Wbers of Tech’s senior leadership took awareness. action to improve notification and response — and taking immediate of security — from prevention to renewed emphasis on its own system. Tech administration is placing a and Public Affairs

Michael Hagearty
and David Terraso
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

Campus safety procedures reviewed

Improving awareness, response

W ith concern over issues related to security on every-one’s mind, the Georgia Tech administration is placing a renewed emphasis on its own system of security — from prevention to response — and taking immediate action to improve notification and awareness. In addressing prevention, members of Tech’s senior leadership took a tour of campus earlier this month to determine where campus safety could be improved.

Despite the soggy conditions, a team of students and administrators traversed the breadth of campus, pointing out spots where things such as poor lighting, overgrown shrubs and inconvenient emergency phones served the interests of an urban campus’ criminal element.

The walk was done at night so that administrators could see for themselves what potential hazards exist.

President Wayne Clough, Police Chief Teresa Crocker, Associate Vice President of Facilities Chuck Rhode, Dean of Students Gail Disabatino and

Safety continued, page 2

The space shuttle’s first captain

Former astronaut John Young, who commanded the space shuttle Columbia’s maiden voyage, recently spoke to a campus audience as part of the School of Aerospace Engineering’s Distinguished Lecture Series.

Young, who graduated from Tech in 1952, is one of 12 Americans who have walked on the moon. While calling on NASA to incorporate “more conservatism” into its manned space programs, he nonetheless expressed his optimism that there will be permanent bases on the moon and manned landings on Mars.

Senate committee examines grading trends at Tech

Dan Treadaway
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

A t Princeton University, the median GPA for the class of 1973 was 3.09, compared to 3.36 for the class of 2000.

Over the last three years at Harvard University, more than 50 percent of the grades awarded have been As.

Georgia Tech’s average overall GPA has risen from 2.59 in 1985 to 2.86 in 2002. While these numbers could be used to support the position that a trend of grade inflation is occurring nationally, do they necessarily indicate grade inflation at Georgia Tech specifically?

To address this question, the Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate began a study of grade inflation at Georgia Tech last year.

Committee co-chairs Niroslav Begovic, associate professor of electrical and computer engineering, and Sandi Bramblett, director of Institutional Research and Planning, gave a preliminary presentation on their work at the April 22 meeting of the Academic Senate, which was also a combined meeting of the General Faculty and Academic Faculty.

Bramblett said the committee defined grade inflation as “the upward shift in the grade point average of students over an extended period of time without a corresponding increase in student achievement.” With this definition in mind, the committee conducted an extensive study of relevant literature, a survey of Georgia Tech’s peer universities and other schools, and a statistical analysis of Georgia Tech data from the past 10 years focusing on the undergraduate level only.

Of the 10 peer institutions surveyed, five had conducted studies on grading and grade inflation. These five studies ranged from the effects of a plus/minus grading system to charts showing average SAT score plotted against average GPA. Most of the peer institutions use the same 4.0 grading scale that Tech uses, the California Institute of Technology and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology assign pass/fail grades only in the freshman year, and 14 peer institutions use some form of a plus/minus grading system.

At Georgia Tech specifically, Professor Begovic said that while the committee’s study does not reveal significant grade inflation, he does believe Tech is experiencing grade compression, which occurs when an increasing number of grades become clustered around the middle range (Bs and Cs). Begovic said the study also revealed that untracked, non-tenure track and adjunct faculty statistically assign higher grades than tenured faculty.

“From what I’ve seen, I don’t think we have a problem with grade inflation,” Begovic said. “But I do think we need to look further into the issue of grades being compressed into the middle range.”

Several Senate members offered ideas on factors that could be causing the GPA increase, including steadily increasing student quality (as evidenced by SAT scores), increasing quality of instruction (through efforts such as the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning), and the effect of increasing numbers of course withdrawals. (Some faculty theorize that students have become more willing to withdraw from courses in which they are not performing as well as they would like in favor of retaking the course at a later date when they are better prepared, or taking other courses in which they feel they can earn higher grades.)

