McEver Poetry Reading April 1

By Arcadiy Kantor

The School of Literature, Communication and Culture will host the McEver Poetry Reading featuring former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins at 7 p.m. in the LeCraw Auditorium on the first floor of the College of Management facility in Technology Square. The event is free. Collins will sign copies of his books after the reading.

Housing lottery results available

The results of the fall 2004 housing selection lottery are available online at www.housing.gatech.edu. Summer 2004 housing sign-ups end Wednesday, March 31. To secure a spot, a $300 prepayment is due at that time. A list of dorms open this summer is available online.

Presidential hopefuls face off in debate

By Daniel Amick

Contenders for undergrad-uate student body president and executive vice president squared off in front of the Campanile Wednesday. During the debate, presidential candidates Adam Bernstein, Ashley Case, Ryan Johnson and Amy Phuong laid out their platforms, then took turns fielding questions about their candidacies, the role of student government and their ideas for improving Tech.

Speaking first, Amy Phuong listed several goals she would work for if elected president. She said she would work with the Department of Parking and Trans-portation to develop online payments of parking tickets and a 24-hour warning system.

Phuong also said she would work to preserve free student ticket-ets to athletic events, help stu-dent organizations and fight budget cuts at the state level with the SGA lobby board.

“Have the experience, have the knowledge. I have established relationships with several admin-istrators across the board. I firmly believe that I have the ability to truly, effectively voice your opin-ion to the faculty and administra-tors,” Ashley Case followed Phuong. She said her platform was based on the idea of improving com-munications and being accessible students.

Phuong also said she would speak for the De-partment of Parking and Trans-portation to develop online payment of parking tickets and a 26-minute warning system.

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We want your opinions!

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E-mail opinions @ technique.gatech.edu
Provost tells reps that budget situation is toughest in years

By Stephen Baehl
Senior Staff Writer

Tuesday night’s UHR meeting was overshadowed by the looming discussion of the proposed SGA budget for the 2004-2005 fiscal year.

Executive Vice President Michael Handelman noted at the meeting’s opening that the upcoming/budget considerations would take significant time and attention by the House, and that quorum had to be maintained for the rest of the semester in order for SGA to finish all the business before it.

“If you cannot attend meetings from now until the end of the semester,” he told representatives, “I would highly encourage you to resign. This is not something that is bad; this is not something that is embarrassing.”

One of the night’s special guests, Provost Jean-Lou Chameau, also spoke to representatives about the tight budget.

“We have had a very tight fiscal year,” he said. In all his time at Tech, he said, “This is the toughest year I have seen on the Georgia Tech campus.”

While cutting funding may be difficult, he said, “We have no choice. We have to deal with the monetary situation.”

“Concerns over the impending budget debates prompted Handelman to propose the creation of an ad-hoc committee to consider budget amendments before they were put on the floor of the house. The committee, he said, would create written reports about the proposed amendments but have no other power.

“The proposal was passed after some debate that addressed concerns of the committee only adding more red tape to the process.

“This looks a lot to me like JFC,” Economics Representative Mark Iannucci said. “I’m a little concerned about these rules; I’d like people to convince me.”

Public Policy Representative Alan Bakowski said the committee would present no problems. “There’s no real downside to this. What it allows us to do is to evaluate these amendments and give us a little more insight before they are considered on the floor,” he said.

After nominations for the annual Student Council Awards, given to outstanding members of the Tech community, were taken, representatives moved quickly to the long list of bills before them.

Most discussion centered around budget proposals for the remainder of the semester, as none before them had reached quorum.

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around a joint allocation to Culture Tech for $3,738 for its Culture Tech Food Fair. The money was requested to fund food ingredients and eating utensils in addition to some Marriott staff to help at the event, in which 13 organizations are expected to participate.

The organization representative said the participating club members would be doing their own cooking, and they expected 400 students to attend. There was no expected charge for admission.

The event has taken place during the spring semester for the past 20 years at Tech; this year, however, Culture Tech also hosted the event in the fall for the first time.

Some representatives questioned funding the expansion of an event like this to taking place two times a year rather than one in a time of budget problems.

One representative said this sort of thing could present a problem if SGA were forced to not fund another club’s annual event and had to tell those students it was due to funding Culture Tech’s event twice.

The bill passed, but the allocation was reduced to roughly $700. However, it was not done yet. A motion to reconsider the bill was quickly passed.

Relay For Life requested $2,000 to pay for a DJ and band for entertainment at its yearly event, which is a fundraiser for cancer research.

The organization representative said she knew SGA usually did not support fundraising events but hoped they could make an exception.

The motion to reconsider the bill with some funding factored back in by a vote of 22 yeas, 17 nays and 1 abstention.

“Isn’t it enough that the organizations cook the food? I mean, are we going to ask for them to pay for it, too?”

Mark Iannucci
Undergraduate representative

Culture Tech also submitted a bill for its performance night. This bill faced much less debate and was quickly passed.

The Graduate Student Senate, however, had noted that not funding the event’s requested money would result in $2,000 less going to the American Cancer Society. In effect, they said this would be SGA funding the American Cancer Society.

