New mid-term grades alert students to problems

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Nearly 30 percent of freshmen received at least one unsatisfactory (U) mark this fall in Georgia Tech’s first distribution of mid-term grades.

Robert McMath, vice provost for Undergraduate Studies, said the number of U grades among freshmen is only slightly higher than expected. “The good news is, if they can recognize the problems they are having, we can help them,” said McMath.

Tech started the new grading system to improve student retention by alerting students who are in danger of receiving a D or F as their final grade. Students who fail one or more classes are more likely to drop out. The program is aimed at helping freshmen adjust to the rigors of university life, but every undergraduate in 1000- and 2000-level courses are required than they had in high school. It’s a level they’re not used to,” Weyant explained.

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The Center for International Strategic, Technology, and Policy (CISTP) in the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs and the Strategic Outreach Program at the U.S. Army War College held an exceptionally timely two-day workshop entitled “Modern Missile Defense Systems: Examining the Impact of National Missile Defense (NMD) Theater Missile Defense (TMD)” last week.

The program kicked off with General James McCarthy (USAF, Ret.) speaking on “Current U.S. Defense Missile Systems and Initial International Reactions” as the Callahan Lecture. McCarthy recently chaired Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld’s commission to study the transformation of the military from a Cold War to a 21st Century fighting force. The Callahan Lecture Series and U.S. Recruitment Command supported the workshop as well. Since 1997, the Callahan Lecture Series, endowed by Leslie G. Callahan, Jr., professor emeritus of Industrial and Systems Engineering, has brought distinguished speakers on military issues to campus including former Senator Sam Nunn and Senator Max Cleland.

Since September 11, we must review all aspects of our homeland defense capabilities,” said John

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For more than 40 years, Georgia Tech has been an innovation powerhouse fueling development of new products and formation of technology-driven companies. To expand the amount of commercialization activity arising from its $500 million a year research program, Georgia Tech has established a new initiative known as VentureLab.

As a one-stop center for technology commercialization, VentureLab provides faculty a clear pathway from lab to the commercial market. It offers assistance throughout the process, including help in evaluating the commercial value of an innovation and guidance from entrepreneurs with experience in forming new companies.

“VentureLab provides comprehensive assistance to faculty members who want to commercialize the technology developed in their labs,” said Wayne Hodges, associate vice president for Economic Development at Technology Ventures at Georgia Tech.

By providing the faculty with the right kind of support and working closely with other campus units providing complementary services, we expect to significantly improve the commercialization process and increase the economic return from Georgia Tech’s top-ranked research program.”

As part of the Office of Economic Development and Technology Ventures, VentureLab builds on 20 years of experience at the Advanced Technology Development Center (ATDC), one of the nation’s most prestigious business incubators. ATDC has graduated 81 technology companies since 1984. During calendar 2000, companies associated with ATDC attracted nearly a half-billion dollars in investment, and in November 2000, Inc. Magazine cited ATDC as one of eight U.S. “Incubators that Work.”

Since 1992, ATDC has operated the Faculty Research Commercialization Program (FRCP), which provides small grants to help faculty move innovations from the laboratory to the commercial marketplace. From research at the six Georgia Research Alliance VentureLab continued, page 3
NCAA Final Four looking for volunteers

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The 2002 NCAA Men’s Final Four will be held at the Georgia Dome this spring, and hundreds of volunteers from Georgia Tech are needed to make the event a success.

Between March 26 and April 2, Atlanta’s Final Four volunteers will welcome and assist the thousands of fans, coaches, players and members of the press who will gather for the 2002 Final Four. Volunteers will manage welcome functions at hotels and airports, oversee transportation operations, staff intramural basketball events at the NCAA Hoop City and provide other event support.

Georgia Tech — along with the Atlanta Local Organizing Committee (ALOC) and the Georgia Dome — is an official host of the 2002 Final Four event. As a host, the Institute has been asked to provide at least 400 of the 1,600 volunteers needed for the event’s conclusion.

“We need to get as many people signed up before the winter break as possible,” said Hal Irvin, executive director of Georgia Tech’s Office of Organizational Development.

Irvin, who plans to volunteer for the event himself, said people from Georgia Tech are especially suited to help with events of this kind.

“For me, the Final Four is the biggest sporting event of the year,” Irvin said. “I’m excited to contribute my time to help make the Final Four a success. With all the people here who helped with the Olympics, Georgia Tech has a volunteer talent pool like no other university. I know the Georgia Tech community will get involved.”

Those interested in becoming volunteers should fill out an online application at www.atlantabasketball.com or call the Volunteer Hotline, 404-586-1010, to request an application. All Final Four Volunteer Team members will receive an official NCAA volunteer uniform; an invitation to the 2002 NCAA Men’s Final Four Salute Presentation; two passes to the NCAA Hoop City’s Volunteer Appreciation Day; and two complimentary invitations to the nationally televised ESPN Awards Show.

Volunteers must be at least 25 years old by Jan. 1, 2002, and must provide their own transportation and housing during the events. All volunteers will attend one 90-minute training session in March, to be held at the Coliseum. They also will work at least three four-hour shifts during the Final Four events.

The ALOC, Georgia Tech’s co-host for the Final Four, is a non-profit organization working with the NCAA to plan not only the Men’s Final Four, but also the 2005 Women’s Final Four, to be held in Atlanta.
Students rate strength of graduate programs

Many media outlets rely on hard data to rank the relative strength of graduate programs, but what about the students who receive the degrees? This question was addressed in a recent report by the National Association of Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS), when graduate students from 1,300 doctoral programs gave an insider’s view.

More than 32,000 graduate students responded to the web-based survey, consisting of 48 questions in nine areas relevant to doctoral education: information provided for prospective students, preparation for a broad range of careers, teaching and teaching assistantship preparation, professional development, career guidance and placement services, controlling time and degree, mentoring, program climate, and overall satisfaction.

At Tech, six programs met the sample criterion: aerospace engineering, computing, industrial and systems engineering, mechanical engineering, physics and public policy. The accompanying chart indicates the grade each received — “recommended practices” averages the responses that do not fully reflect the opinions of the entire graduate student population. In spite of this, Georgia Tech believes there is important evidence that concerns expressed represent widely held student opinions rather than a small but outspoken set of negative voices.

NAGPS is an advocacy organization representing 500,000 graduate and professional students across 200 U.S. campuses.

The survey was funded by a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

VentureLab, co-founded by a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, has helped generate approximately $1 million in licensing revenue and create 22 new ventures that together produced $16 million in revenue.

“Students are an under-examined market and ATDC’s 20 years of success is often quite significant. Among the largest of the obstacles is the large gap between research and commercial product. VentureLab has four specific components: VentureLab Assessment, VentureLab workshops and Seminars: VentureLab conferences, and VentureLab Pre-Seed Awards. The gap between research result and commercial product is often quite significant. Among the largest of the obstacles is the need for pre-seed financing to generate a prototype or proof-of-concept needed to show the commercial potential of an innovation. VentureLab Pre-Seed Awards will help bridge that gap, offering the funding needed to advance the technology and make the resulting company attractive to investors.”

For more information, visit www.nagps.org/gradeuugps

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