TALKING POINTS FOR GEORGIA TECH PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH
Forum: Next 50 Years of Women at Georgia Tech, 3/28/03

• When first two women accepted 1952:
  o Women could only enroll in majors that were not offered at other Georgia public colleges (engineering, architecture, and the master’s degree program in applied mathematics).
  o The lack of restrooms and dormitories – women had to live in apartments off campus – was raised in opposition.
  o Male students didn’t warm to the higher level of decorum they thought would be required. They were sure all Tech traditions would end and worried that too many female students would hamper their ability to get good seats for athletic events.

• When I was a student more than ten years later:
  o Probably had 20 women in my graduating class
  o Can’t remember any classes I took that were taught by a woman

• But women immediately began to integrate themselves into campus life:
  o Fall of 1953: first female cheerleader
  o Fall of 1954: first two female ROTC cadets, first sorority
  o Fall of 1955: first female doctoral student
  o Had the help of the president’s wife, Ella Van Leer, and Tech’s librarian since 1939, Dorothy Crosland, who raised private funds to buy books and eventually to build Price Gilbert Library.

• Continue to have that “yes, but” culture when it comes to women at Georgia Tech:
  o Yes, many firsts for women over past 50 years – will celebrate them this evening at a special gala dinner – but there is still more to be done.
  o Yes, we are the nation’s leading producer of female engineers, but women only make up 27% of student body. That is actually a slight decrease over last year when we were at 28%. Have held pretty steady, with no increase over the past several years.
  o Yes we have significantly increased the percentage of tenured faculty who are women during the past decade, but it is still only 16%.
  o Yes, females have now edged past males in the undergrad enrollments of the College of Sciences and Ivan Allen, but they have lost ground in the College of Computing, decreasing from 16% in fall of 1999 to 13% in fall of 2002.

• How much more might we have accomplished over past 50 years, if our culture had simply been “yes” instead of “yes, but.”
• Studies consistently show that women have important contributions to make in the technological arena. They bring a different perspectives to interdisciplinary teams, broaden the teams’ outlook, and help the teams work better.

• Clearly more work to do to sustain our momentum and make the next 50 years of women at GT even more progressive and successful than the first 50 years. How to do that is focus of this forum.

• Raise some questions for discussion:
  o What inhibits our ability to recruit and hold women?
  o What do we need to change, what new things do we need to do to make Georgia Tech more attractive and appealing for women?
  o What goals should we set for the next 50 years? 50% women in student body, on faculty? We have made tremendous progress over the last decade or so opening administrative positions to women: 2 academic deans; dean of students; registrar; police chief. Hopefully during next 50 years, Georgia Tech will see first woman president.
  o What do the professions represented by Tech’s disciplines need to do to encourage participation and leadership by women, so that women aspire to them?

• Looking forward to hearing from the panel, then engaging in discussion with the audience on questions like this.