Begovic said the committee’s final report will be posted on the Senate Web site (www.facultysenate.gatech.edu) within a couple of weeks.

Peer review report

The Senate also heard a final report on the Institute Oversight Committee’s Periodic Peer Review process, formerly referred to as Post-Tenure Review, Mechanical Engineering Professor Farrokh Mistree presented the committee’s proposals, which included the following:

• The faculty in each unit shall decide whether tenured faculty with administrative titles (other than unit heads) are eligible to serve on the unit-level

Senate continued, page 3

www.whistle.gatech.edu
"QUOTE-UNQUOTE"

"The bridge hasn’t been rebuilt yet. What has changed, and what will change some more, is the stuff at either end. You should drive over there and take a peek for yourself. Or better yet, park your car and walk. Because what’s really changing in the area is the scale of things, and their natural audience, and perhaps even an urban mentality. Before long, the typical inhabitant of the area around the Fifth Street bridge will be a revolutionary creature: a human being on foot, rather than people in cars."

—Colin Campbell, a columnist for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, on the potential impact of Technology Square.

"It is extremely disappointing, but nobody’s complaining."

—Industrial and Systems Engineering Associate Professor Chen Zhou, on the decision to cancel summer study abroad programs in Asia.

(Atlanta Journal-Constitution)

Learning Center planning summer camps

The R. Kirk Landon Learning Center is planning six summer programs, geared for children ages 5-12, each with a different theme. Known as “Camp Explorations,” these two-week programs are not only organized around swimming, science experiments and field trips, but also offer additional areas of concentration: • Session one (May 27-June 6) “Let the Games Begin!” — sports skills and coordination • Session two (June 9-20) “All Things Great and Small” — the animal world • Session three (June 23-July 3) “Musically Inclined” • Session four (July 7-18) “The World Around Us” — exploring different cultures and traditions • Session five (July 21-August 1) “Creative Genius” • Session six (August 4-8) “Campers Delight”

Camp Exploration hours are from 7 a.m. – 6:30 p.m. and is open to children of the Tech community. For more information, call Michele Cole-Jones, assistant director for the Learning Center at 404-249-1500 or e-mail bh0705a@earthlink.net.

With semester ending, students submit final projects for evaluation

College of Architecture Associate Professor Jude LeBlanc, Associate Dean Sabir Khan and Associate Professor Russell Gentry examine a piece of furniture following a presentation by graduate student Justin Couch at Georgia Tech’s Advanced Wood Products Laboratory (AWPL) April 17.

Couch designed and built his project in the College of Architecture’s furniture design class, a graduate-level course in which students develop individual pieces of furniture using computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing software. The students then produce their pieces using computer-numerically-controlled machines at the AWPL.

Among other things, the laboratory provides training in computer-aided manufacturing and in the operation and maintenance of wood-processing machinery. Its long-term goal is to make the country’s wood and wood-composite industry internationally competitive.
A new season at the Ferst Center

With a full year of experience under his belt, Ferst Center Director Jay Constantz has had plenty of time to plan for his first season of arts and entertainment.

Having announced the schedule for the 2003-04 season earlier this month, he spoke about how he approached this fundamental responsibility.

"It is a process that I really enjoy," he said recently. "Throughout the year, I seek input from our audiences, welcoming their comments about artists they’d like to see. I also talk with students, my staff and other people in the arts community."

According to Constantz, the mission of the Ferst Center encompasses two primary goals: to serve as a bridge between Georgia Tech and the greater Atlanta community, and to provide a wide array of arts experiences for Georgia Tech students.

When planning a season, he said, "I look for artists who will appeal to both students and the greater public. While many artists in next year’s season are already well known, you will also find new jazz and classical music artists, and several who will be performing in Atlanta for the first time."

In fact, it’s the new faces that Constantz is most looking forward to.

"I really enjoy introducing exciting new talent to a community," he said, "so I can’t wait to open our season with jazz artist Peter Cincotti, and then to welcome classical pianist Orion Weiss and the woodwind quintet Imani Winds. One of my all-time favorites is Broadway singer Barbara Cook, who will return in November. I also think it will be great to see an 80-piece orchestra on the Ferst stage, so I’m looking forward to Shanghai Symphony in October."

