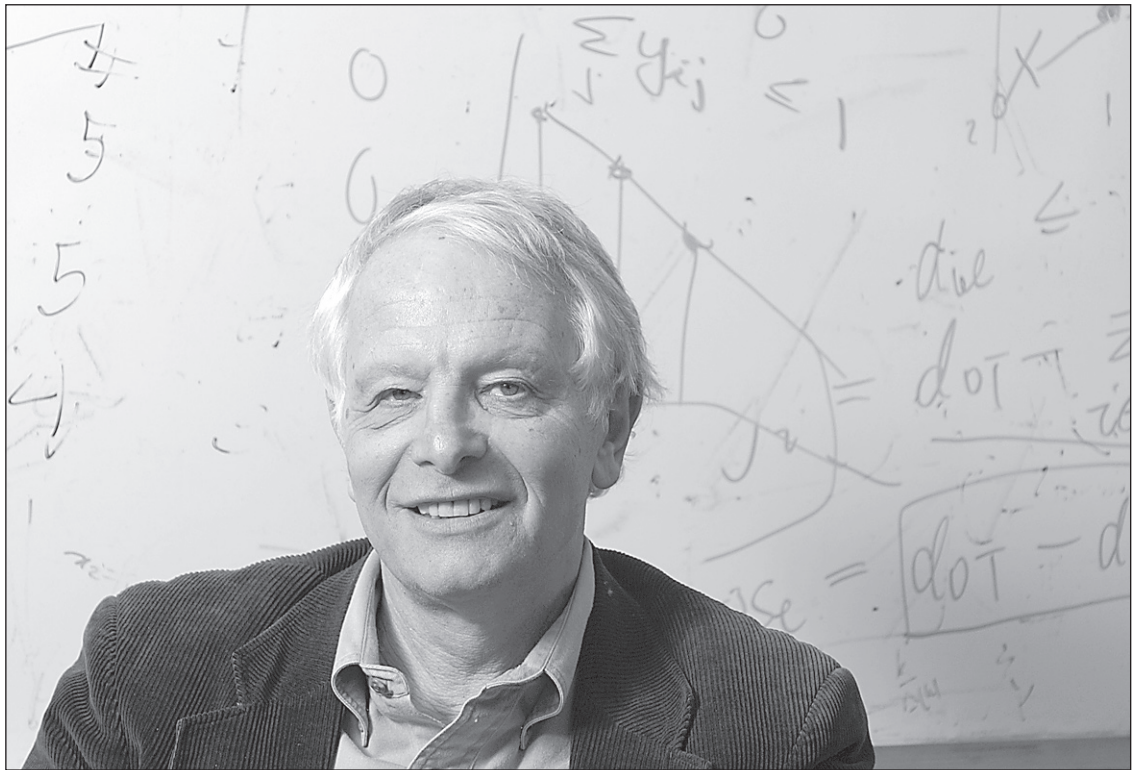


Photo courtesy Institute Communications and Public Affairs

Dr. George Nemhauser, a professor in the School of ISyE, is a partner in the Sports Scheduling Group, a company that is responsible for conference schedules such as the ACC and Major League Baseball.

Technique

Making Friday classes more interesting

BPC

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mersiTech solution was not our first project," Ramsaur said. "We actually spent a lot of time on another venture before finding some fatal flaws that caused us to seek a new direction. We have learned how to work together and tailor our roles to fit our strengths, much like you would do in a real business."

Ramsaur feels the management based curriculum was instrumental in his team's success. "Every MBA class I have taken has fed into this plan," he said. "It was not about learning to be an entrepreneur but rather about learning how to establish a compelling and actionable business strategy, marketing plan, contingency strategy and workable financial plan."

Many of the start-ups were conceived as part of MGT 6165: Venture Creation or MGT 6789: Technology Ventures, classes where students formulate a complete business plan.

However, all of the groups said that in order to be ready for the competition, the total effort involved was about three times greater than the initial effort for the class.

"Talking to potential customers and investors—the more they got excited about technology, the more it drove us and confirmed our feelings about the potential of the venture," Ramsaur said. However, creating a business plan also involved less lofty tasks. "The least enjoyable part was creating the financials," he said.

One of the highlights of the competition was the "elevator pitch" portion, which took place on Feb.

18, a week before the final round. During this part of the competition, the teams presented their business plan to a panel of judges for a prize of \$500 in grant money—but with a twist.

"[We] hold the 'elevator pitch' where one team representative has 60 seconds to make their best pitch," Dickson said.

In the time it would take for an elevator ride, the team must tell what the company is about, what problem they are solving, what they are going to accomplish it—and the most important of all, they must capture the attention and the imagination of the judges and the audience.

"We have a panel of judges that selects the winner based on one criterion—which team would most likely be invited to your office tomorrow in order to let them present their full business plan," Dickson said.

However, there were many other components to the

competition, including an initial screening and an intensive Q&A session.

"Just making it to the competition is challenging," Martin said.

ImmersiTech plans to go on to compete in the Venture Challenge at San Diego State University and the New Venture Championship at Oregon State University later this spring.

ImmersiTech's advice for future entrepreneurs? "Seek out and be receptive to constructive feedback and don't be afraid to admit that you don't know something. Just follow up with the right answer when you get it—and keep your solutions as simple as possible."

"Talking to potential customers and investors...confirmed our feelings about the potential of the venture."

Jeff Ramsaur
MGT grad student

ATTENTION READERS: Make us laugh.



By Christopher Gooley / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

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Nothing too vulgar, please.