African American students ‘focus’ on Tech

Victor Rogers
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

For prospective graduate students visiting Georgia Tech for FOCUS 2000, the message was clear: earning a graduate degree from Georgia Tech is not easy, but it can be accomplished.

“Attending Georgia Tech is like drinking water from a fire hydrant. It can be done, but you’ve got to be strategic,” said S. Gordon Moore, a Georgia Tech alum and managing partner of OMED Educational Services. “Part of your strategy is making sure you’re going to the right [university]. Throughout this weekend you should ask questions, and keep asking until you have nothing more to ask.”

Moore spoke during the FOCUS 2000 welcome reception for 240 African American undergraduates from 77 colleges and universities. The FOCUS program, held annually during the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, is designed to give undergraduate African Americans an opportunity to visit Georgia Tech, receive an overview of the graduate degree programs and participate in the holiday celebration.

Malcolm Benson, a master’s candidate in electrical engineering and president of the Black Graduate Students Association (BGSA), extended a hearty welcome and a show of support on behalf of BGSA.

“I came here from Hampton University, an HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities). Georgia Tech was different,” he laughed. “I thought I couldn’t compete, so I was struggling and had no one to depend on. Students from the BGSA pulled me aside and said, ‘We’re in this together. You didn’t come here by yourself and you’re not going to leave by yourself.’ That’s what I want you to learn this weekend. We have a strong foundation here,” Benson said.

Evidence of that strong foundation is easy to find. Georgia Tech is a leader in developing graduate recruitment programs geared toward minorities, and graduates more minority engineers at the doctoral level than any other U.S. university. Tech is the nation’s second largest producer of minority engineers at the bachelor’s and master’s degree levels, according to Black Issues in Higher Education.

The evening’s keynote speaker, Frank M. Taylor of Ford Motor Company, urged FOCUS participants to prepare for leadership roles.

“FOCUS 2000 is really about preparing for leaders of tomorrow. That’s vital to me personally and to Ford Motor Company as a company, urged FOCUS participants to prepare for leadership roles.”

See FOCUS, page 3

Semester transition running smoothly

Dan Treadaway
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

Several weeks into Georgia Tech’s second term under the semester calendar, the dust stirred up by the conversion from quarters to semesters appears to have settled. While most of the institute-wide academic functions still have a few issues to be resolved, most say the transition has been smooth.

Many Tech students and faculty were unhappy with the 1995 decision by the Board of Regents to adopt a semester calendar for the entire University System. Now that semesters are a reality, however, many students and administrators are talking openly about the advantages of the semester system.

Curriculum and Faculty Issues

Bob McMath, vice provost for Undergraduate Studies, said that most of the unresolved issues related to the conversion are relatively minor and should be resolved by the end of spring semester.

“Classroom and lab space are tight, but that’s a function of increased enrollment as well as semester conversion,” he said. “Some fine tuning is still being done in core courses in math, science and computing, in part so that we can more readily accommodate transfer students, but we are in pretty good shape with that.”

McMath also said that minor problems with degree certification—“checking people out to see if they have finished their course work”—will continue as long as there are students who completed courses under both the quarter and semester systems.

As for faculty, McMath says the adjustment to semesters is an ongoing process. “Faculty, like students, have had to adjust to the pace of semesters,” he said. “And, like students, some of the class preparation has been done on a ‘just in time’ basis as we started with semesters.”

Admissions

Georgia Tech admits 600-700 undergraduate transfers annually, and Director of Admissions Deborah Smith echoed McMath’s comments about the need to accommodate transfer students, citing it as the biggest challenge Admissions is facing in the transition to semesters.

“With semester conversion, the faculty took the opportunity to redesign the entire curriculum,” Smith said. “As a result, some of the quarter system academic programs don’t necessarily match the new semester programs. In some programs, for instance, a larger percentage of the major classes are now taken in the sophomore year. This can create problems for students transferring in as juniors.”

Smith said she is leading an effort to create a new program for evaluating transfer students for admission. “We will be evaluating transfers based on their specific degree programs,” she said.