The undergraduates agreed, and the bill failed.

Different majors have different requirements, and CAPP will be especially beneficial not only to some students deciding to make a drastic change of majors like Chemistry to Management but also to students who are undecided, she said.

Schools are also continuously involved in course and degree restructuring, so CAPP presents a possible benefit to them, as well. By using CAPP effectively, a department would be able to make changes to degree and course requirements, and inform all of their students by simply changing the “CAPP compliance” in the system.

The system will be supported by Engineering Information Systems (EIS), a division of the Office of Information Technology (OIT), like all of Tech’s other student-oriented websites.

“I think it would be beneficial, but hopefully I would not have to use this system every week,” said Stephen Bates, a first-year Undecided Engineering major.

Currently, testing is being done on the system by various academic units around the Institute and will conclude sometime later this month. A Beta version of CAPP will be re-
Committee tables grade substitution proposal

By Haining Yu
Staff Writer

Committee members at the March 15 meeting of the Student Rules and Regulations Committee (SRC) decided to table the grade substitution proposal. Members are demanding that more statistical information be gathered before any decision is made, in order for committee members to make a better informed decision.

The proposal does not pass through the SRC in time for the April 20 meeting of the Academic Senate, then it is highly unlikely it will be implemented by fall 2004.

According to Paul Benkeser, chair of the SRC, “The reason we tabled the proposal was that we got into a discussion about whether or not the policy was going to have the impact that it was designed to have, that is, to improve the retention of students who had done poorly in their first or second semesters at Tech.”

The committee felt that it lacked adequate amounts of “hard evidence” in the form of statistics in order to determine the actual effect the policy will have on the Institute.

“The concern was that we are creating some false hopes in students who really shouldn’t be at Georgia Tech.”

Paul Benkeser
SRC chair

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By Christopher Gooley / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Data from the College of Sciences presented at the latest meeting showed that students who did poorly in two or more classes during their first year at Tech were unable to improve their grades by a significant amount after retaking the class. “The concern was that we were creating some false hopes in students who really shouldn’t be at Georgia Tech.”

Paul Benkeser
SRC chair

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“Of all the people who [can] log into BuzzPort, which are employees, faculty, and students, about 30 percent of them use it on a regular basis,” Huseth said.

Users of the portal have had mixed opinions on the system, however. “Right now what I need is provided by other [services],” said freshman Industrial Engineering major Binh Ngo.

“This is a very complex product...but generally we’ve been able to keep it available.” Huseth said. Potential instabilities had to be ironed out before the new features could be made public.

User acceptance of the portal has been-in-line with expectations. OIT’s statistics last semester showed moderate use. “Of all the people who [can] log into BuzzPort, which are employees, faculty, and students, about 30 percent of them use it on a regular basis,” Huseth said.

Students have had mixed opinions on the system, however. “Right now what I need is provided by other [services],” said freshman Industrial Engineering major Binh Ngo.

BuzzPort’s administration believes that as faculty and students grow more used to the system, the number of users will grow. “[Users] do not want to invest a huge amount of time in learning a new system,” McMath said.

The administration also believes there is a lack of knowledge of the system’s capabilities on campus and is looking to correct that.

“As the BuzzPort leadership sort of goes around the campus and tells people about the new upgrades...what I would expect is not a huge spike but a steady upward ramp...on utilization.” McMath said.

Honesty don’t think I ever got information that said ‘Here’s how you use it. As a faculty member, here’s what you can use it for,’” said Literature, Communication and Culture instructor Lisa Minnick.

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items against the new funding policies. The Music Department, a Tier 2 organization, received only $20,400 of its requested $56,419.

“The Music Department is an academic department and should not be funded under the student activity fee,” Brown said, expressing her opinion. She added, “We cut instruments that could come from Capital Outlay and all things related to classes that needed to be registered for.”

Capital Outlay funds are granted through bills presented to SGA during the school year.

Other organizations encountered fewer problems. For example, Student Publications and the Student Center Programs Council, both Tier 2 organizations, saw fewer relative cuts, because most of their requests did not include newly restricted items. Tier 2 organizations also receive higher funding priority than Tier 3 organizations.

“The big areas that got cut down to zero were publicity, office supplies and student assistants,” said David Ziskind, a member of the Student Center Governing Board and preparer of Student Center Program Council’s SGA budget. “Obviously, it’s a disappointment to us that we couldn’t get everything we requested. But we also know there are a lot more other student organizations out there, and given the current state of the budget, we were fortunate to get the allocation we did.”

Typically, travel and publicity requests are for yearly needs an organization knows it will incur, such as a club sport’s travel to conference games or annual tournaments in which it always competes. Those needs that appear during the year, such as that resulting from a team or club advancing to national competition, are usually funded through bills.

Richard Lau, treasurer for GT Water Polo, said, “Without the travel allocation, it does affect what you can compete at.” Some tournaments and competitions for student organizations and club sports, he said, help the team find extracurricular time to play before conference competition, giving them a competitive edge.

He said some teams will feel this impact more than others. “Who it really affects is the club sports who are capable of competing at the national level,” he said, referring to those who are invited annually to national tournaments. As for his water polo team, he said the organization is $11 per year dues helped offset travel funds not granted through the budget. Also, most of the team’s competitions are within the southeastern U.S.

