Summer conference program reduces student costs while helping to pay off Olympic debts

By Jennifer Hinkel

As campus is flooded with visitors from camps and conferences in the summer months, Michael Gallant of the Housing Department is busy making sure that students are not overly inconvenienced by the change.

The campus conference program, which runs from May through mid-August, officially began in the summer of 1997. Planning for the program began in 1992, but conferences could not be implemented until after the completion of the Olympic housing, known now as the West Campus apartment buildings.

This summer, the program will host a wide variety of groups. Smaller groups house youth cheering, football, and basketball camps in the traditional dorms, while large adult groups from United Way and SCHEM (Southeastern Consortium for Minorities in Engineering) bring thousands of participants to the West Campus apartment complexes.

“We have the best available housing for an adult conference group as any college in the country,” said Gallant, the Associate Director of Housing, Conferences.

Among the top draws of Tech’s campus for conference groups, especially the adult organizations, is the potential being millions of revenue each summer, are the layout of the apartment buildings, the abundance of air conditioning, and the proximity of campus to Hartsfield International Airport, and Atlanta area attractions. Gallant works closely with the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau to create a positive image of Atlanta and Tech in the eyes of group directors searching for the ideal conference location.

Summer conferences help “offset student rates,” said Gallant. When groups pay for the use of dorms and apartments, transportation, parking, and dining, the revenues help to reduce what students must pay for these same services during the academic year.

The largest group coming to campus this summer will be the National Law Enforcement Explorers, a group affiliated with the Boy’s Club of America. The association, formed to promote law enforcement careers, will bring 4,000 young people to campus starting on July 22 and 23. The conference, which will include workshops, competitions, seminars, and field trips, will conclude on July 29.

“The Explorers will be the next busiest to the Olympics,” said Gallant, whose staff and auxiliary services are already busy preparing accommodations for such a large group.

Semester conversion has increased the capacity of the conference program, opening up weeks in May that are popular with adult groups who hold conferences before the end of the school year. Late May and early June are the most popular times for such large conferences, which have the ability to generate higher revenues than youth camps that are smaller and less expensive to host.

Gallant and his staff coordinate accommodations for the arriving groups, acting as liaisons between group directors and auxiliary services on campus. Visiting groups use facilities from dorms and cafeterias to SAC, the Coliseum, and classrooms.

“How does the campus look, feel, and function for a visitor?” asked Gallant, describing the process his staff considers when preparing for group arrivals. Some of the chief concerns of the conference planners are transportation around Atlanta and campus and ability to orient groups to the buildings and facilities they will need to find during their stay.

The Explorers conference will generate over $1 million in revenue for the program and auxiliary services; the program will yield more than $2.5 million during this Summer Semester.

“Students need to be aware that there is crime in the world, and they need to take very careful decisions about what they are doing.”

Karen Boyd
Senior Associate Dean of Students

As a student of the first year, Joe Morse disappeared from Towers dormitory early May 6.

By Jennifer Hinkel

Freshman Joe Morse has been missing for more than six weeks. Neither family nor friends have been contacted with information of his whereabouts.

“We got on for him to reappear,” said David Uhlig, a Peer Leader on Morse’s floor in Towers. When Morse was last seen, walking to the shower around 8:30 a.m. the day of checkout, friends did not notice anything out of the ordinary.

Michael Tremain, the last student to see Morse before he vanished, remembers the morning clearly. “But there was Joe... walking down the hall, wiggling his key chain, and smiling like he always does. I groggily said ‘good morning,’ and he said ‘hey,’ and proceeded to walk by me and around the corner. That was the last time anyone saw him. Odd, because he didn’t seem like the usual self.”

Morse’s belongings remained in his dorm room; he left campus only the clothes he was wearing, hanging in the closet. He had told friends and his parents that he had enrolled for summer classes and housing, but concerned Housing staff checked their records and he had not enrolled.

“Our gut feeling is that he is depressed and homesick and just was totally overwhelmed,” said Morse’s mother in an interview with the Cincinnati Enquirer, Morse’s home newspaper. “But we want to say to him, ‘You’re not alone. We’re always going to be your son. And there’s nothing that can’t be worked out.'”

Morse’s parents had planned to pick him up at the airport in Ohio, where he would arrive by a student stand-by flight from Hartsfield International. He planned to take a bus if he was unable to get on a flight.

During Spring Semester, Morse, a Mechanical Engineering major, attended classes in frequently, missing tests and exams as well as lectures. However, his friends did not notice any change in his demeanor.

Rising sophomore Tymeon Banks, who also lived in Towers, wrote the following about Morse: “Joe was one of the most happy-go-lucky people I’ve ever met. His smile could always brighten my day. I’ll never forget him.”

See Morse, page 3

Student awareness urged as burglary spree hits campus

By Huda Kaza

At 9:30 on Tuesday night, Senior Associate Dean of Students Karen Boyd thought she was the only person left in her suite. When she stepped out of her personal office, however, she found young African-American male seated at one of the desks in the outer office.

He told her his name, claiming to be a member of the custodial staff. “He didn’t look like anybody I’ve ever seen on the cleaning staff,” said Boyd. “I know the custodial staff pretty well.”

Boyd asked him what he was doing in the office and encouraged him to leave, which he did without argument. She then called campus police.

