

# TECHNIQUE

"The South's Liveliest College Newspaper"

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Serving Georgia Tech since 1911 • Volume 88, Issue 9 • 28 pages

Tech in Outer Space! Read all about the experiences of Tech alumni at NASA.

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Burritos anyone? Look inside for a comparison of Atlanta's many burrito joints.

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## "Black" Humor Lewis Black preforms at the Ferst



By Steven Marek / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Tech students enjoy a performance by *Daily Show* comedian Lewis Black last Saturday at the Ferst Center. The demand for the show was so great that officials at the Student Center decided to hold two shows instead of only one.

## Registrar eliminates Friday spring start, paper OSCAR

By Madhu Adiga  
Senior Staff Writer

After a year of discussion, the Office of the Registrar recently announced its decision to discontinue the printing of class listings in the semester registration booklets. Beginning spring semester 2003, class schedules will be solely online through OSCAR while general registration information and academic calendars will remain in a smaller version of the booklet.

Efficiency is the driving force behind this change. "At the time the booklets are printed, classrooms usually are not assigned yet, and most of the information is subject to change," said Registrar Jo McIver. The information online is more relevant and up to date, especially since it shows available classes.

Discontinuing the print version of the course listings and schedules will also be more cost-efficient, significantly reducing the length of the printed registration booklet. Also, information like fee schedules and financial aid information that is

easily accessible online will be taken out and replaced by links to the relevant websites, such as the Bursar's Office. McIver hopes that this will further streamline the booklet by cutting down on redundant content.

The Banner web application

"The majority are used to looking at their classes online."

Jo McIver  
Registrar

of OSCAR students are accustomed to seeing now has been in place since the winter quarter of 1997. Discussion started as early as a year ago about keeping the class listings solely online.

"I meet once a term with academic advisors and chairs of various schools, and until now, most of them questioned the wisdom of changing a system that the students were used to,"

said McIver. In fact, the administration was constantly hesitant about no longer printing class schedules, until recently when student input was taken more closely into account.

Last year, Chris Kavanaugh, then Undergraduate Student Government President, conducted a straw poll through SGA that showed most students were comfortable with the idea.

"Most students we have talked to agree that it is a welcome change. The majority of them are already used to looking at their classes online rather than in the booklet," said McIver.

Another change with the Registrar's Office is the change of the date on which students return to school after winter break. Traditionally, Tech starts school on the Friday after New Year's Day, but this year the will fall on a Wednesday, closer to the week's end. Thus, the Registrar has approval from the administration to start classes on the Monday after New Year's Day instead.

"Most people already ques-

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## SGA starts Dead Week website

The Student Government Association now has a website for Dead Week, at [cyberbuzz.gatech.edu/critique/deadweek](http://cyberbuzz.gatech.edu/critique/deadweek). Students can enter the specific classes and professors who have scheduled tests or projects during Dead Week on the website. The Academic Affairs committee then addresses the issue with the respective Department Chairs to try and fix the problem.

## Second Ramblin' Night at SAC

Tech's second Ramblin' Nights event will be Casino Night at the Student Athletic Complex, tonight from 10 p.m. - 2 a.m. Free food and prizes will be available, as well as free admission to the GT Dance Association's Swing Dance in the Student Center.

## Scholarship info session available

An Information session will be held on Tuesday, September 24 at 11 a.m. for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors who are interested in learning about the Goldwater and Truman scholarships. The session will be in the Student Success Center, President's Suite C.

## Tech climbs in national rankings

By Sriram Narasimhan  
Senior Staff Writer

The undergraduate university rankings conducted by the *U.S. News and World Report* every fall placed Georgia Tech ninth among all public universities, moving up one position from last year, and 38 overall, moving up three positions.

According to U.S. News, the College of Engineering was ranked sixth nationally, four schools of which were ranked in

the top five, including industrial and systems engineering again at first, aerospace engineering at second, civil engineering at third and mechanical engineering at fourth. The DuPree College of Management was ranked 35. The overall rankings demonstrated that Tech's national image has consistently improved in recent years.

"This is a cumulative effect of continuing to increase the quality of faculty and students in the department and special

effort that the president has promoted such as undergraduate research," said Dr. Robert McMath, Vice President of Academic Affairs.

The study was conducted in two distinct ways: the first method relates to the overall university rankings, which are primarily based upon raw data sent to U.S. News.

The other method is associated with the individual colleg-

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## CS 1321 alternative accepted

By Daniel Amick  
Senior Staff Writer

Many freshman entering Tech next semester may not have to enroll in the often dreaded introductory CS course, as a new class could soon provide an alternative to CS 1321. Dr. Mark Guzdial is spearheading the effort to design the new course, entitled *Introduction to Media Computing*.