Series packages and special five-show ticket packages — at a 20 percent discount off individual tickets — can be ordered from the Ferst Center Box Office. Individual tickets for the new season will go on sale in July.

2003-04 Ferst Center season

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 27</td>
<td>Porgy and Bess</td>
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<td>Oct. 4</td>
<td>The Umbilical Brothers in &quot;Thicko&quot;</td>
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<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td>The Woyacying Strangers</td>
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<td>Oct. 10 &amp; 11</td>
<td>The Blind Boys of Alabama</td>
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<td>Oct. 12</td>
<td>W.C. Handy Blues All Stars</td>
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<td>Oct. 24</td>
<td>The Uniceld Brothers in &quot;Thicko&quot;</td>
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<td>Oct. 25</td>
<td>Keiko Matsui</td>
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<td>Nov. 1</td>
<td>Barbara Cook</td>
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<td>Nov. 2</td>
<td>Dave Koz</td>
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<td>Nov. 7</td>
<td>Orion Weiss</td>
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<td>Leahy</td>
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<td>Dec. 5</td>
<td>The Blind Boys of Alabama</td>
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<td>Dec. 7</td>
<td>Moscow Boys Choir</td>
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<td>Jan. 16, 2004</td>
<td>Aquilia Theatre Company presents William Shakespeare's Othello</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 17</td>
<td>The Uniceld Brothers in &quot;Thicko&quot;</td>
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<td>Jan. 30</td>
<td>Imani Winds</td>
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<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>Yellowjackets</td>
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<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td>The Jekyll and Hyde Tour</td>
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<td>Feb. 27</td>
<td>Spoleto Festival USA</td>
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<td>Feb. 28</td>
<td>MOMIX &quot;Baseball&quot;</td>
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<td>March 7</td>
<td>Kiss Me, Kate</td>
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<td>March 13</td>
<td>Rockapella</td>
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<td>March 30</td>
<td>Awadogian Pratt</td>
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<td>April 16</td>
<td>Mark O’Connor’s Hot</td>
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<td>April 17</td>
<td>Mavis Staples</td>
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<td>May 1</td>
<td>Atlanta Ballet</td>
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<td>May 7 &amp; 8</td>
<td>A.M. G Burg</td>
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For tickets and information, call 894-9600 or visit www.ferstcenter.gatech.edu.

IN BRIEF:

Uzer named Regents’ Professor

Physics Professor Turgay Uzer has been named Regents’ Professor, effective July 1. A committee of Regents and chaired professors recommended him for this honor, and their recommendation has been confirmed by Provost Jean-Lou Chameau.

Tech is allowed to nominate up to two individuals per year for appointment as Regents’ Professors. Those considered already hold the distinction of professor and are nominated by their colleges based on excellence in research and teaching and contributions to their profession and to Tech over a period of time. A committee made up of Regents’ Professors and other chaired professors representing the six colleges considers the nominations and makes a recommendation to the provost.

Uzer’s research interests concern the intersection of theoretical atomic, molecular, and chemical physics with nonlinear dynamics and chaos. Current research areas include: energy levels, spectroscopy and ionization of highly excited atoms in external fields, periodic orbits and their influence on spectra, nondispersive electronic wave packets in atoms, dynamics of energy flow in molecules, and mechanisms of unimolecular chemical reactions.

Get tested

In an effort to help detect skin cancers at the earliest curable stages, Kaiser Permanente is offering free skin cancer screenings in May.

The screenings will be held from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. at the following locations (call for directions):

- Tuesday, May 6: Brookwood at Peachtree, 770-885-7649
- Tuesday, May 6: Cumberland Medical Center, 770-451-4550
- Wednesday, May 14: Medical Center at Ocmulgee, 770-931-6001; and Southwood Medical Center, 770-605-3666
- Thursday, May 15: Crescent Medical Center, 770-496-5401

Free to everyone in the community, the screenings will be offered on a walk-in basis. No appointment is necessary.