On the plus side, semesters offer two distinct advantages for Admissions, according to Smith. Students are admitted and accepted three times a year instead of four, and, unlike fall quarter, fall semester begins well before Admissions’ peak travel season, which means more admissions staff are on campus to help new students.

See Semesters, page 3
Tech professor gives land-mine victims new hope

Amanda Hainesworth
Institute Communications and Public Affairs

Land mines strike thousands of innocent victims every year. A new Georgia Tech-led project could have a significant impact on the care and rehabilitation of land-mine survivors worldwide.

According to estimates made by the International Committee of the Red Cross, at least 2,000 people every month are killed or injured by land mines—the equivalent of a new victim every 20 minutes. Millions of mines, leftover weapons of war but still potentially lethal, are scattered over 70 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and the Americas.

Tech's Mark Geil, a recognized authority in amputee gait analysis and prosthetics, has recently returned from the Republic of Georgia, part of the former Soviet Union, where he examined lower-leg amputees, many of them land-mine victims. He also researched artificial limbs currently available in the capital city, Tbilisi, with the aim of enhancing the design and accelerating the manufacture of prostheses available to amputees.

War broke out between the Republic of Georgia and the neighboring Republic of Abkhazia, also once part of the Soviet Union, in 1992 resulting in a border now riddled with land mines where civilians continue to be killed and injured. Geil said the Georgian government estimates that there are about 6,000 amputees in the country, but only three prosthetics-making shops, with a waiting list of two and a half years.

"Only about seven limbs are made in a week, so it's clear that with greater production of a better design, many lives could be improved," he said.

Geil's groundbreaking project to help land-mine survivors could soon result in the remote manufacture of prosthetic sockets which, when eventually fitted on the amputees, would greatly improve their mobility and enhance their quality of life. "In the U.S., because of the Americans with Disabilities Act, we have a much greater awareness of the issue of accessibility. But there's no such awareness in Georgia. Because there are few elevators and stairs are much more common, many buildings are inaccessible for those on foot," he said. This meant that being able to walk about easily was essential. "But if walking is painful, or if you move slowly because you use crutches, your ability to conduct ordinary, everyday activities is greatly reduced."

Geil aims to arrange for workers at a Tbilisi trauma center to be trained in the use of high-tech, portable digitization and pressure analysis systems, which take precise measurements of an amputee's residual limb. The data collected in Tbilisi will be sent via the Internet to Atlanta for the production of customized prosthetic sockets. Geil hopes the Atlanta Veterans Administration Medical Center will manufacture the sockets.

This system of remote manufacturing has enormous potential to improve the lives of land-mine victims all over the world. The Red Cross says a child injured at the age of 10 will need about 25 artificial limbs during his or her lifetime, but in many countries, crutches are all people can afford.

Archil Kobiladze, a Tbilisi associate professor of medicine and advisor to the Georgian Minister of Health, said that when he first heard about Geil's project he had "a strong feeling of relief. I almost lost all my hope that we could achieve anything for the amputees in Georgia."

Kobiladze said the amputees need not only inexpensive, but also good quality prostheses. "They also need a repair and replacement service for their prostheses and access to advisory and training services," he said.

Geil described some of the currently used prostheses in Tbilisi as "like something from the Dark Ages," with the manufacturing and fitting processes at least 20 years out of date.

"As matters worsen, Geil said the trauma center personnel work for paltry wages in terrible conditions with minimal equipment, working only from their desire to help others. "They need to improve the quality and quantity of prostheses available in Tbilisi is given added impetus by the possibility that the Red Cross, one of the existing prostheses manufacturers, will leave Georgia at the end of this year. Geil said local people would need training to take over the Red Cross' role.

Geil works within Tech's Center for Human Movement Studies, which has an established research relationship with the Medical College of Georgia. The two are working on this project with the Atlanta-Tbilisi Partnership for Healthcare, Emory Hospital and the Atlanta VA Medical Center.

