

FOCUS

Technique • Friday, July 15, 2005

ATHLETES STAYING ON TRACK

Check out how student athletes take summer classes at Tech so they can maintain academic eligibility and stay on track to graduate. **Page 16**

WAS DOWNTOWN ROCKING?

Get the scoop on last week's Downtown Rocks free concert. Find out if Cake lived up to expectations if you missed the show due to weather. **Page 9**



Priority registration evokes mixed feelings

By Joshua Cuneo
Online Editor

Imagine the following scenario. You're in your fifth year at Tech and go online to register for classes for the upcoming semester. You choose the LCC option and scroll down to your preferred choice for your last humanities credit, only to find—surprise—that the class is already full.

Class registration is based on a course credit system: the more credits you accumulate, the earlier you get to register. So who, then, are these people filling up classes before the graduating seniors?

The answer is a selective group of students with a special status: priority registration. These are athletes, disabled students, FASET leaders, tour guides, Presidential Scholars and Registrar office assistants, all of whom, for various reasons, get to register first, regardless of the number of credits accumulated.

"Well, for example, the disabled students, some of them are limited in the buildings in which they can have classes, and...if you're in a wheelchair, you might not have time to get from one location to another," associate registrar Debbie Williamson said. "So their schedule has to be planned with a little more

thought as far as location."

Priority registration for the disabled is common at most universities, but Tech tacks on several other groups as well. Athletes have to schedule morning classes to keep the afternoons free for practice and away games. Tour guides must be available for tours at the times advertised on the Institute's website. FASET leaders and students who assist the Registrar's office during Phase II are given priority registration for one semester in lieu of monetary compensation.

And Presidential Scholars? Well, it's just part of the package deal.

Some students consider this unfair bias in favor of certain extracurricular activities.

"It just seems like Georgia Tech is rewarding anyone doing something other than just attending classes," said Ajay Patel, a second-year Physics major. "But there are so many other ways to get involved, I don't see why it has to be narrowed down to those listed."

Others have a more mixed reaction, understanding the reasoning behind some activities but not others.

"[FASET leaders and tour guides] help out a lot around campus, and they aren't exactly getting paid to do it," said Ricky Whelchel, a second-year Material Science and Engineering major. "[But] athletes is pushing it. A lot of them get free

"Most people would probably agree that the academic effort they put in should give them priority in registering..."

Steve Heitner
BIO/BME, fifth-year



By Wei Liao / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Students gather around their FASET leader. The FASET leaders are one of the groups that get priority registration. FASET is also where most freshman register for the first time.

school in the first place."

Priority registration can cause a lot of grief for the rest of the student body. Popular humanities and elective courses sometimes fill up with priority registration students before anybody else's time ticket starts.

At an Institute where students often complain about finding classes too full even in their own major, priority registration often exacerbates the problem.

"Most people would probably agree that the academic effort they put in should give them priority in registering for their academic schedule," said Steve Heitner, a fifth-year Biology and Biochemistry major.

"The further you progress in the curriculum, the fewer classes are offered, and more potential for

a conflict...I can understand how somebody might get upset that a class they absolutely need to take is not available because somebody else that may not need to be taking it got priority registration," Heitner said.

Other students see it as less of a problem, pointing out that any student can get priority registration if they want it badly enough.

"If people really want priority registration, they can do something to get it, like being a tour guide or helping the office," said Brian Williams, a fourth-year Discrete Math major. "There aren't so many people out there with priority registration that it makes getting any specific class impossible. So I don't see anything wrong with it."

But the fault lies not so much with the Registrar's office as with the individual schools. Each school is responsible for determining its own class schedule and ensuring that there are enough sections available to feed the demand.

"The Registrar has absolutely no jurisdiction on how many seats are put out there, how many overloads, what time they're offered, who's teaching," associate registrar Candy Carson said. "We see it when you see it."

Most schools try to solve the problem for at least some courses by restricting by major, reserving seats or requiring a permit for registration.

"[Students need to] talk to these

See **Priority**, page 8

Tech Grad Student Climbs Mt. Kilimanjaro

By Andrew Guyton
Contributing Writer

"I decided to climb the mountain to challenge myself rather than sit on a beach for two weeks. I wanted to see in person the only place in the world where you can find glaciers on the equator. I wanted a graduation trip I would always remember, and climbing to the Roof of Africa was definitely memorable," David Lipton said.

Lipton returned from that memorable graduation trip a month ago, and was willing to tell us about it.

He recently finished his bachelor's at UGA and will be pursuing a Masters in Public Administration at Tech in the spring; his companion Jarkko Simonen received a bachelors degree from Auburn.