"The class is designed to meet the needs of people who are going to be script users, but [who are] not necessarily in engineering," said Robert McMath, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. "It wasn't necessarily the course that would be right for somebody else."

*Introduction to Media Computing* will target students in non-science and non-engineering majors.

"In response to the discussions that came out of CS 1321, we got a better understanding of what it is people on campus were looking for," said Guzdial.

"Without really intending to, I think we had designed a first general course for computing that tracked with what the College of Computing [CoC] thought their own majors should take," said Robert McMath, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. "It wasn't necessarily the course that would be right for somebody else."

With funding from Mc-

Math's office and the support of the CoC's Director of Undergraduate Education, Kurt Eiselt, Guzdial began work on the new course last spring.

"We spent the summer developing a lot of the technology and defining the scope of the class. We have a big effort underway to develop course materials," he said.

*Introduction to Media Computing* is not designed to be easier than the current CS 1321, says Guzdial, but it will be very different. CS 1321 teaches students how to abstract programs to handle any kind of information, regardless of what it is. The

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## Infected mosquitoes found on campus

By Tony Kluemper  
News Editor

Although it first hit the United States over a year ago, last Thursday, September 12, evidence of West Nile infected mosquitoes were discovered on Tech's campus. The infected mosquitoes were found in the area behind the President's home on Tenth Street.

In the time since the virus entered the country over 1,600 people have been infected and over 80 have died due to the infection. The states that have been affected the most are Midwest states such as Illinois and Indiana, but nearly 20 cases have been reported in Georgia.

While the chances of contracting the virus still remain low, directors at Tech's facilities department want all students to be aware of the risk that is involved now that infected mosquitoes have been found on campus. However, Tech officials are not looking to alarm Tech students, as there have been no reported cases of infected Tech students to date.

Currently Tech is looking at ways to reduce the risks of student infection. Members of the facilities staff have been working to eradicate the mosquito breeding areas for over a year, long before the infected mosquitoes were discovered. Removing all areas of standing water on campus where mosquitoes can breed often is a daunting task, however.

Facilities is still awaiting word from Fulton County officials on whether they intend to spray the area impacted by the virus.

**Technique Online** Voice Your Opinion!

Last issue's poll garnered 69 responses to the question: "What aspect of the new Atlantic Station project are you most looking forward to?"

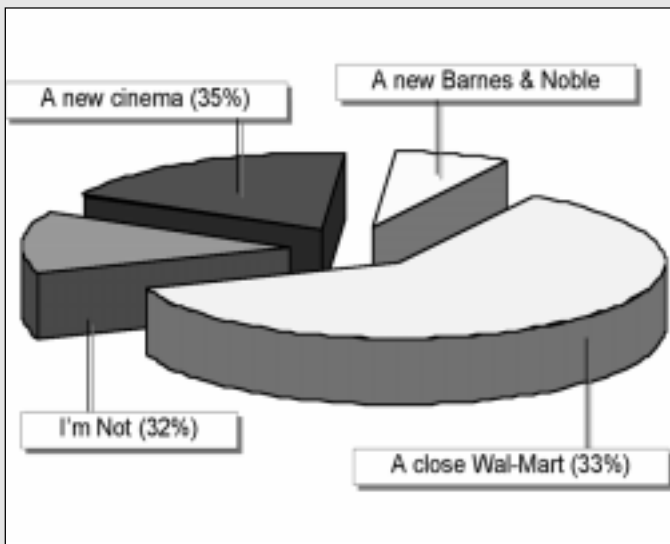


Image by Ian Clark / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

This week's poll is related to the new CS 1321 alternative. How do you feel about the establishment of the new course? Tell us what you think at [www.cyberbuzz.gatech.edu/technique](http://www.cyberbuzz.gatech.edu/technique).

# From the archives...

## The Nique's top stories from:



**10** years ago: September 25, 1992—OIT announced that two Macintosh computer clusters would open on campus. The two clusters would have 64 "Quadra 700 Macintoshes with...4 megabytes of RAM." GT announced that the Student Success Center next to the stadium would open in December.

**20** years ago: September 24, 1982—A bat invaded the Coon Mechanical Engineering Building. The bat was chased out of the building by a janitor. Tech celebrated 30 years of women as students. The male-to-female ratio was only 4:1.

**30** years ago: September 26, 1972—The Dean of Students' office announced that possession and consumption of alcohol in dorms is allowed for anyone 18 or older. The Dean of Students called it the university system's "most permissive" alcohol policy in recent history. Alcohol use, said the director of Housing, is a "personal and private activity."

## CS

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new course will emphasize a data-first approach.

Software is the tool for manipulating digital data, and thus, Guzdial argues, programming ability becomes a vital communication skill. The new course will teach students how to create, analyze, and transform data in digital formats. This “media manipulation” could include transforming numbers into graphs, merging video imagery, and creating sound.

