Committee to consider grade substitution

By Judy Shaw
Associate Editor

A proposal that would allow limited grade-substitution, once-known as grade forgiveness, is slowly working its way through several Academic Senate committees.

The Student Rules and Regulations Committee soon will discuss the proposed grade-substitution policy that would give undergraduate students the limited ability to re-take a Tech course in which they earn a D or F and replace their previous grade in the calculation of their GPAs.

If viewed favorably by the committee at its Feb. 9 meeting, the policy could find its way to the Academic Senate, the body that must approve any such change to make it official Tech policy.

Under the proposed policy, students may substitute grades for a maximum of three 1000-level courses, though they may only do so once per course.

The original course grade would appear on the student’s transcript, but it would be marked to indicate that the course was retaken, and it would not be used in the calculation of the student’s GPA.

The policy was drafted and passed unanimously by the Institute Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (IUCC), a standing committee of the Academic Senate that originally considered the issue in September.

Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Academic Affairs Robert McMath, who, along with Gary May, the Special Assistant to the President, spearheaded the initiative for the Office of the President, believes this “limited opportunity” will allow some students who fall behind early in their Tech careers a chance to catch up, remain at the Institute and succeed late in their undergraduate careers.

See Grades, page 7

HOPE with students

By Helen Yu
Contributing Writer

Georgia Lieutenant Governor Mark Taylor met with students from Tech and Georgia State University Wednesday to talk about possible cuts to Georgia’s HOPE scholarship in the 2005 budget.

Taylor, a Democrat, laid out a position in stark contrast to Republican Governor Sonny Perdue.

The cuts in question pertain to HOPE’s current policy to pay for fees and a $300 yearly book stipend, in addition to basic tuition costs at public Georgia institutions. If made, these cuts will amount to $125 million.

The scholarship, eligible to all Georgia residents with a B average or higher in high school, has been in existence for over a decade, paying for 17,661 Tech students alone.

Co-author of the original HOPE bill, Taylor detailed his counterproposal of changes for HOPE that preserves “the original contract we signed with the students of Georgia... to pay for your college costs.

Taylor’s HOPE proposal includes three main components: implementing a 3.0 GPA requirement for the scholarship to replace the current 80 out of 100 percent requirement; re-evaluating HOPE scholars every 4 credit hours instead of the current 30 credit hours; and asking for a three year tuition and freeze from the University System of Georgia.

Taylor accused Perdue of underestimating the budget. “Their model is based on misinformation, and their projections, in my mind, are incorrect. There are absolutely no numbers coming out of state government saying that there is any financial problem until 2008.”

Taylor also expressed his opposition to Perdue’s proposal of reducing HOPE by $125 million.

See HOPE, page 4

Swarmin’ the Tigers

By Jamie Howell / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

The Big Bounce!

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution leading scorer Fallon Stokes lights up the ACC in the ACC's biggest game of the season.

The Jackets face off against the No. 1 Duke Blue Devils tomorrow.

Tuesday night. Jackets improved to 16-3. The Jackets face off against the No. 1 Duke Blue Devils tomorrow.

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Tuesday night. Jackets improved to 16-3. The Jackets face off against the No. 1 Duke Blue Devils tomorrow.
Last issue’s question garnered 56 responses: What do you think of increased student fees?

This week’s question: What are you most looking forward to in the completed CRC? Tell us what you think at www.cyberbuzz.gatech.edu/technique.

From the files of the GTPD...

Battery
1/24/2004 2:48:00 hrs.
LOCATION: 555 Eighth Street/Eighth Street Apartments.
INCIDENT: Report of simple battery.

Entering auto
1/23/2004 17:47:00 hrs.
LOCATION: 879 Hemphill Avenue/Parking office.
INCIDENT: Report that a white 1998 Pontiac Grand Prix was stolen.

Motor vehicle theft
1/24/2004 13:19:00 hrs.
LOCATION: 749 Fowler Street/Peters Parking Deck lower level.
INCIDENT: Report that a red 1989 Chevy Silverado was stolen.

Fire alarm
1/23/2004 15:49:00 hrs.
LOCATION: 580 Turner Place/ULC.
INCIDENT: Report of a fire alarm caused by burnt bacon.

