New office spaces in Commons promise more visibility, campus involvement and interaction for WREK, SGA

By Jennifer Lee
Focus Editor

With Burdell’s shuffling and Pandini’s serving up pizza, it seems that the majority of the new Student Center Commons is open for business. However, students wandering through may overlook the fact that a vital part of the Commons area has yet to move in.

The sleek, empty offices on the west side of the first floor and the entire second floor are awaiting WREK radio, the Office of Student Involvement and the Student Government Association. While the move will mean different things for each group involved, the one thing all have in common is increased visibility and a prime location in the center of campus life.

A space to be seen

All groups expressed the hope that by moving into the Commons, more people will see them, become interested and ultimately, get involved.

SGA is moving to perhaps the most visible space, the first floor offices just past Pandini’s. “We’re kind of back in a corner over here,” Graduate Student Body President Pelham Norville said of their current offices in the Flug Building. “Not a lot of people necessarily come into this building unless they’re studying in the atrium. The new Student Center Commons…is a destination for a lot of other things,” he explained, including Burdell’s, CyberCafe and other restaurants.

The Office of Student Organizations, under the direction of Danielle McDonald, is also moving upstairs to the second floor, and is being renamed the Office of Student Involvement.

However, it is WREK radio that will perhaps be the most changed by the move. Currently located on the second floor of the Office of Human Resources on the east edge of campus, WREK has always struggled with visibility. They will move to a 1,339 square-foot space tailored to their needs on the second floor of the Commons, with a large window overlooking a stage on the floor below.

“Survery [any] 20 people… I would be surprised if three or more… know what frequency we are on the dial,” said John Lyons, WREK General Manager. “The problem is, being out by the Coliseum, no one really knows…[that] by moving into the Student Center Commons… people will walk by us every day.”

“One of the things that we do sometimes… [is] go out somewhere on campus, usually Skiles Walkway, and broadcast from there, and we’ll play music and interview people. [That] will be easier because it’s a lot closer,” said Michael Ng, WREK Public Relations Director.

In addition, Ng said, the space would help them publicize their own events, including concert ticket giveaways and Live at Tech, a show where local or student bands would be able to play live on the Commons stage, instead of just performing inside the WREK studio.

Before and after the move

Most of the groups are scheduled to move into the Commons over the summer. The Office of Student Involvement, according to McDonald, is “just waiting on furry feet. We’re hoping we’ll be moving there in the next few months.”

For WREK radio, especially, whose current studio is located on the east edge of campus by the Coliseum, the move into the new Student Center Commons may provide more visibility and a chance to interact with students.

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Most people have seen a reality show or two, but Jennifer Yu, a fifth-year Aerospace Engineering major, will actually appear on one this month. Yu will be featured on TBS’s “Movie and a Makeover,” a Saturday morning show hosted by Mia Butler.

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By Kristin Noell
Contributing Writer

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During the course of the movie, being on camera was something that any person would be able to do, but Yu had to get used to. “I didn’t really know what to say when they asked me questions,” she said.

“Being on camera was something else. You had to get used to it. ‘I didn’t really know what to say when they asked me questions,’” she said.

“The second filming took place in Yu’s dorm room in the Underground Learning Center. She said that having cameras all over her room was “really weird… fortunately it was only three people, and some of my friends were there too, so it wasn’t too bad.”

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“Another of her pre-makeover outfits she described as not “grubby pants”…[and] old fleeces—not what I usually wear.”

By Christopher Gossey / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

By Chihoon Shin / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Jennifer Yu, a fifth-year AE major, recently filmed a segment for TBS’s show, “Movie & Makeover” where she was given a haircut, new clothes and interview advice. Parts of the filming took place in her ULC dorm room.

Having so many people focused on her was also a strange feeling for Yu. “They had phone-in experts, I had a stylist and my hair stylist, and it was like I was being the center of attention the entire day,” she said.

She said that she felt like she was just going through the motions of what the producers told her to do. “It was very surreal,” she said.

The show involved two filming sessions, one of which was supposed to be the “home video” of Yu asking for a makeover.

Reality show fans may be disappointed, but Yu readily explained.

“By the way, page 14
professionally. It’s not like I didn’t have any taste or anything like that.”

For Yu, the most dramatic change was the haircut she received. Her hair, which once ran all the way down her back, is now two feet shorter and a pound and a half lighter.

“Everyone says it’s a dramatic change,” she said. “It’s been almost two weeks now, and I’m still trying to get used to it. It’s never been this short!”

Her haircut is also the most permanent change after the makeover. It is the “only thing they really can change,” she said, “because I still go to school, and I still can’t wear...a pantsuit every day.”

The results of the makeover shocked her friends and family. After the filming, Yu drove to her Atlanta home, where her mother was surprised to see her daughter with short hair for the first time since she was two years old.

Because of her haircut in particular, “everyone now says I look older and more professional, so I guess the makeover did work,” she said. “But I still kind of miss my long hair.”

Others, Yu added, “still haven’t seen me, and they’ll walk right by me and not even realize it.”

Katie Rhode, a fourth-year Management student and Yu’s little sister in her sorority, agreed that “Jen didn’t really need a makeover to begin with. However, I especially like her new haircut—it makes her look more professional. After her makeover, I could barely recognize her.”

