

NOTES FOR PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH  
**Board of Regents: Present Undergraduate Learning Center, June 8, 1999**

- I'm pleased to have this opportunity to tell you about Georgia Tech's proposed Undergraduate Learning Center. At its most fundamental level, this 225,000 square-foot building addresses pressing needs for undergraduate library resources, classrooms, labs, academic services and student center space. These needs have developed over the past three decades as a result of enrollment growth, program growth and the evolution of a more intensely residential campus environment. Our plans for the center are designed to meet these needs using technology that is presently unfolding and will be strengthened in the next century.
- Over the past 30 years, our student enrollment has grown 75 percent from 8,000 to 14,000. According to our enrollment plan, we are slated to grow to 15,000 students by 2004. This past year our freshman class was our largest in our history. In the face of a record number of applications for freshman and transfer admissions this year, we will see increased enrollments again next year, on the order of 100 to 200 more students.
- Within that overall increase in enrollment, growth in graduate enrollment has been especially dramatic, from less than 1,400 in 1969 to more than 3,600 today. With the development of new graduate degrees and the addition of mission-specific programs like bioengineering and the history of technology, we have doubled our academic degree offerings in the past 30 years. The new degree offerings have created a demand for additional library holdings.
- During the course of these increases in enrollment and degree programs, our library space has remained unchanged. The newest wing of our library building is now 31 years old, and its size and capabilities have fallen far behind what we need. They are far short of what will be required to serve an even larger student body in 2004. The library also has asbestos problems and badly needs to be renovated, but space is so tight, that we have not been able to do to it.
- The same can be said for our student center space, which was built in the 1970s. The existing student center is under the double stress of general enrollment growth plus a doubling of the number of students living on campus. We now have only half the student center space of other universities with similar enrollments.
- We are also struggling because most of our undergraduate classrooms and labs are located in old buildings, built more than 50 years ago when technology was not a consideration. They are neither configured nor retrofitted for the technology-based courses we are now developing.
- Given the set of needs we have, we are proposing an Undergraduate Learning Center that is innovative and takes full advantage of new educational technology. It represents a new approach to education that blends academic and library space with co-curricular and academic support services to create a comprehensive, collaborative learning environment enhanced by interactive technology.

- At Georgia Tech, we join the Board of Regents in recognizing the growing importance of technology in education, and we are deliberately changing our approach to education. Our goal is not merely to add technology around the edges, but to change our whole culture of teaching and learning.
- Georgia Tech has campus-wide computer networks. Beginning with the freshman class of 1997, we required all students to have a computer that is connected to those campus networks. At the same time, we began a thorough overhaul of our curriculum and how we deliver it. Our faculty have now redesigned more than 200 on-campus courses to utilize computer networks to deliver materials and to facilitate student interaction. We are also committed to having a number of degree programs ready by the year 2001 for Internet delivery.
- The development of a technology-based curriculum is well underway, but we still have much more to do. The ULC will be the central facility on campus for implementing our plans. For example, GTREP calls for Internet-based courses to supplement those offered on site in Savannah or Statesboro. Many of these courses will emanate from the ULC, which will have classrooms with interactive technology. This technology will allow students at up to five locations to participate actively in the same class, and also to work together on projects outside of class.
- The ULC will also address our need for library space. Historic information and documents of record will continue in hard copy, and books will continue to have their uses in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. So the ULC will include some stack space. But the primary focus of this new facility will be on the human and interactive aspects of library resources, both through technology and by providing meeting space for team research projects. The library resources of the ULC will give us the elbow room we need, first to renovate the old library and get rid of the asbestos, then to expand our overall library capabilities.
- At your April meeting in Savannah, Sir John Daniel made the point that technology always involves people. The need to create a technology-based, inter-active community of learners who have the ability to work in teams has been clearly articulated to us by our two key constituents – students and the companies who hire them. Our students come to us already knowledgeable and adept in technology, and they expect to use and improve their skills. Technology defines the companies that hire them after they graduate, and many of these companies have expressed their expectations that Georgia Tech become a leader in the use of educational technology, and to do so while inculcating the ability to work in teams.
- The Undergraduate Learning Center is a flexible facility that is designed to promote collaborative and creative learning... a facility that links the formal with the informal, and the “virtual” with the “real”... a facility that promotes community and human relations together with technology. As noted, it will even promote collaboration between students beyond the boundaries of our Atlanta campus. The idea of students learning from students has its roots in the ancient Roman forum, but in the ULC it is expressed for a new millennium that is based on technology.

- It is a 24-hour-a-day facility that brings all aspects of undergraduate campus life together, from informal discussions over coffee and Cokes to group projects, from classes to research assignments, from the office of the Cooperative Division to the office of study-abroad programs.
- The Undergraduate Learning Center is expected to cost \$46 million, and we propose raising \$8 million of this total from private resources. We believe the same alumni and corporations that were willing to support our new curriculum efforts will step forward to help us fulfill this goal.
- The Undergraduate Learning Center is consistent with Georgia Tech's Campus Master Plan. In fact, you will find the location identified in the Master Plan. It is right at the heart of campus – beside the existing library, close to the existing student center and in the middle of the existing undergraduate classrooms and labs. This site emphasizes the centrality of the building to the education process. And it also fits into our efforts to create an environmentally sustainable urban campus that is compact, pedestrian friendly and vehicle free at its center... so that students can leave their cars on the fringe of campus and get around easily by foot within the 10-minute break we provide between classes.
- Thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts about a building that is crucial if Georgia Tech is to fulfill its educational compact with our undergraduate students and with the State of Georgia.