GT responds to safety concerns

Police, students notice surge in campus crimes, work to address the problems

By Daniel Amick
Senior Staff Writer

A rash of vehicle break-ins combined with recent high-profile crimes like the Jan. 20 abduction of a Georgia State University student have made some Georgia Tech students more than a little nervous about their safety.

"I had my car broken into right before finals," said Ryan McFerrin, a second-year Industrial Design major.

"Within a week (of the incident), I could have named 20 people that I knew personally whose cars had also been broken into," he said. "That’s when I knew this was not something sporadic. It was frequent."

In the past couple of months we did get a surge in crimes involving illegal entry into an automobile, said Patrol Captain Pat Wypasek. Wypasek served as Interim Police Chief for the Georgia Tech Police Department (GTPD) through the latter half of 2002.

The number of vehicle break-ins for 2002 was headed for a decline from 2001 until the last minute increase, Wypasek said. Total vehicle break-ins rose about 4.5 percent, from 292 in 2001 to 305 in 2002.

In spite of the surge, overall crime rates on campus have remained fairly stable in 2002, rising by about 4 percent. This jump corresponds to a nationwide increase of about the same amount.

"This is the first time in ten years that crime nationwide has gone up," said Wypasek. "That’s not an excuse, but it is an explanation."

While some types of crime increased in 2002, others, like reported robberies, remained constant. Still others, like bicycle theft, fell. Some variation in crime rates is normal, says Wypasek.

"(Crime) comes and goes," he said. "But that’s part of the challenge for us."

McFerrin decided to bring the issue of campus safety onto the campus floor. He and several friends presented the issue of campus safety to the Student Senate. The Senate, in turn, presented the issue to student president Petty, who presented the issue to President Clough; however, they are not the final decision. And, while he usually follows the committee’s advice, the Board of Regents will agree, said Alan Michaels, graduate student body president and member of the committee.

Petty plans the single largest fee hike is recommended to go toward transportation, which currently costs each student $39 per semester. Due to the new need for transportation routes and to from Technology Square, the committee approved a provisional $10 increase, but the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority will possibly give Tech a grant that will pay for new buses. If this is the case, the increase will only be $6, the price needed to cover the added routes.

However, freshman Chemical Engineering major Stephanie Johnson said this increase "seems to be a little steep at $6 a person."

Students could see increased fees next semester

By Stephen Baehl
Copy Editor

The Mandatory Fee Student Advisory Committee recently recommended fee increases for every mandatory student fee. The committee chose to recommend increases for four of the five fees paid usually follows the committee’s advice, the Board of Regents will agree, said Alan Michaels, graduate student body president and member of the committee.

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The increases were decided upon by vote in the committee, which is comprised of four undergraduate and four graduate students. Their findings serve as recommendations to President McFerrin; however, they are not the final decision. And, while he usually follows the committee’s advice, the Board of Regents will agree, said Alan Michaels, graduate student body president and member of the committee.

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The committee also approved another fee hike for the activity fee, which is currently $78 a semester. This $8 increase will largely go to support the new SAC II facilities and all the positions created by it. The $114 health services fee was marked for a $4 increase, due largely to the new Health Center, the additional provision of dental cleaning to students and a full-time psychiatrists available for student use, according to Michaels. Currently, the fee is $110.

Grant to fund INTA research

A $1.3 million grant from the MacArthur Foundation will fund a new fellowship in the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs. The fellowship will allow mid-career scientists and engineers to study international security policy. Fellows will write research papers and attend weekly seminars, professional trips and a two-week summer workshop.

Students offered IMPACT money

Auxiliary Services is offering ten $5,000 scholarships to students who have made a positive IMPACT in the Georgia Tech community.

Applicants must be full-time students who plan to attend next year, must be in good standing with a minimum 2.5 GPA and must be a sophomore or higher. To apply, submit an application and essay on the Auxiliary Services website.