To fit in with her “career makeover,” Yu also had an interviewing coach to help her ace future job interviews. However, she felt that the coach did not really teach her anything she did not know. “After five years of college, you pick up what you should be doing at interviews and what you should not be [doing],” she said.

Yu did have an interview last week with Boeing, and she wore one of the outfits she got from the show. “I was well-dressed at least, so I made a good first impression,” she said. She joked that she will hear back from them this week and find out whether the makeover “went well.”

“The show “really is my fifteen minutes of fame,” said Yu. “That’s all I need though; I don’t want any more!”

For students who want to take a break from studying for finals to watch a fellow Techie transformed, the episode with Yu airs on April 24 at 10 a.m. on TBS with the film Career Opportunities.

Jennifer Yu
Fifth-year AE major

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Katie Rhode
Fourth-year MGT major

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Students return to roots, host high school math tournament

By Joshua Cuneo
Senior Staff Writer

High school math competitions—those great Saturday morning uber-nerd social gatherings—have not been hosted at Tech since 1957. However, a team of students and faculty from the School of Mathematics resurrected the old contest and held an "updated" version of it two weeks ago.

The competition took the shape of a traditional high school math contest: competitors participated in a multiple-choice exam and a ciphering round following breakfast and registration. Semifinalists moved on to a proof-based exam after lunch.

Over 400 students, teachers and parents from across the southeast attended.

Nguyen Truong, a third-year Computer Science major and the team’s “quiet co-conspirator,” originally approached Professor Yang Wang, the Undergraduate Coordinator and Associate Chair in the School of Mathematics, with the idea.

“I told him, ‘I think it would be much better if this event was a multiple-choice exam and a ciphering round following breakfast and registration. semifinals. Chess games, frisbee and paper airplane contests were a hit, and several professors offered short seminars.

The College of Sciences, also a major supporter of the event, wasn’t ashamed to admit that they used the contest as a recruiting exercise. Campus tours were readily available for all participants.

“Those students who didn’t get to go to the second round just had fun by walking around campus.”

Nguyen Truong
Third-year CS major

including Patricia Pichardo, a Ph.D. student in mathematics and a graduate student in operations research, and Stephanie Benton, a second-year mathematics major.

“We had all been involved in math competitions in high school, and I was like, ‘Hey, Georgia Tech doesn’t have one. That can’t be right,’” Pichardo said. “We must have one. That can’t be right,’” Wang added. “I think [advisors] would rather you do research than play around with a math competition.”

Patricia Pichardo
Ph.D. student, Mathematics

Pichardo explained what Michaels meant. “I think [advisors] would rather you do research than play around with a math competition.”

But the entire team is already looking forward to the next competition and hopes the process becomes fully automated by the time they graduate.

Everybody feels good about this event,” Wang said. “You know, we have not just the…undergraduate students but graduate students…staff members, the faculty members, Pi Mu Epsilon…we even have people from other departments.”

Invesco was so favorably impressed by Tech’s mathematics honor society Mu Epsilon…we even have people from other departments.

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[Tech’s mathematics honor society] involved.”

That’s where Truong met Alan Michaels, a Ph.D. student in electrical engineering and a graduate student in mathematics. Michaels helped hammer out an action plan and recruit additional volunteers, among them.

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SC Move

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WREK, on the other hand, is actively seeking the approximately $1350,000 in funds they need to make the transition a smooth one, primarily through an alumni campaign. Though WREK could make the move without the full amount in funds, “A lot of the equipment is older than I am [and] needs to be replaced,” Lyon said.

“So far, with the money we have right now, the move could happen, but it would...cutting it close. What form that move takes—how much new equipment, how long we’re off air—it all varies.” Though the Commons spaces are newer, they are not significantly larger. “It’s actually, square-footage-wise, almost the exact same amount of space; we’ve just divided it up a little differently,” Norville said.

In addition, many of the new offices will have more space dedicated to conference and workrooms.

“You can’t tell now because the furniture’s not in,” McDonald said, “but there [will be] lots of round tables with four chairs where you can pull up and have a meeting, and (there’s) going to be a lounge area.” WREK is actually moving into a smaller space, and will have to deal with managing their collection of music and their equipment accordingly. “The studio is a little smaller, our library...is going to be smaller,” Ng said.

There is also the question of whether WREK will tailor its eclectic programming towards a wider audience once it moves into a much more public space.

“Will there be some programming changes? Perhaps...with much larger student involvement, you’ll have more student opinions involved in the process of programming,” Lyon said.

“Whether that means mainstream depends on how you define ‘mainstream.’” Ng agreed, saying that he didn’t expect the programming format to change very much.

“I think the main thing is [that] people need to go in with an open mind when listening to WREK,” Ng said, “because one of the main points and goals [of WREK] is to play things that you won’t hear on other radio stations, even on college radio.”

The trickle-down effect

Other organizations will be indirectly affected, moving into the vacated offices. MOVE will take the student organizations’ office space, and the Women’s Resource Center (WRC) will move into the old SCA office. Though the WRC will just be moving one floor down, the shifting will allow their organization to expand greatly, according to Yvette Upton, the WRC Director.

“We’re going to go from two small rooms to a suite of offices, including a conference room or programming area,” Upton said. “It will actually be a physical gathering space for women on campus.”

“When we have the Women’s Leadership Conference or Women’s Awareness Month, hundreds of students attend, but there are a lot of...smaller discussion-oriented programs, that we could easily do within the space itself,” Upton added.

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