Come to our weekly meeting Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. in room 137 of the Student Services building and eat free pizza.
Representatives elect Handelman in four-way VP race

By Edward Tamsberg
Staff Writer

This week’s meeting of the Undergraduate House of Representatives was dominated by the absence of Danny Puckett, and the election of his replacement. Representatives chose Michael Handelman, a senior Economics and Public Policy major, to replace Puckett. Handelman, a former representative, ran for the position in SGA elections last spring but eventually lost to Puckett.

The four nominations from the week prior stood unchanged as the first thing undergraduate representatives did was to close the nominations. Among the four nominated were Handelman, Ryan Spanier and current representatives Adam Bernstein and Hunter Oates.

The bylaws of the Undergraduate House of Representatives have no formal procedure established for the election of a vice president in the event of his resignation, so the entire event was overseen by Alan Bakowski, the Senate and House News Editor.

“I was at first sad to see Danny [Puckett] go, but then I was excited because I knew that I would get this chance to run.”

Adam Bernstein
CS representative

Representative charged with chairing UHR meetings until a replacement for Puckett could be found. The procedure agreed upon by all the representatives was that every nominee would leave the room and that they would each be brought in individually for a time of ten minutes in which they would be questioned by representatives and be allowed to make any speeches or statements that they wished to make.

The first nominee to speak was current Computer Science representative Bernstein.

He began his speech by advising the representatives of his insider standing and long span of experience.

“I was at first sad to see Danny [Puckett] go, but then I was excited because I knew that I would get this chance to run. I was initially worried about the whole election process, but after seeing the others nominated I am confident that I am the best candidate for the position,” Bernstein said as he spoke to UHR.

The next to address the House was current Earth and Atmospheric Sciences representative Handelman.

See UHR, page 4

Senators table MLR couches bill

By Daniel Amick
News Editor

Graduate senator once again attempted to act on a large allocation bill that would fund couches for the Music Listening Room.

Once again, the $44,000 bill faced significant scrutiny. The bill would consume a substantial part of student government’s remaining funds.

Sally Hammock, the Student Center’s associate director for programs, appeared before the Senate to respond to senators’ concerns.

Hammock said that the current couches in the Music Listening Room are about 20 years old. She said they have been re-covered in 1993, but are once again frayed and “pretty dirty.” She said that re-covering again is not an option.

Physics senator Edwin Greco asked why the cost seemed so high.

“It’s just furniture,” he said.

Hammock said that part of the reason the price was so high is that the couches must be of high enough quality to match the lifespan of the current couches.

Another reason the cost is so high is that the couches are modular rather than independent units.

Some senators suggested that, rather than fund the full amount now, the Senate should approve one third this year and the remaining amount over the next two years.

This option might end up being more expensive, but one senator said it may be the only option available.

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**Obituary**

Robert Vincent Mackay

Georgia Tech lost a member of its community on Monday, January 5 when Robert “Robbie” Vincent Mackay, 20, passed away.

Robbie was a third-year International Affairs major. He was a graduate of The Athens Academy.

Those who knew Mackay remembered him as a “really good man” who had a contagious smile and an adventurous spirit. He “was into all the things kids were into,” one friend said.

Mackay was a member of Swarm, an avid gamer and a fan of science fiction movies. He was athletic, enjoying rugby and basketball. According to a former roommate, he was also a history buff, extremely well read and always eager for a good debate. He eventually wanted to work for the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mackay entered Tech as a part of the Army ROTC program, but had to withdraw after a semester because of asthma. He continued to take ROTC classes and had a love for the program.

In September 2003, Mackay experienced back pain and was eventually diagnosed with leukemia. He withdrew from Tech in October to undergo treatment. Those who knew Mackay were surprised by his passing because he seemed to be improving.

His life was celebrated at three memorial services, the latest on Saturday, January 24.

He is survived by his parents, Leigh and Victoria Mackay; and younger brother, Andrew Mackay, all of Greensboro, GA.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in memory of Robert Vincent Mackay to The Athens Academy, 1201 Spartan Lane, Athens, Georgia 30606.

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**HOPE**

from page 1

requiring a minimum SAT score for HOPE Scholars. During the questioning period, Taylor would like to see the development of an end-of-course test for high school subjects that would set the bar for HOPE recipients.

The question of a possible income cap on eligible families was brought up during the discussion as well. This is not a foreseeable change to HOPE at the moment, though there was originally a $60,000 income cap on HOPE when it was introduced.

Another concern brought up during the questioning period was the proposed 24-credit-hour re-evaluation period. A student expressed concern that though 12 credit hours is the minimum requirement for full-time students, many at Tech take more, therefore making the re-evaluation period less than one academic year.