The break from CS 1321 will extend to the course’s programming language as well. CS 1321 currently uses Scheme. The new course will utilize Python, a commercial language employed by Google and Industrial Light and Magic.

“Scheme has a reputation for serious computer science,” said Guzdial. “But for appealing to non-CS majors, that isn’t really what I want. I don’t want anyone to be scared off by [the language].”

The class will not serve as a pre-

requisite for any other CS course, including CS 1322. “In all likelihood, someone required to take CS 1322 would not take this class,” said McMath.

The new course will be offered as a special topics class beginning in Spring 2003. The pilot class will accept 100 students, 80 of whom will be first or second year students.

“If we just opened up the program to anyone, I was told, guaranteed, [enrollment] will be almost entirely athletes, juniors and seniors, which then makes for a lousy experiment,” said Guzdial. Once the program is up and running on a permanent basis, the target students will be freshmen and sophomores.

“I’d hate to optimize the course for seniors if it’s a 1000-level class,” he said.

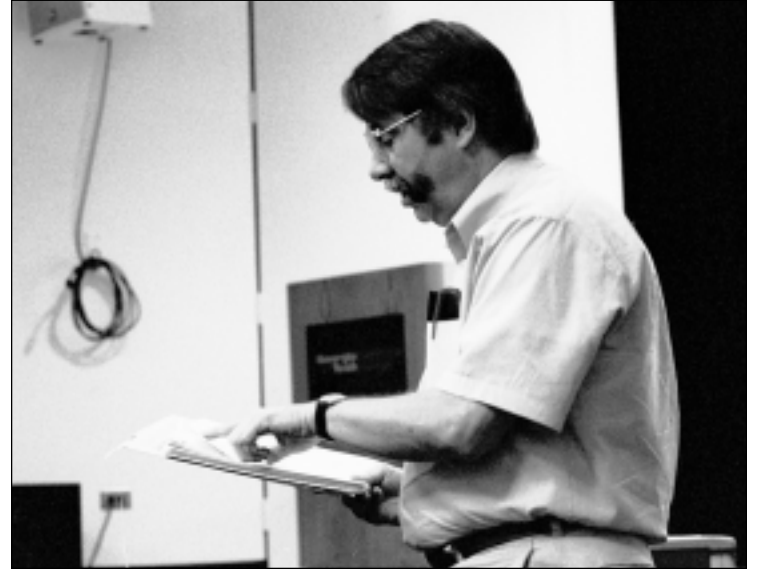
The special topics class will serve as a prototype, bringing problems and obstacles to the surface. If all goes according to plan, the course will expand in Fall 2003 to 250-300 people. Scaling the program to accommodate large numbers of students could present a problem. About

1200 students take CS 1321 every semester, and any new introductory class would need faculty to teach large numbers of TAs to assist students.

“We’re designing the program to be large from the start,” said Guzdial. “Generally, a prototype course has 25 or 30 spaces. We’re starting with 100.”

Currently, *Introduction to Media Computing* is not part of the degree program for any major at Tech. The Faculty Senate paved the way for colleges to change that fact Tuesday. Senators approved a minor revision to the general education requirements for computer literacy. According to McMath, the revision provides academic units more flexibility in constructing their degree requirements, while maintaining a requirement for computer programming and literacy.

“[The Senate is] saying we’re going to define what our basic educational goals are, and then allow for multiple versions of the [CS] course,” he said. Colleges can now petition the Institute Undergradu-



By Tim Cailloux / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

**Math professor William Green speaks at this past Tuesday’s Faculty Senate meeting, which featured the approval of a CS 1321 alternative.**

ate Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate to have their computer literacy requirements met by the new course.

For Guzdial an important definition of the new course’s success is

increased student motivation.

“I would like a class experience to be enjoyable enough where, at the end of the class, the student would say ‘I’d like to take another CS class,’” said Guzdial.

## Registrar

from page 1

tion the idea of starting classes on a Friday, and as a result, that first day back always seems like a wasted day," said McIver.

This proposed change, however, leaves Georgia Tech with only 74 instructional days in the spring semester, as opposed to the 75 days mandated by the Board of Regents. Should the Regents object to Tech's plan, few options exist.

## Rankings

from page 1

es and programs within the university, and is primarily judged by its reputation among other institutions that support the same program. Since the criteria for the rankings change annually, it is no surprise that there are slight fluctuations when dealing with top schools, the College of Engineering being a prime example.

One of the more significant additions to the judging criteria was a new category called Programs That Really Work. Tech's co-op program was rated third overall.

"With these modifications, the rankings are always going to move up one or two slots," said Bob Harty, Executive Director for Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

"For the ISyE program to attain a number one ranking consistently...is impressive."

