NOTES FOR GEORGIA TECH PRESIDENT G. WAYNE CLOUGH
Acceptance of ACRL Award, April 10, 2007

• Great honor to receive Association of College and Research Libraries’ 2007 Excellence in Academic Libraries Award.

• Thank:
  o Pam Snelson of ACRL
  o John Laraway of Blackwell Book Services

• Exciting to have our library recognized for creating a new model that not only merges the traditional reference desk with information technology services, but also transforms our library into a central gathering place for our campus community.

• Award made possible by:
  o Vision and hard work of Dean of Libraries Rich Meyer and entire library staff, together with Office of Information Technology,
  o Tech students – provided much advice, and a portion of their technology fees help to fund both Commons.
  o Private donors:
    • Al West
    • Price Gilbert Jr. Charitable Fund
    • Lewis H. Beck Educational Foundation
    • 50-year reunion project, Class of 1955

• West Commons, opened in 2002, brought reference desk and information technology services together, available 24/7, to provide a rich resource for students and faculty.
  o Test-bed for larger information commons that will be part of Undergraduate Learning Center.
  o Result: student usage of library doubled – knew we were on to something.
  o Focus is on the individual.

• East Commons, opened in 2006, is complementary – focuses on groups. Reinforces Georgia Tech’s goal to be community of learners.
  o Fall 2003: Studied 7 most popular places on campus where students gathered to study in groups. Asked students why chose these places; took pictures of how students arranged the furniture in these places.
  o Fall 2004: Formed student advisory council, did student focus groups.
  o Theme: refreshment for mind and body. Central place for students, faculty to gather outside classroom for discussion, collaborative work on projects, relax over a snack, cup of coffee.
  o Designed to be flexible, adaptable so that students and faculty can be creative in using the space to meet their needs. Expect students to come up with new uses, configurations we haven’t thought of yet.
• Overall goal: create the library of the future.
  o Back when we were beginning to develop concept for West Commons, I spoke to the
    Association of Library and Information Science Educators in Washington, DC.
    ▪ At this time, some were predicting (or fearing) Internet would make library
      obsolete.
    ▪ Said in my talk that the Internet was no substitute for the library, because it
      lacked that human element that librarians provide.
  o Since then, Georgia Tech has taken this concept of the library’s human element a step
    farther:
    ▪ Recognize that while technology is a tremendous resource to enable
      education, it does not replace the relationships between faculty and students
      and among students that are central to the educational process.
    ▪ Have made the Georgia Tech library a focal point for those important human
      relationships that foster education, create community of learners – Eg.
      CeLIBration brings in new freshmen, introduces them to the library; Tuesday
      Talks = interface between students, faculty around research.
  o GT library blends best of both worlds to serve our campus community:
    ▪ Leading-edge information technology, presentation technology, digital
      content, and virtual services.
    ▪ Environment that encourages and supports the human connections and
      relationships that are so important to the education process.

• Honored to have ACRL recognize and reward our efforts. Do not intend to rest on our
  laurels, but are committed to continue pushing the envelope in quest to create library of
  future.