NOTES FOR PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH  
Board of Regents: Permission to Renovate SAC, June 9, 1999

- I’m pleased to have this opportunity to tell you about Georgia Tech’s plans for our Student Athletic Complex, which we call SAC. The proposal before you is in accordance with the Georgia Tech Master Plan, and the site of the expansion, which we call SAC-II, is identified in the master plan.

- This is a $41.4 million project that involves 510,000 gross square feet of new and renovated space. It will renovate the existing SAC building, and incorporate it into an expanded facility that doubles our athletic floor-space, and also incorporates the Olympic swimming pool and provides parking.

- There are several reasons for making this request. The most significant is that our athletic and recreational facilities have fallen far behind our enrollment. When our existing Student Athletic Complex was built in 1976, we had 8,300 students. Today we have 14,000 students – an increase of almost 70 percent.

- Our campus has also become more intensely residential. We now have twice as many students living on campus as when our existing Student Athletic Complex was built. And our students have become more interested in fitness. The demand for intramurals and programs like weight training, aerobics and martial arts has been even stronger than enrollment growth.

- Our peer institutions offer 12 to 20 square feet of athletic space per student. Right now we have 8 square feet per student. Our enrollment goal for 2004 is 15,000 students, which would give us only 6 square feet per student if we do not move to address this need. Every week, 12,000 to 14,000 students, faculty and staff attempt to use SAC – far more than it was designed to serve. We routinely experience shortages of space and equipment, and have to turn away users and turn down student requests for activities.

- Our existing Student Athletic Complex will be renovated to upgrade the building systems and take care of code corrections. The expansion will double the square footage of athletic floor space from 110,000 to 210,000 gross square feet. The result will be new and renovated space for multi-purpose courts, fitness and aerobics programs, physical education classrooms, and administrative and program support services.

- In addition, this expansion will encompass the Olympic swimming pool and a pre-existing outdoor pool next to it, providing 100,000 square feet of enclosed aquatic space. The enclosure of the Olympic swimming pool is an important part of our effort to strengthen intercollegiate athletics at Georgia Tech. Last year our swimming and diving team broke several school records, and our recruiting efforts are going well. We would also like to add a women’s swim team to our intercollegiate athletics program. But the only way for us to get out of the backwaters and into the mainstream of swimming and diving, is to be able to host intercollegiate events. And the only way to do that is to have an enclosed facility.
• Georgia Tech inherited a natatorium from the Olympics and we want to use it as the Olympic legacy it was intended to be. It is presently an open-air facility with only a roof. We try to use it six months a year, but that is a stretch. And it has already begun to deteriorate because of exposure to the weather. It was designed to meet the specifications of world-class competitive swimming and diving, but its outdoor setting limits its appeal and its use for that purpose. Enclosing it as part of SAC-II will serve our students, enable us to develop a full-fledged intercollegiate swimming program, and give Atlanta the opportunity to host national and international aquatic events.

• The third part of this proposal is a two-level parking deck with 500 spaces. It will serve competitive athletic events and provide desperately needed student parking at the west end of campus, where the Olympics gave us lots of new dorm rooms, but no parking to go with them.

• As I mentioned yesterday in describing the Undergraduate Learning Center, our goal is to create a pedestrian environment in which students leave their cars parked near their dorms at the edge of campus and move around through the day on foot. This deck is part of the effort to shift vehicles and parking spaces out of the academic core of campus to the edge, and provide student parking near the dorms.

• The construction and renovation will be funded with 30-year bonds issued by the Fulton County Development Authority. The annual cost of paying off the bonds is expected to be about $2.85 million. This cost will be covered with student recreation fees, faculty and staff user fees, parking fees, Georgia Tech Athletic Association revenues, and private gifts to the Georgia Tech Foundation. As you can see from the brochure we brought with us, we have already begun raising private funds.

• Student athletic fees to help cover the cost will run $54 per semester for the next 30 years. Our Student Government Association has already voted to approve these fees by a 74 percent margin, which indicates how frustrated our students are with the limitations of our existing facilities.

• When the bonds are retired after 30 years, the land, the buildings with all improvements, and any accumulated capital reserves will become the property of the Board of Regents.