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**Submit a sliver and we’ll print it in the paper! Go to www.nique.net/sliver, and express your feelings!**
The Senate also gave funding to Ultimate Frisbee for a trip to San Diego. There, the team will compete in an iteration-only tournament. Senators also approved two allocations to the African American Student Union.

The organization requested money to help advertise for upcoming Black History Month events and a leadership conference. There was some discussion about whether the organization could combine the advertising efforts described in the two bills but ultimately funded both bills.

Joint Finance Committee Chair Lisa Brown addressed the Senate to respond to confusion about recent changes to JFC policy. The new policy cuts all funding for decorations down to $100.

Brown said that this move was taken in response to shrinking funds. She emphasized that the JFC only makes recommendations.

“I really encourage you guys to challenge me,” Brown said. Shurgled members to “think about what’s important for student life and ‘the big picture.’”

Auxiliary Services Communications Officer Melissa Moore presented a quarterly report to the Senate describing that department’s activities.

An allocation bill to Lambda Sigma to fund a dance marathon was postponed until next week because no organization representative was present.

The difference by allocating $12,000.

$9,000. Senators decided to split the allocation to the Student Center Programs Council or the Student Center Operations Board.

Senator-at-Large Alan Michaels introduced an amendment to change the allocation to $14,000 and change the recipient to the Programs Council.

Before a final vote could be taken, the Senate lost quorum. The bill will come up for discussion again next week.

In other business, senators approved a smaller version of an allocation to fund the Sting Break concert. Last year, a similar concert brought the band Mighty Mighty Bosstones to campus.

Representative Adam Bernstein, who is involved in the planning of the concert, said organizers reduced their funding request from last year because they recognized that student government has limited funds. The total request came to $15,000.

The Joint Finance Committee recommended that the bill be cut to $9,000. Senators decided to split the difference by allocating $12,000.
**CRC** from page 1

- host racquetball courts, a squash court and some of the other recreational facilities offered in SAC.

- The first floor of Phase II will host a cardio-theatre and weight room, locker rooms, four racquetball courts, one squash court and a climbing wall. Some equipment currently set up in the CRC will be moved to its new location once construction is complete.

- A leisure pool will also be included in the second phase of the center’s construction. McQueen said the pool came into being as a result of a donation.

  “That pool will have six lanes for recreational swim, a 184-foot water slide and a lazy river,” he said. “When the varsity swim team has the main pool for practice or meets, the leisure pool will serve us for recreational swim during those times.”

- Phase II will also host a café on the second floor, as well as an entry lounge area and administrative offices.

  “They have been there when we needed them and have kept us up to speed on all accounts.”

  **Kirk McQueen**
  **Interim CRC Director**

- Auxiliary Services has funded the construction of a parking deck as part of the facility, as well. Access to the deck’s 500-600 parking spaces will be available from both Ferst Drive and Tech Parkway. The deck is planned to be considered a new parking zone, W10.

- McQueen said it has been a pleasure working with Skansa, the construction firm working on Phase II. “They have been there when we needed them and have kept us up to speed on all accounts,” he said. “It has been two and a half years and all has been exciting.”

- Construction on Phase I of the CRC was also completed ahead of schedule. Originally planned to be finished in October 2003, the facility was open for student use in August.

- Phase I includes a 50 meter natorium, complete with multiple diving platforms and spectator seating for up to 1800 people on the first two floors. The fourth floor houses six basketball courts surrounded by multi-purpose exercise rooms, an auxiliary gym and a game room, for amenities like table tennis.

- The sixth floor has an indoor track, open in the middle with a view down to the courts. Also on the floor is a collection of cardio equipment, such as rowing machines.

- The entire south side hosts a clear view of the city through its windows.
**Breaking the Bubble**

A lot of things went on outside of the bubble of Georgia Tech this week. Below are summaries of a few of the important events taking place throughout the nation and the world.

**Kerry gains momentum with NH primary win**

Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts, front-runner in the Democratic presidential candidacy, garnered 39 percent of the vote in Tuesday’s New Hampshire primary. Former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean finished second with 26 percent of the vote. Retired Army Gen. Wesley Clark and Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina each earned about 12 percent. The win continues Kerry’s “comeback” trend—polls as recent as two weeks ago showed him behind Dean by double digits in New Hampshire.

