Technology Square, the expansion of Tech’s campus across I-75 and into Midtown, is now a year old and still going strong.

Home to the School of Management, the Technology Square Research Building (TSRB) and Advanced Technology Development Center (ATDC) research facilities, the campus bookstore, the Georgia Tech Hotel and Convention Center (which has hosted politicians, celebrities and conferences) and various restaurants and retail shops, this new addition to campus was designed to integrate the Institute with the vibrant Midtown community, giving the students a new set of easily accessible stores and giving Midtown a new neighborhood with a distinctive feel.

Although the academic and research facilities opened later, the commercial district made its debut last summer. Over the past year, most of the stores were very successful, but some were forced to close due to lack of business. Others that had been planned were never actually launched.

Among the existing stores, some have had slower-than-expected business, but have still done well enough to stay afloat, and the rest have flourished.

Sales have increased each month since the stores opened,” said Rich Steele, director of the Student Center and manager of the Technology Square retail space. “It’s been a tough economic environment...the summer’s been really hard—sales are down, and business, though business has gone down, business has still got a way to go as new stores launch,” said Gillens, adding that he was excited about the progress Technology Square has made during its first year.

“It’s giving Georgia Tech a very different mood than other Starbucks locations,” said Steele. “It’s giving people a chance to see the Institute feel has really helped make people come to the coffee shop throughout the day and use it as a quiet atmosphere to study in the evening. Though business has gone down for the summer due to the smaller student body, he points out that they are always serving new customers that are looking for new and different places to hang out. Jim Hawes is the owner of the Cookie Club/Parcel Plus combination store, which is the first location of this chain in the metro Atlanta area. "We’re serving the multiple needs of many different customers here—small businesses, large businesses, students, the Midtown community...” he said. This area was chosen for the first Atlanta store because it seemed to be a good fit.

One year after opening, Technology Square businesses are still enjoying the unique mix of Midtown community patrons and students. Several new restaurants will be added by the end of fall.

Colin Gillens is a fifth-year Computer Science major and supervisor of the Technology Square Starbucks. “Tech Square’s improving, but it’s still got a way to go as new stores open,” Gillens said, adding that he is generally pleased with how his store has served both the Tech and Midtown communities.

The students give his store a different mood than other Starbucks locations.

“It’s an interesting atmosphere, since it’s infused with the student population,” added the clientele changes at different times of the day.

He explained that professors and businesspeople show up in the morning and midday, while students come to the coffee shop throughout the day and use it as a quiet atmosphere to study in the evening. Though business has gone down for the summer due to the smaller student body, he points out that they are always serving new customers that are looking for new and different places to hang out.

Jim Hawes is the owner of the Copy Club/Parcel Plus combination store, which is the first location of this chain in the metro Atlanta area. “We’re serving the multiple needs of many different customers here—small businesses, large businesses, students, the Midtown community...” he said. This area was chosen for the first Atlanta store because it seemed to be a good fit.

One year after opening, Technology Square businesses are still enjoying the unique mix of Midtown community patrons and students. Several new restaurants will be added by the end of fall.

Colin Gillens is a fifth-year Computer Science major and supervisor of the Technology Square Starbucks. “Tech Square’s improving, but it’s still got a way to go as new stores open,” Gillens said, adding that he is generally pleased with how his store has served both the Tech and Midtown communities.

The students give his store a different mood than other Starbucks locations.

“It’s an interesting atmosphere, since it’s infused with the student population,” added the clientele changes at different times of the day.

He explained that professors and businesspeople show up in the morning and midday, while students come to the coffee shop throughout the day and use it as a quiet atmosphere to study in the evening. Though business has gone down for the summer due to the smaller student body, he points out that they are always serving new customers that are looking for new and different places to hang out.

Jim Hawes is the owner of the Copy Club/Parcel Plus combination store, which is the first location of this chain in the metro Atlanta area. “We’re serving the multiple needs of many different customers here—small businesses, large businesses, students, the Midtown community...” he said. This area was chosen for the first Atlanta store because it seemed to be a good fit.