From the Hill

Despite all the hype, Y2K fortunately turned out to be a "non-event." Georgia Tech made the transition to 2000 with no major disruptions and only a few minor problems, thanks to several years of preparation by its Y2K team. Nearly 100 team members were on Y2K duty over New Year's weekend. Following is a letter of thanks to those individuals from President Wayne Clough:

"I would like to express my personal gratitude to you, and express thanks on behalf of the entire Tech community for the time you spent on campus over the New Year's weekend helping insure a smooth Y2K transition. Some 90 of your fellow employees participated in this extraordinary exercise, coming from almost all of our support organizations.

Georgia Tech has become known as an institution with a reputation for commitment to excellence because of the willingness of our staff and employees to go the extra mile. Also, we succeed because we understand the meaning of teamwork. The New Year's weekend and all of the work leading up to it was a clear illustration of this ethic. It gives me great pride to be the president of this institution, and your effort helps add a spring to my step. Our successful transition through the Y2K challenge was not easy, but the results could not have been better. Thank you for all you do for Georgia Tech and especially for taking time from your holidays to help in this important task."

A photo by H. Kenneth 14ker, MD

An amputee land-mine survivor attempts to relearn basic walking skills at the Tbilisi facility of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The former soldier is using a polypropylene prosthetic and faces considerable additional pain from iron shrapnel in his intact leg.

Did you know

Temporary sidewalk closing

The sidewalk between the west entrance and south end of the MARC building will be closed temporarily due to grading associated with construction of the new MRDC II building. Work is scheduled to begin this week. Pedestrians will not be able to use this pathway to travel between MARC and MRDC I until construction is completed in late March or early April. For more information, contact Gary Petherick, project manager, at 894-6507.

Faculty/staff club

As of Jan. 18, a Faculty/Staff Club lunch facility has opened in Room 343 of the Student Center (across from First Place). The club, renamed the University Club, will be open from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Monday - Friday. Sandwiches, soup and beverages may be purchased in the lunch room, but feel free to bring your own meal or snack from the First Place, the Food Court or home. All faculty, staff and friends of the Institute are welcome. A search will continue for a permanent facility in a new location.

The Whistle

Editor-in-Chief: Denise Noble

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.

Published by Institute Communications and Public Affairs.

Publication is weekly throughout the academic year and biweekly throughout the summer.
Call for faculty committee nominations

A large part of the business of Georgia Tech is accomplished by faculty committees. With committee elections approaching, the Nominations Committee now is seeking interested candidates. Forward your nominations (including self-nominations) by Feb. 4 to Craig Rinning, chair, Nominations Committee, by e-mail (craig.rinning@arch.gatech.edu) or campus mail (College of Architecture 0155). Please indicate which committee or committees the nominations are for.

The Nominations Committee will assemble the ballot, and elections will be held during spring semester. The committees of the General Faculty Assembly and the Academic Senate are listed at right. For a complete list of the membership of each committee, see the Faculty Handbook online at http://www.academic.gatech.edu/handbook/Section2/Committee.html. Feel free to contact committee chairs or other members to find out more about their activities.

FOCUS, continued from page 1

University of California-Davis. “Coming here really solidified that choice.”

“I thought the program was wonderful,” White said. “The tour of various labs in the College of Computing was very rewarding. I expected a very high level of computer technology, and that’s what I saw. They gave great information about the graduate process and what they expect of us.”

White, a 31-year-old wife and mother, was particularly interested in the advice the panel of graduate students gave regarding how to balance family issues with graduate school. She plans to have a career in education, perhaps becoming a professor in signal processing.

Georgia Tech also was the top choice for Alisha Stroman, a senior at MIT majoring in electrical engineering and computer science.

“This was my number one choice based on the programs and curriculum. Now that I’ve talked to more people, this is definitely where I want to be,” Stroman said.

“My main concern about coming to Tech was the same one I had about going to MIT: it’s a majority white institution, so I was concerned about having supportive faculty and staff, and having other students who try to help each other instead of being competitive,” Stroman said. “People here gave me very candid answers; the FGSA is very supportive. As long as I have some support, that’s what is necessary for me to get through here.”