“**MyDoom** called fastest spreading worm ever

The MyDoom mass-mailing worm struck thousands of computer users around the world this week. British security firm MessageLabs said Wednesday that the worm accounted for 1 in 12 emails handled. Computers become infected when a user opens an email attachment, usually an executable or .zip file disguised as a normal text file.

**Judge rules Schwarzenegger broke campaign law**

A California judge ruled Tuesday that Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger violated the state’s campaign laws when he took out a $4.5 million bank loan for last-minute campaign expenses. Schwarzenegger’s campaign lawyer said the act was based on a 2002 interpretation of the law—an interpretation the recent ruling said is wrong.

**Second NASA Mars rover encounters problems**

While NASA’s first rover on Mars, Spirit, continues to be idle due to problems that arose last Wednesday, Opportunity, the second such rover, has suffered a power drain. Mission manager Jim Erickson said the problem was likely caused by a heater on the robot that turns itself on and runs without commands from NASA to do so. NASA scientists do not believe the problem will overheat the vehicle, but are unsure of long-term effects. Erickson said the rover was otherwise in “pretty good shape.”

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**Grades** from page 1

“I don’t think the number of students whose careers will be changed by this policy is that drastic,” said McMath.

May concurred. There are many anecdotes about students who fail out of the Institute only to come back after sitting out one year or two years,” May said. “Under this policy, they could stay at the Institute, continue to take classes and recalibrate themselves.”

The current proposal also stipulates that students may only use grade substitution for classes taken in fall 2003 or later, and that they must do so before earning 61 or more credit hours at the Institute. The opportunity exists, however, to make the final policy more retroactive.

“In thinking more about the issue, there is a good argument for retroactivity,” May said. “I’m not personally opposed to it, but thought this initial proposal would be more palatable to the faculty.”

In an April 2003 memo to the IUCC, May and McMath cite the grade substitution policy as one of the reasons that peer institutions such as UC-Berkeley, Johns Hopkins, Minnesota, Purdue and Stanford, along with their correspondingly higher freshman retention and six-year graduation rates.

Additionally the administrators hope the change will help correct the issue of students who fail out of the Institute. The opportunity exists, however, to make the final policy more retroactive.

“Your first year in college, a lot of people mess up. I had good teachers of people mess up. I had good teachers,” Dainer agreed.

“I would fully expect a wide range of opinions [from the faculty],” McMath said. “There is no right or wrong answer on this type of issue.”

According to May, however, as faculty members learn more about the limitations of the proposed policy, they become less concerned about softening the academic experience or creating opportunities for abuse. Student opinion seems similar to that of the faculty; they are warm to the idea of a limited grade substitution policy.

“I think three times seems like a little much, but it sounds like something that would be beneficial to get students acquainted with the [Tech] environment,” Greg Leo, second-year Economics major, said.

“Freshmen have never dealt with classes this difficult. It’s similar to teachers that allow students to drop a test so that they can become used to a particular teacher,” he said.

Second-year Biology major Erin Dainer agreed.

“Your first year in college, a lot of people mess up. Had good teachers in high school, and I learned how to study, but I noticed a lot of my friends didn’t know how,” Dainer said.

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**Proposed Grade Substitution Policy**

The Institute Undergraduate Curriculum Committee proposed the following modifications to the Student Rules and Regulations to implement a grade substitution policy. The Student Rules and Regulations Committee, a standing committee of the Faculty Senate, takes up the issue Feb. 19.

Students who receive a grade of D or F in a 1000-level course, taken in Fall 2003 or later, may be eligible to repeat the course and have the original grade excluded from the computation of academic average. Grade substitution may be used only once per course, with a maximum of three courses total.

The course must be repeated at Georgia Tech before the student has earned 61 or more resident credit hours. The application for grade substitution must be filed with the Registrar’s Office no later than the deadline for withdrawing from a course during the student’s next term in residence after the course is repeated.

The original course and grade will continue to appear on the student’s transcript, with a notation that the course was repeated and that the original grade is not included in calculation of the academic average. Credit for the course will be counted only once.

If the revised academic average results in a change in academic standing for any term, then the revised standing will be reflected on the student’s transcript. If standing is changed from Dismissal to a higher standing, it will be recorded as “standing from Dismissal” and the dismissed will continue to be counted with respect to regulations and policies related to withdrawal and readmission.

A course is not eligible for grade substitution if the student was found guilty of academic misconduct in the class.

The grade substitution policy (including, but not limited to, course eligibility, number of courses, time limits, and deadlines) is not subject to exceptions and may not be petitioned to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.

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