

WOMEN VOLLEY TO VICTORY

No. 5 seeded Lady Jackets defeated Miami to top the ACC Women's Tennis Championship for the third straight season. **Page 16**

LINKIN PARK ALBUM FALLS FLAT

Linkin Park has just released a new album titled *Minutes to Midnight*, but its mediocre quality does not stand up to the band's signature sound. **Page 9**



T-Square pilot launches as WebCT successor

By Jenny Zhang
Focus Editor

There is a new T-Square on campus, and no, it is nothing like the drafting instrument for drawing horizontal lines. It is a far more sophisticated tool that can be used by all students, not just those in the College of Architecture.

The successor to WebCT, T-Square is a virtual collaboration and learning environment powered by Sakai, an open source software application. It launched earlier this May in pilot form and is being rolled out for summer semester.

"This pilot is really a full rollout in that anyone at Tech who wants to use it may, and it will be fully supported...it is already fully operational," said Donna Llewellyn, director of the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (CETL).

During the pilot stage, administrators hope to fine tune the system and fix any bugs that may have before T-Square completely replaces WebCT at the end of the fall semester.

"[T-Square] is a platform for ongoing development...it is continuing to be fleshed out. Not all of the classes taught at Tech will be well served by

T-Square right now, for example, and so there are feature gaps with some of the expectations people are bringing from WebCT, and we're expecting to have those closed in the next few months," said Clay Fenlason, director of Educational Technologies.

This capacity for ongoing de-

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CETL Director

velopment is mainly due to the fact that T-Square is based on the open source Sakai code, which runs along the veins of Firefox and Wikipedia in that it allows users to modify the system themselves.

"This means that we can work within the Sakai community to

improve [T-Square], enhance it and shape it to fit our needs. The advantage this gives us is that in reality [T-Square] is never at a final state—we will be...growing it and making it better all the time," Llewellyn said.

This flexibility gives T-Square a natural advantage over WebCT, which is based on proprietary code that is licensed by the Blackboard company and leaves its users dependent on the vendor for changes or enhancements.

T-Square also boasts more collaborative abilities than WebCT while maintaining the same strong course management and delivery tools—assignments, gradebooks, online tests, learning module construction, etc.—as its predecessor.

What is new, however, are innovations like blogs, wikis (websites that allow visitors to add, remove and edit content), polling tools, file managers and tools that allow the more programming-inclined to integrate with other simple web applications.

"Faculty and students can use [T-Square] for a multitude of purposes—class work, design projects, research teams [and] committees.

You can create your own project sites and include a wiki, a discussion forum, an email list [and] places to share resources," Llewellyn said.

Almost everyone can benefit from T-Square's collaborative platform.

"Anyone (student, faculty member or staff) can simply create a new site on the fly and add anyone they choose as members. This, in conjunction with the ability to sponsor guest accounts for T-Square, opens the door for collaborations with people beyond Tech boundaries," Fenlason said.

Administrators are optimistic about T-Square, but its success ultimately depends on its reception by the people who use it, and if they think it is a true improvement over WebCT.

"It looks the same as WebCT, but it seems to be faster, and I like the different tabs they have for your classes. It's pretty cool that you get your own wiki and can make your own webpage. Everything's also pretty self-explanatory and easy to

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WebCT	vs.	T-Square
● Blackboard Co.		● Sakai Project
● Proprietary code		● Open source
● Course management tools (gradebooks, assignments, online tests)		● Course management tools
		● Collaborative tools (blogs, wikis)

New counseling program teaches interpersonal skills



By Ethan Trewitt/STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Student assistants work at the Health Center. A new program focuses on helping improve students' interpersonal skills in work settings.

By Levi Kafka
Contributing Writer

The Counseling Center is developing a program to help Tech students develop better interpersonal skills. This program is tentatively entitled "Working with People: Teaching, Helping and Learning," and it will focus on preparing students for careers in healthcare and education.

Much of the work to put this project together has been done by Brendan Finton, a third-year Psychology major, and Mack Bowers, associate director of the Counseling Center. "The Psychology Department has [also] been very supportive of the endeavor," Finton said.