FOCUS 2000 concluded with Georgia Tech’s ninth annual King Week Ecumenical Service on Jan. 16. The keynote speaker was Thomas W. Dorch Jr., national president of the 100 Black Men of America, Inc., the nation’s premier mentoring organization for African Americans.

“As you move through life understand that no one owes you anything,” Dorch said. “You must earn what you get, and most often you will get what you earn. Understand that what happened in the past is no excuse to sit back and say ‘they owe me.’ You cannot expect others to do for you the things that you can do for yourself.”

Seminars, continued from page 1

Financial Aid

“The good side to semester conversion is the numbers,” said Jerry McTier, director of the Office of Student Financial Planning and Services. “It reduces the number of times we receive and disburse funds, which come from government agencies, private foundations and lenders. Now we only have to do that two times a year instead of three, which means there’s fewer chances for mistakes to happen.”

The bad news is that the cycle for awarding and delivering funds is pushed up by about a month. “The students weren’t ready for that last year, and we weren’t as ready as we wanted to be,” McTier said.

“The semester calendar means we have to get awards out much earlier than before and be ready for disbursement by the end of August instead of the end of September, so we are strongly encouraging students to apply earlier.”

McTier also pointed out that while students are receiving the same amount in awards annually, they are receiving fewer award payments (two instead of three). “I’ve heard some students say they are having to do better at money management because of that,” he said.

Co-op Program

After a drop in co-op enrollment last academic year, the numbers for Tech’s first two semesters are back up again, according to Cooperative Program Director Tom Atkins. The number of students in the Co-op Plan increased from 3,238 last spring quarter to a projected total of 3,500 this semester. “The drop last year was the result of juniors and seniors who didn’t have enough co-op hours for a co-op degree deciding to go ahead and graduate before semesters took effect,” Atkins said. “We expected that, and we have been concentrat- ing on marketing the program to new students.”

Atkins said that under the semester system, the Co-op staff is inter- viewing and preparing students for co-op assignments only twice a year instead of three times. As a result, the office is placing more emphasis on marketing the program and continuing to attract top- notch students.

Student Reaction

No one on campus has felt the impact of semester conversion more than students. Even though the change has been dramatic, many students are seeing the positive side. “The primary advantage of the two semesters is getting the opportunity to go further in depth into a subject,” said computer science student Cory Kidd. “With 15 weeks of class time instead of 10, I’ve had the chance to work on longer projects and papers. On the other hand, three semesters in a year gives a choice of fewer classes than four quarters.”

Carolyn Cleveinger, a History, Technology and Society major, echoed Kidd’s mixed feelings. “I feel like I’ve gained a greater depth of knowledge in my courses under semesters,” she said. “I think the big disadvantage is that students take fewer courses, so we don’t graduate with as large a variety of classes.”
Automobiles
1989 Toyota Tercel, 115K miles, a/c, auto transmission, pwr steering, maintenance records. $1,200 OBO. Contact 206-9661, 894-4079 or gty@ics.egr.gatech.edu.

1990 Chevy S10 Blazer, gray, auto, 2-wd, 4.3L, engine, roof rack, cruise, 202,000 miles (125,000 on engine, 2,000 on transmission). $3,100 OBO. Carla Koresky, koresky@fas.gatech.edu or 872-9025.

1991 BMW 318i. Black w/ black leather interior, 4 dr, 130K miles, moonroof, new clutch, breaks and tires, antilock breaks, alarm system, CD player, $6,800. Contact 894-9990, 770-423-8266 or jhuff@spm.gatech.edu.

1997 Ford Ranger XLT, 4.0L V6, auto, pwr steering, sunroof, 55K miles, auto, am/fm/cass, pwr windows/mirrors, ABS, alloy wheels, airbags, 6 p.m. or norma.denuex@arch.gatech.edu.

1997 Dodge Grand Caravan. All maintenance records, psw, pw, pm, am, am/cass, CD, quartz sunroof, windshield, backrest, hi-way pegs, manual trans, $2,200 new, asking $1,500. Shirley, 385-0683 or sam.rizve@cos.gatech.edu.