So why did a UGA grad and an Auburn grad have a Tech flag on top of Mt. Kilimanjaro?

"I was raised on Georgia Tech football and my dad and I have had football season tickets for 18 straight years. I was at the 1985 All-American Bowl when we beat Michigan State, I was there in 1990 when we beat Nebraska and too many other games to mention. I eat, sleep and breathe Tech football, but when it came time to choose my school, UGA

had my major and Tech didn't. But despite being an UGA alumnus I am a ramblin, gamblin' helluva engineer," Lipton said.

One of David's professors is from the area near Mt. Kilimanjaro and assisted in planning their expedition; then his teacher's brother [a grad student at UGA] was there to meet David and house him for a few days, while he found a tour guide with a guy who lived in the next village over.

The only problems associated with climbing the mountain were lack of sleep due to high winds pounding the tent all night, very cold hands and feet, no shower for seven days, the fatigue of hiking up hill with forty pounds on your back for eight hours, and the thin air when you get above 12,000 feet. The summit is 19,400 feet," Lipton said.

Of course, the entire trip wasn't

drudgery.

"When the snow ended the ground was all loose rock and dirt. When you took a step you would slide for two to three feet every time. We figured when we reached Uhuru Peak, the summit, it was all down hill from there.

"Well, it was a constant struggle to keep from sliding over 2,000 feet to base camp. After a few hours of slipping and sliding we decided to try and ski the loose rocks in our boots rather than continue to struggle to get footing.

"It worked for a minute but I slipped and started to fall down the mountain and was saved by our guide who caught me before I ended up in little pieces," Lipton

said. The journey didn't end there. They also went on a wildlife safari to Arusha National Park, and stayed at what Lipton calls "the island paradise" of Zanzibar.

"We got a cottage on the [Zanzi-

See **Climbers**, page 8



Photo courtesy of David Lipton

Friends David Lipton and Jarkko Simonen climb Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa. They displayed a Tech flag at the summit.

Priority from page 7

people and the department and say, 'Look, this is what's happening. Can you reserve some seats for us or restrict it by major or whatever and help us?'" Carson said.

"In some cases, the department may not even be aware that that's even a problem.... [The students] need to make their concerns aware to the people that can really help," she said.

So what can students do if they discover a class is full? They should request an overload for the course. Carson pointed out that they can also keep an eye on OSCAR during Phase II registration to see if any seats open up.

"People hold seats, and they register more hours than they intend to take," she said. "So a lot of the time,

"People hold seats....students are doing this to each other, and then at phase II they'll decide what...to take..."

Candy Carson
Associate Registrar

students are doing this to each other, and then at phase II they'll decide what they want to take, and a lot of seats open up naturally that way."

Tech Up Close

THIS WEEK'S PHOTO:

CAN YOU FIGURE OUT WHERE ON CAMPUS THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN?

Email focus@technique.gatech.edu if you think you know the answer.

Answer to previous Tech Up Close:
Fire Hydrant (near Ford building)

Correct submission for last issue:
Megan Murphy



By Robert Combler / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Nevertheless, the priority registration system is likely to remain unchanged for the time being.

"I'm fresh off the boat, and that is not on my radar screen right now," said registrar Rita Pikowsky. "I have a lot of other things I need to learn, so I would say that no, it's not on our plate right now...and I don't really expect that it will be for awhile."

But Pikowsky encourages students to voice their opinions to her at comments@registrar.gatech.edu and to visit the Registrar's home page at www.registrar.gatech.edu.

Climbers from page 7

bar] beach for \$25 U.S. a night. The last night we were there my buddy picked up a British girl and left with her to go to a club on the other side of the island.

"I went to a bar on the beach with some locals we met. Around 4 a.m. I finally realized my buddy was nowhere to be found and the taxi would pick us up in one hour to head to the airport.

"Somehow, my buddy also

remembered he had to leave so as I was getting in the cab, he showed up. We got to the Zanzibar Airport at 6:30 a.m. for our 8 a.m. flight.

"The flight was really at 10 a.m. but we were in no condition to remember such details. So we slept on a bench at the airport until it left for Dar Salaam then onto Kilimanjaro.

"Once in Kilimanjaro we took a cab one hour back to the town of Moshi to pick up our luggage...On the flight home we were trying to piece together the night before and

trying to recall what had all transpired," Lipton said.

So if you really set out to celebrate graduation, remember that it is possible to include sliding down a rocky cliff, picking up British girls in Zanzibar, partying on an island paradise, and an African safari all in one whirlwind trip. Oh yeah, and seeing the highest point in Africa and displaying a Tech flag on it.

At least Lipton managed to do so, which is why we'll welcome this new Tech student and loyal sports fan to our ranks come spring.