One year after opening, Technology Square businesses are still enjoying the unique mix of Midtown community patrons and students. Several new restaurants will be added by the end of fall.
They lauded Tech’s system of students working side by side with professors in the laboratory.

“The reason we do research is because it’s such a good way to train students,” said Eckert. “The fact that Liotta and I are able to co-occupy lab space and co-direct students in a building devoted to the environment has made it much easier for us to have an impact.”

Liotta and Eckert work in the Ford Environmental Science and Technology Building, where faculty from a variety of backgrounds work in neighboring offices and labs to bring researchers together to focus on environmental issues. The two professors share lab space with graduate students working side by side with undergraduates from both the School of Chemistry and the School of Chemical Engineering. They felt that their students gained additional experience from this collaboration between schools.

“Interdisciplinary research is the vehicle for educating students about collaboration and partnership to solve problems,” Eckert said. “Georgia Tech is very supportive of collaborative work. I think it is very important that this award is being given for a multi-disciplinary collaborative effort.”

He and Liotta have been very pleased with the results, bragging that their students gain multidisciplinary experience that makes them extremely competitive in the job market.

“The chemist learns to work with the engineer, the engineer learns to work with the chemist, and that something that we believe produces an outstanding student,” Liotta said. “By the time they get their masters, Ph.D., or bachelors degrees…they have really evolved and are really mature. That’s what we’re most proud of.”

Liotta and Eckert predict that the industry will be making use of many of their discoveries in the near future. National and international industrial organizations have been supporting their endeavors and are already aware of their research contributions.

“One of the specific applications is to develop new processes for biologically active molecules: pharmaceuticals, agricultural chemicals,” Liotta said. “We see this as a very important first step in the use of our discoveries.”

“For me, that’s the theme: work with students, teaching them to be creative, teaching them to work with people from other disciplines, teaching them to interact with industry, teaching them to not be afraid to try new things…To us, that’s the important thing, the production of outstanding, world-class students.”

Tech Square is also currently home to LA Fitness, Fifth Street Kicks & Blues, Moe’s Southwest Grill, St. Charles Deli, Marble Slab Creamery, T-Mobile and Modern Care Cleaners & Newsstand.

Student opinion seems to agree with that of the store owners. Yoshiniro, a Computer Science and Robotics Ph.D. student who spends much of his time at the TSRB, generally agrees with the sentiments of the store owners.

“The choice of food—the availability is good,” he said. “I like the mixture of the people—not only Georgia Tech students, but you see many people.”

Jenny Parks, a third-year Management major and a barista at the Tech Square Starbucks, feels the same way. “I really like it—I have most of my classes here… it’s a great way to sociable.”

On the move of the School of Management to Tech Square, “For me, it’s really changed. It’s nice to have such an awesome building to go to, [with] comfy classes… it’s much nicer than the IC was,” she said.

There are still mixed feelings among the students on the retraction of Tech Square from the rest of Tech’s campus. “It’s far away,” Byrne, who does some research at the TSRB and has had limited classes in Technology Square, said. “Tech is traditionally been bordered by residence places, and now we have to cross 75 to get to Management classes. I didn’t really go there till a couple of months ago.

Parks has a similar view. “I don’t go to central campus,” she said. “Last semester… Tuesday/Thursday, I had one class in Architecture. I feel separated from central campus—I just move around floors.”

Endo sees it a little differently, though. “Walking—sometimes you need exercise,” he joked.

This coming week, Ray’s New York Pizza and Cedar’s Mediterranean Grill, both with other locations in Atlanta, are scheduled to open, offering a wide variety of food for generally reasonable prices; since both will be serving alcohol, they will be open very late. Khao, an urban international specialty foods market, will open in two weeks—it will offer not only prepared food such as sushi, and it will cater primarily to Asians (this includes a section completely devoted to rice and rice-related eating utensils, as well as international beverages, magazines, and newspapers), though it includes an Hispanic section as well. St. Charles Deli will also be offering a student menu with more affordable prices.

There are rumors of the addition of a Tech Square director to give the area some direction… with the change-up of stores—if the project were under some kind of direction, I think things will get better,” said Gillens. He also said that Starbucks may reevaluate their hours and stay open till midnight.