1997 BMW 328i 4-dr sedan, 48K miles. Silver w/ black top, leather sunroof. Will negotiate price below appraisel retail book value ($30,450). Contact bygridlin@gti.gatech.edu or Michael Barrett, (770) 378-0900, (800) 792-0300.

1997 Dodge Grand Caravan. All maintenance records, pw, pl, pm, am, am/cass, CD, electric seats, tinted windows, luggage rack, new tires. $14,750. Contact 770-445-4035 after 6 p.m. or norma.denuex@arch.gatech.edu.

1997 Ford Ranger XL/2.4L, 4X4, auto, pwr wind/locks/mirrors, ABS, alloy wheels, airbags, sliding glass, bedliner, am, in/cass, sport intake and exhaust, 12K miles, 550-984-8728, 876-0231 or gary.phillips@facilities.gatech.edu.

Furniture
Off-white soft leather sectional w/ queen-size sofa sleeper bed, recliner. 8 months old, manufacture tag still on, rarely used. Bought for $2,200 new, asking $1,500. Shirley, 385-0683 or shirley.miller@carnegie.gatech.edu.

Living room sofa and love seat (like new), glass coffee table, end tables, 2 lamps, $800 for all. Contact 770-979-0436 after 6 p.m. Armoires, night stand in matching wood, good condition, great for starting out. $70. Will deliver. E-mail carrie.reynolds@mg.tgt.gatech.edu.

Remote Control.

MISCELLANEOUS
Hondas ST1100. Good shape, low miles. Hard luggage, Corbin seat and original seat. Metzler tires. $5,500. Contact 894-9990, 770-423-8266 or jhuff@spm.gatech.edu.


2002 Saturn SL2. 59K miles, white ext., tan cloth int., ps/pw, pl, pm, am/cass, 5 spd, bought SUV, must sell. Asking $5,200 OBO. Contact 894-6062 (day), 636-7197 (eve) or sean.porter@library.gatech.edu.

1995 Nissan Sentra XE, 4 dr. black, a/c, only 55K miles, auto, am/fm/cass, pwr steering, airbag, cruise control, 1 owner. $4,750 OBO. Contact 894-9997.

Furniture

1997 Hyundai Accent L, 2 dr. 5 spd, black, a/c, 33K miles, am/cass, CD player, new tires. Moving. $3,500 OBO. Contact 894-6833, 770-457-8184 or larry.eastin@fas.gatech.edu.

1999 BMW 318i. Black w/ grey interior. 4 dr, 130K miles, moonroof, new clutch, breaks and tires, antilock breaks, alarm system, CD player, $6,800. Contact 894-9990, 770-423-8266 or jhuff@spm.gatech.edu.

1991 GM 318. Black w/ black leather interior, 4 dr, 130K miles, moonroof, new clutch, breaks and tires, antilock breaks, alarm system, CD player, $6,800. Contact 894-9990, 770-423-8266 or jhuff@spm.gatech.edu.

Brown Bags/Lectures
Jan. 13

Feb. 1
Materials Seminar Series. "Salty Interfaces: The Physics of Highly Charged Surfaces," Dr. Fyl Pincus, UC Santa Barbara. 3 p.m., Burger-Henry, Rm. 383. Contact: Marlene White, 894-2850 or marlene.white@mse.gatech.edu.

FEBRUARY 2000 Classifieds

2001 Honda ST1100. Good shape, low miles. Hard luggage, Corbin seat and original seat. Metzler tires. $5,500. Contact 894-9990, 770-423-8266 or jhuff@spm.gatech.edu.

1997 BMW 328i 4-dr sedan, 48K miles. Silver w/ black top, leather sunroof. Will negotiate price below appraisel retail book value ($30,450). Contact bygridlin@gti.gatech.edu or Michael Barrett, (770) 378-0900, (800) 792-0300.

1997 Dodge Grand Caravan SE, burgundy, 75K miles, loaded, air conditioning, pwr steering, airbag, cu...