Finton conceived of "Working with People" last fall, when he had difficulty finding ways to get involved

in clinical psychology work.

Seeking to fill a void, Finton contacted Bowers in the spring. "We began discussions on how we could set up a program to offer some training in this area and to give back to the Tech community. We decided that we could expand this program to offer experience to students interested in areas like teaching and medicine, too. Over the course of the semester we developed a framework which will now guide the summer program," Finton said.

The program will begin with an informational meeting at 4 p.m. in the J.S. Coon Building Tuesday, May 22. If enough interest exists, a pilot program will be run this summer. Bowers described the pilot as involving "bi-weekly meetings to address such topics as developing listening skills, how to get into graduate school

in these professions [and] functional aspects of becoming a psychologist, doctor [or] teacher."

"Working with People" will be open to students from all majors and departments.

"We would like for anyone interested in learning new skills and helping the campus community to get involved," Finton said.

In addition to helping students develop interpersonal skills, Bowers sees this program as an opportunity for students to take an active role in the mental health of the Tech community.

"We would also like to see this program address issues that are relevant to college counseling centers, like how to identify students who might benefit from the services

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navigate,” said Matthew Morton, a second-year Biomedical Engineering major.

“I didn’t see a need for another system. Unless a case can be made that [T-Square] brings added benefits to the class, or that it makes maintenance much easier, I’ll probably stick to my current system. But I am interested in learning more about its capabilities,” said Matt Kohlmyer, a Physics professor.

Students and staff can give feedback about T-Square through OIT’s helpdesk system (www.oit.gatech.edu/help) or attending one of CETL’s “Feed and Feedback” sessions.

“Since T-Square is based on an open source application, there’s yet

another great way to give feedback. If you have the skill, go out and do it better, and then show it to us,” Fenlason said.

At present, the future of T-Square seems bright and limitless with its flexible, open source platform that allows for constant tweaking and improvement.

“We’re...serious about the idea of this system being a development platform and not just a static, finished product. There is a wealth of innovation and know-how at Tech, and we look forward to supporting ways for students and faculty to add their own functionality to it. I hope and expect that at the end of the day we’ll have something that’s really relevant: a meaningful support to the teaching, learning and research missions of Tech,” Fenlason said.

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offered by the Counseling Center, how to make referrals [there] and how to become a partner with the Counseling Center in promoting good mental health on campus,” Bowers said.

Finton has high hopes for the program. “In the long run, I would love to see this become a course that students can take for credit and have on their transcripts. I see the program becoming a student-directed group with support from the Counseling Center that educates those involved and allows them to help out the community as an auxiliary of the Center,” Finton said.

Other proposed ideas include different certifications in active lis-

tening, signs of depression and other useful skills so that there is a tangible benefit to program participants.

“Overall, I would like for this to be a program that helps present different perspectives interacting with people, whether they are your students, peers or clients,” Finton said.

So far, student response to the program has been mixed.

“I think a lot of Tech students could stand to work on their interpersonal skills,” said Miquela Hiller, a third-year International Affairs major.

Brandon Borm, a third-year Mechanical Engineering major, voiced frustration. “I don’t really need any interpersonal skills, but I wish they would tell people about this stuff. When did you say that meeting is?”

Hungry? Get barbecue

By Archel Bernard
Contributing Writer

The good tastes of the summer are now available at Tech with the start of the new, student-led Barbecue Club. The organization meets monthly for judging and competition in a down-home, top chef kind of gathering. The club started out simply as a way for students to show their love for savory barbecue.

The monthly meetings have different themes for barbecue. Everyone makes a new dish to share and people judge each other simply on taste. “The potluck is like a collegiate-level Food Network competition we have each time we meet,” said Damon Rousis, an Aerospace Engineering graduate student and founder of the Barbecue Club. “We have a good time just making new dishes and trying each other’s food.”

The club even slow-cooked pork on Skiles Walkway this past spring semester. “The smell of the walking past. We had pulled pork do things like that all the time. We are really just interested in good barbecue,” Rousis said.

Who doesn’t love that?



Photos courtesy of Damon Rousis

A few snapshots from this past spring’s Barbecue Club activities.



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