GT Dining hosts environmentally friendly competition

By Rebecca Tattersfield
Contributing Writer

Tech Dining halls are competing against each other for the gold medal in green services. Britain and Woodruff dining halls and the Student Center Food Court are currently involved in a series of competitions designed to make our campus more environmentally friendly.

These contests are only some of the many steps GT Dining is making towards healthier, more sustainable and more socially responsible dining facilities on campus.

Local produce already accounts for a large amount of the food on campus, but GT Dining aims for more. The two dining halls as well as the Student Center Food Court are currently competing to see who can purchase the most local and organic produce.

The contest will be running every semester to help encourage the consumption of local produce. Students are contributing by eating the organic food bought from Destiny Organics that is offered in the dining halls. After the food is eaten the organic food has to be composted and this contributes to the total score.

So far, Britain Dining Hall has a large lead ahead over the other two dining halls. The prizes have not yet been determined.

A common campus myth nationwide is the alleged poor quality of food found in dining halls. With the healthy initiative dining services is taking with this competition, GT Dining is putting a crimp in this myth, and hopefully the “Freshman Fifteen,” for good.

The goal of the second competition is to create the most compost between the dining halls.

Greenco Environmental, a composting company, is working with GT Dining to reduce waste and increase compost, which instead of going to a landfill will be reinvested into Tech’s campus come planting season.

Students’ opinions are both positive and negative, spanning from the healthy optimists to the economically wary.

“It’s a pleasant change,” said Shrinimini Jayarajah, second-year AE. “I didn’t buy a meal plan this year, mostly because it was too expensive, but if my money was going towards a healthier food, I might consider getting one next year.”

Kyle Pate, second-year BME said, “I like the idea of being more environmentally friendly, but going organic usually means paying more.”

Tech has always been ahead...
in the race to greener services. Since 2004, 40% of GT Dining services produce is locally grown and bought. In fact, this habit of buying and serving local food has been a part of Dining Services for over 100 years. Organic foods are a little rarer at only 5% of total food on campus. However, organic options are available at every food serving facility on campus, including the EastSide and WestSide Markets.

Tech has also signed on to the Atlanta Local Food Initiative (ALFI) which promotes local and organic food in Atlanta.

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In our opinion, if we could continue this project, we can expand the scenarios. We can deal with rivers and seashores, or birds from videos. But the problem is, now how do we expect these systems on Google Earth? There is still research to be done, and there is still a gap in the engineering to make it commercialized,” said Kim.

Some may argue that this new technology is merely a tool that can create invasion of privacy. However, the program allows one to stretch past Google Earth’s boundaries, allowing users to be somewhere else in real-time. Essa and Tech’s other researchers are still developing the program, creating new simulations and scenarios and finding new ways to further real-time video.

Whether or not this work will revolutionize the way students and others view technology, the program is still bulldozing past Google Earth’s limitations and others view technology, the program is still bulldozing past Google Earth’s limitations and pushing on with this type of multimedia in the future.

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Center for Music Technology redefines music interaction

By Chris Russell
Staff Writer

What is music? For such a simple-sounding question, it’s one that carries a lot of clout. For one person, it might be a life-long passion and fulfilling career as a composer or musician. For another, it might just be noise pumped out of an iPod en route to class, helpfully blocking out thoughts about an upcoming exam. Whatever it is, it’s hard to define.

One reason for this is that, just as painting has evolved from Da Vinci and Michaelangelo to Warhol and Pollock, music has evolved over time, too. Watching a parent recognize an elevator tune as a top-10 hit from college or a grandparent grumble about the “noise” kids listen to today is a classic bit of evidence that the times are changing.

Tech is playing its part in these changes, too, by applying its resources as a tech-savvy school to see what new innovations it can bring about in the field of music. Last Nov., the Center for Music Technology (CMT) opened its doors and began researching how technology can be used to advance music and reshape all aspects of music.

According to Weinberg, the CMT’s purpose is to help innovate the relationship between composers, performers and consumers. As an example, he points to ZootBeats, which is available for purchase on the iTunes app store, and is beginning to develop into a social network.

On the application’s website, users can listen to and download other users’ compositions and upload their own. Of course, developing all these technologies wouldn’t do much good if they weren’t put to use. This is where Sonic Generator comes in.

Founded in 2006, the group’s executive director, Jason Freeman, describes Sonic Generator as “the contemporary music ensemble-in-residence at Georgia Tech dedicated to using technology to transform the ways in which we compose, perform and listen to music.” If this sounds similar to the CMT’s purpose, it’s not without good reason, as the two groups often work closely with each other.

Researchers at the CMT certainly seem to be meeting that goal, as a number of projects redefining every aspect of music have been completed in the past or are currently in the works.

Some programs, like ZootBeat, a recently developed smartphone application, are even aiming to redefine the traditional relationship between composers, performers and consumers. The CMT website describes the application as a “gesture-based musical studio,” which, in layman’s terms, means that users can compose music on their iPhone by tapping, shaking and singing into their device.

The program is easy to learn (composing a short techno beat took a grand total of five minutes after finishing the download), but still features more than enough tools for more serious users to go beyond creating little snippets and composing, some really impressive full pieces.

Brad Ritchie of Sonic Generator performs music by Michael Gordon with video by Bill Morrison at a performance last spring.
Freeman points to a recent collaboration and its unique results as a good example of the group’s relations.

Freeman said, “Last year, for instance, we used mobile phone software developed at the Center to perform a work by composer John Cage. It was originally scored for chorus; our version was for four iPhones and video animation.”

Technology is only part of what the group does, though. Sonic Generator is made up of a group of very talented musicians from throughout the Atlanta area. Freeman said, “The core members of Sonic Generator are some of the best classical musicians in Atlanta; many of them are members of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. Part of the group’s mission is to bring these amazing musicians to campus to collaborate with our faculty and students and present the results through concerts.”

Freeman himself deals with the electronics for the group, though he says he rarely steps out in the limelight himself.

“Typically I am sitting at a laptop and a mixing console with a few of my students rather than actually performing on stage,” said Freeman.

When asked how he got involved in this field, Freeman said, “I’ve always been involved in composing music and have always been a bit of a computer geek—over the years, these areas of my life began to merge. These days, my research focuses on using technology to facilitate collaborative creative experiences.”

The group will be holding a concert on Nov. 16 at 8 p.m. in the Alumni House.

The concert is free to the public, and will focus on efforts by French and American artists to, as a blurb on the group’s website states, “explore the connections between French and American musicians in their explorations of technology.”

The performance will feature several traditional instruments, but a heavy dose of tech can be expected as well, as a sizable portion of the pieces will feature an electronic component.

The concert in Nov. is the first for the program’s 2009-10 season. There are currently two other concerts scheduled in the spring of which no details have been listed yet. Check sonicgenerator.gatech.edu for more information about Sonic Generator’s performances this year.