In fact, last year’s treasurer for the team forgot to submit a budget, but, he said, “Having to pay for travel out of our own pocket, honestly, isn’t that big of a deal,” when the team is only traveling to local tournaments.

Lau said cuts to publicity and office supply requests were also not a problem for the water polo team, but he knew of other organizations that in the past have relied on publicity funding.

For organizations that typically rely on travel and publicity funding in budgets, problems could arise. Still, Brown said, “Anything cut from budgets can be brought before SGA in the form of bills. Otherwise, the organizations can possibly look to other sources such as fundraising.”

Organizations should not underestimate fundraising abilities, Brown said. “Many of the student organizations do not come to SGA with budgets or have just started coming around SGA.”

Phuong plans to work to help those who need funding find alternative avenues. She said, “I just kept running into the same questions from student organizations, and a lot of them don’t know what other resources are available on campus.”

“I’m still developing a fundraising/resource book, and I’ve been working with other leaders on campus,” she said. The book, she said, will cover not only how to go about getting funding from SGA, but also about how to seek funding from other campus organizations such as RHA and the Alumni Association. Lau mentioned some other ideas to help more efficiently trim budget allocations and requests. He noted that, from looking at past years budget requests from other treasurers, many requests were superseded.

“Every club requests a lot of money because they know they’re not going to get it all,” he said. “But I feel that if you don’t think you’re going to get it from SGA, you’re wasting your time.”

Lau suggested that requiring organizations to itemize their budgets before sending their budgets could cut back on excessive requests. He said that, for example, someone could ask for $500 to pay for an entry fee he knew he needed to be $250, and not even be closely questioned about it.

This year’s budget was released a few months later than usual, leaving SGA little time to debate and pass a finalized version.

Brown said the reason for the delay was her late appointment. Usually, she said, the JFC chair is appointed in the spring. “They have time to work over the summer on preparing budget packets, assembling their committee, due dates and notifying the organizations,” she said. Brown, however, was not appointed until fall 2003. “I was behind quite a bit from the beginning,” she said. “And with the budget constraints facing this year, I was blessed with the committee that I had, and we were glad to get it out as soon as we did.”

The Undergraduate House will hold a budget information session Sunday, March 23 from 6 to 8 p.m. in room 117 of the Student Services Building.
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http://www.greek.gatech.edu
Debates from page 1

munication.

“For the past several years, SGA has not met my expectations as far as the connections between students and their government,” Case said. “The sole purpose of the student government is to do what you want to do. I’d like to be the bridge between students and their government.”

Case said she wants to create a committee within SGA made up of representatives from all student organizations so that they can network. She also proposed an extended weekend before finals week.

Ryan Johnson spoke after Case. He said his platform was based on making students happier. “I don’t understand when people say they have to graduate as soon as possible,” Johnson said.

“No you don’t. College is supposed to be the best years of your life. If you vote for me, I guarantee, you’ll have the best year of your life next year,” he said. He also said he will represent the voice of the common student.

Adam Bernstein spoke last. He said his platform is different from the other candidates because of its strong focus on academic issues. I have a vision for the future of courses at Tech,” a class that is dynamic, that changes based on the

Degree from page 5

leased at the beginning of this summer and students will be allowed to test a prototype of the CAPP system for themselves.

McVerson said Tech is months ahead of a schedule set by the University System of Georgia which requires CAPP for all colleges in the system by the end of December this year.

“If it makes the changing major process easier, I would consider it a good thing,” said Kelly Straub, a first-year Biomedical Engineering student. However, the CAPP system cannot handle both quarter and semester credits, and presently, only 70 percent of the students have all of their credits in semesters. Tech converted to semesters in 1999 after being granted a year dispensation from the requirements of the Georgia University System.

“I think this system will bring good times to the campus as we are looking towards graduation,” said Chris Vaughts, a first-year Biology Major.

While the banner system is responsible for creating and adding CAPP to OSCAR, the Registrar’s office is responsible for all of the specific programming involved with aligning the system to all of Tech’s different degrees and schools.

The entire system is a free improvement for the school because OSCAR is run by the banner school system, which installed the improvement for universities around the globe. This is an added bonus because of the budget crunch Tech is facing.

Grades from page 6

“Many student groups we polled were not real enthusiastic about the idea [of grade substitution].”

Paul Benkeser SRC chair

Institute Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, a standing committee of the Academic Senate that initially considered the issue in September. Motivated by the hope that this change aids Tech graduates as they face potential employers who are sometimes reluctant to interview students because their GPAs are lower relative to those at peer institutions.

Originally the proposal would have allowed students to retake up to three 1000-level courses in which they received a grade of D or F. The policy was modified to apply to all courses taken in a student’s first or second semester. The class would have to be retaken during the student’s first four semesters.

In a written statement, Norville wrote that the organization should have sought funding from the Graduate Conference Fund, rather than from Student Activity Fees. He also wrote that if every student who attended a conference were to request money, SGA would never be able to meet all the demand.

We worked hard to earn that title.