“The person looked familiar, so I wasn’t overly scared at first, until I realized he didn’t want me to recognize him. He pulled his hat down over his eyes. He didn’t want me to be aware of who he was,” stated Boyd, who can give a very clear description of the intruder.

The break-ins at the Student Services building this week is the latest in a string of burglaries all over campus. In the month of June, sixteen buildings were burglarized, including the Administration Building, the Success Center, Lyman Hall, the Savant Building, and MDC II. According to Chief Jack Vickery of the Tech Police Department, almost all of the buildings on the Hill have been hit at some time or another.

“Typically, the areas most often hit by burglaries are fraternity houses. This is unusual to the extent that it has been primarily some of the administrative type of buildings,” commented Vickery.

In all the cases, the motive for the break-ins appeared to be theft. The intruder was usually looking for cash, although a few of the buildings lost computers and audio/visual equipment.

“In many of them,” stated Vickery, “it was through drawers and desks, and at the same time leaving some valuable equipment.”

Two arrests have been made for two of the break-ins. Vickery feels some of the burglaries may have been perpetrated by the same person while others were obviously the work of different people.

None of the break-ins showed any sign of forced entry into the building. Vickery assumes the intruders either came through an open door or came in during regular office hours and remained after everyone else left.

Both Vickery and Boyd agree awareness is the key to prevention.

“Students need to be aware that there is crime in the world, and they need to take very careful decisions about what they are doing,” commented Boyd.

Friday, June 30, 2000
Worst drought in over a century plagues Atlanta summer

By Matt Gray  
Assistant News Editor

As Georgia suffers through its worst drought in over 100 years, a number of stringent restrictions have been placed on outdoor water use; farmers are worried that there may be a statewide crop failure. Rain forecasts continue to dwindle, with no immediate relief in sight.

“This may be the worst natural disaster in Georgia history,” said Tommy Irvin, the Georgia Agriculture Commissioner.

Congress recently passed a $7.1 billion disaster relief bill to aid against the drought. Roughly $150 million will be sent to help Georgia’s farmers, and will arrive in September, of which, $47 million will go to peanut farmers.

“In Georgia, agriculture is one-third of our economy,” said Republican Senator Paul Coverdell, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee. "For America, it is a critical component of national security: the ability of the nation to feed itself, its army and its allies."

The 50,000 farms in Georgia produce more than $6.5 billion in agricultural products annually.

“Probably every farmer is impacted by the drought,” said David Abbe, a statistician for the US Agriculture Department’s Georgia Agricultural Statistics Service. “No farmer is going to escape this, regardless of what they produce.”

The drought has been compared to the conditions Georgia faced two years ago, when farmers lost $750 million due to the lack of rain.

Livestock farmers are in trouble because their animals have trouble finding land to graze on, and are forced to sell the animals prematurely for lower-than-normal prices. “My understanding is that the market dropped 12 cents per pound in one week’s time,” said Clark Weaver, of the USDA’s Georgia State Farm Services Agency. “That is devastating.”

“Our five-year average for this time of year is 14 percent very short [of water], so we’re about three or four times worse than normal as far as moisture goes,” said Abbe.

Long-term forecasts predict the hot and dry weather will continue throughout the growing season. In response to the drought, a number of water bans on outdoor use have been put into effect under the odd-even system, in which odd-numbered street addresses may only water on odd numbered calendar days, and even-numbered addresses can only water on even numbered days.

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French consulate hosts bon voyage party for study abroad students

By Jennifer Hinkel

Student participants in a new study abroad program, French for Business and Technology, depart Thursday, June 22 with an itinerary that will include classes in Lyon, a stay in Paris, and visits to different industrial and business locations before the August 3 return to the United States.

On Monday, June 19, the program was celebrated by a reception at the home of Jean-Paul Monchau, French Consul General and Trade Commissioner. In attendance were program leader and Tech French teacher Professor leMarchand, Dean Sue Rosser of the Ivan Allen College, and several colleagues of the Consulate General. Student participants, their parents, and other Department of Modern Language teachers were among those on the guest list.

Consul Monchau spoke of his excitement and enthusiasm for programs such as this one, where students will be experiencing “the France of today,” and not only “the France of museums.”

The Consul expressed the importance of gatherings such as the one he hosted, saying that “this is the secret formula: teachers, parents, and children.” Monchau spoke of his strong feeling that interest in France and French culture is engendered by such groups coming together to learn about France.

The students will enjoy several French holidays and celebrations during the program. Bastille Day, July 14, is one such holiday. The Tour de France and the hundredth birthday celebration of Antoine de St-Exupery, author of The Little Prince, will also take place during their stay.

Highlights of the trip include industry visits and historical and cultural experiences. Tours of the Institut Français du Périnolé, Mérail Pharamaceutique, Centrale Nucléaire du Bugey, and Vifabrance will offer experiences of French industry. Participants will hear a concert of the Parouille de France City church’s bells and sightsee at Fourvière and the Gallo-Roman museum. As one of the most anticipated events of the journey, students will be guests of famed chef Paul Bocuse, touring kitchens and dining in the renowned restaurant.

Class offered by the program will teach French grammar, Business French, current events, and cultural aspects. Students will also complete a project and write weekly reports on French films. More than ten guest speakers, including an engineer, a journalist, doctors, and managers will present their companies and the technology aspects of their careers to the students.