The rankings given to schools not in the top ten, however, varied more dramatically in the last few

years than the rankings given to the College of Engineering because a lower rank signifies a greater potential for improvement. However, this was not the case last year with the College of Management.

"The differences between engineering and business are large," said Harty.

"We are competing against a larger pool of applicants in business. Good things are happening in DuPree, but it will take a longer time for [a high ranking] to be realized, since they are based upon what other colleges think of us."

The university-wide rankings, on the other hand, deal more with nu-

"This leaves us with only the option of having students start on that Friday as in previous years or having a Saturday class," said McIver.

Trying to make up the one missed day at the end of the semester interferes with the finals schedule, pushing back the day students receive their grades by nearly a week. The delay would also interfere with the start of the summer semester.

"We cannot do anything to shorten the summer semester, as it is already so compact," said McIver.

merical figures. Tech scored highly in SAT scores of incoming students and had 99 percent of full-time faculty currently on staff.

Conversely, the rankings showed several areas where improvement is needed.

The relatively low graduation rate at 68 percent is largely attributed to the low freshman retention rates from five and six years ago. However, the rankings also show that the retention rate has steadily grown in the last few years, leading to optimism about future graduation rates.

"Because our retention rate is better, we may find that in a few years our graduation rate will get better," said Sandi Bramblett, Director of Institute Research and Planning.

The high acceptance rate, at 54 percent, is another key issue that has been raised. Public schools usually have higher acceptance rates than their private institution counterparts because state taxpayers' money is on the line.

"The state has an obligation to reach out to its constituency, an understandable responsibility that we shoulder," said Harty. "It's astonishing that Georgia Tech can attract this level of caliber in and out of state."

Attracting students is certainly one of the top priorities for Tech enrollment officials.

"In the admissions business, we want to be high on that list because we get more publicity and can market that," said Deborah Smith, Director of Admissions.

"Rankings are great but should not be everything that students should use to make an application decision."

# Undergrads discuss Ferst Center



By Brian Oxford / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

**Dr. Lee Wilcox, Vice President of Student Affairs, spoke at last week's meeting of the House. Representatives held their first "issue" meeting of the semester where they discussed student use of the Ferst Center.**

By Daniel Amick  
Senior News Staff

Representatives in the Undergraduate House seemed a little out of their element at Tuesday's meeting. The normal routine of bills and reports was tossed aside to make way for UHR's first "issue meeting." Up for discussion Tuesday was increasing Ferst Center accessibility for student organizations.

The Ferst Center can seat up to 1,155 people and some student organizations could make good use of the large space. Unfortunately, high rental and production fees can make the Ferst Center cost-prohibitive. UHR has funded student groups in the past, but the process is lengthy and cumbersome. Sometimes funding does not come through at all. For example, last year, I-MovieFest could not raise enough money to use the Ferst Center and the UHR allocation bill failed to pass.

Lee Wilcox, the Vice President for Student Affairs, and Jay Constantz, the Director of the Ferst Center, were among the special guests invited to give reports to the House. They detailed the history and current challenges for the Ferst Center. Members asked the guests questions about ways SGA could help alleviate the problems.

The concept behind issue meetings is to bring a topic of concern before the entire House, discuss it from all angles, and then...well, no one seemed to know what was supposed to happen after that. Many representatives seemed eager to do what they do best — pass an allocation bill. In the late 1990's the Ferst Center was under the organizational umbrella of the Student Center, and UHR allocated about \$150,000 annually for the Center. Then the Ferst Center was transferred to Auxiliary Services, and the flow of money disappeared overnight. Now, the

Ferst Center is out of the jurisdiction of Auxiliary Services again and some representatives want to restore that funding.

The suggestion that seemed to gain the most support was to allocate some amount of money to the Ferst Center Student Advisory Board. The money would pay for some or all of the Ferst Center costs for student organizations. UHR would be responsible for establishing a set of criteria that groups seeking funding would have to satisfy.

There was one small problem. No one seemed to be able to put a finger on how much money to allocate. Some said \$10,000. Some said \$50,000. Some said \$150,000. Without knowing more, the House discussion stalled.

They decided to charge the Campus Services Committee with three tasks. First, they have to come up with a way to cover the rental costs for all student organizations. Second, they must determine how much it would cost to cover all of the other fees aside from rent. Third, they have to do it by UHR's October 1 meeting.

The House chose to refer the matter to an existing committee rather than to an ad-hoc committee because, said SGA President Tiffany Massey, "We should be coming together to work on issues." After an hour and a half, members closed the meeting by postponing action on any pending bills until next week.

Although the House has made some changes in their meeting structure, it was business as usual, as members of the Graduate Senate also met on Tuesday.

The Senate discussed and passed the one bill on the agenda: an allocation to AIAA to attend a national conference in Houston.

In other business, many senators expressed concern about not being directly notified about changes in JFC policy made at the end of last semester.