“We’re looking for students who are passionate about their causes, relentless in their pursuit of success and industrious in their methods,” said Rosalind Meyers, Associate VP of Auxiliary Services.

UHR Secretary position open

The Undergraduate House of Representatives is accepting nominations for the position of House Secretary. The House secretary is responsible for recording the minutes of Tuesday night meetings and posting the minutes by the next morning.

Candidates must be an undergraduate student with 15 completed hours who has paid the Student Activity Fee. Anyone interested should come to Tuesday’s meeting at 7 p.m. in room 117 of the Student Services Building. They must be nominated and have a brief speech.
Voice Your Opinion!

Last issue’s poll garnered 53 responses to the question: “What aspect of the renovated bookstore space are you most looking forward to?”

This week’s poll is related to the increases for mandatory student fees. How do you feel about the proposed fees changes? Tell us what you think at www.cyberbuzz.gatech.edu/technique.

From the archives...

The Nique’s top stories from:

10 years ago: January 29, 1993—Proposals for a TECHCARD, precursor of the BuzzCard gained momentum. Student groups began moving into the new Student Services Building. The “Flag” building provided space for student orgs. Men’s Basketball got booed at halftime in a loss to Wake Forest.

20 years ago: January 28, 1983—EE, ME, and ICS (now CS) decided to raise enrollment requirements because too many students were being accepted. ME’s student-to-faculty ratio was 95 to 1. Plans for Tech’s centennial celebration began 2 years before the event, October 12, 1985.

30 years ago: February 2, 1973—The steam compressor from the basement of the ME building was saved from destruction and placed on the front lawn of the administration building at the request of VP of Planning Dr. Clyde Robbins. SGA passed a resolution condemning Robbins for failing to get permission before acting.
Graduates debate showing of cricket

By Tony Kluemper

News Editor

For the second time in as many weeks, the Graduate Senate meeting ran for over an hour, even though only four bills were actually discussed by the senators.

A guest presentation by James Pete, director of the Buzz Card Center, on the introduction of the new GT identification number to increase if the games were aired on GTCN.

The other major issue of discussion at the meeting was a bill allocating funds to the Tech Cricket Club in order to obtain commercial broadcast rights for the 2003 ICC World Cup Cricket competition, known as the Super Bowl of cricket. According to the Cricket Club representative, the rights would be used to show the games on the Georgia Tech Cable Network (GTCN), which is available to all students living on campus.

The bill, which was submitted by the Cricket Club on behalf of the India Club and the Pakistan Student Association, covered the $4,000 to get the broadcast rights.

According to the representative, nearly 1,000 students attended previous showings of the games and he expected that number to increase if the games were aired on GTCN.

Although the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) had not yet considered the bill because it was originally in new business, JFC chairman Chris Webb voiced his personal concerns about the bill.

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Council Clippings Senate and House

Bills Considered

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Undergraduate representatives subordinated just about every other concern Tuesday night in order to deal with the 2003 Student Activity Fee Budget. Seven separate amendments came up for consideration. Some were offered to correct minor arithmetic or format errors. Others called for changes of hundreds or even thousands of dollars in budget allocations. Tim Cailloux introduced an amendment that would increase the Graduate Conference Fund from $45,000 to $55,000. This fund subsidizes travel costs for graduate students who want to present their research at professional conferences.

"We need to remember that this is $10,000 that will not go to other student organizations," said Ridley.

"I don’t think we [as undergraduates] realize how important it is that graduate students present their papers," countered ECE Rep John Parsons. The amendment passed 24-6-1.

Another measure introduced by Junior Rep Chris Rankine sought to add $9,000 to the Music Department for band and choral concerts. Without this money the Music Department would be forced to cut back on equipment and concerts, Rankine said.

At-Large Rep Alan Bakowski cautioned against providing funding too readily, saying that if Tech administrators felt SGA would always assume such a responsibility, they might never chip in themselves.

What we should be saying is that SGA would always assume such a responsibility, and yet they might never chip in themselves.

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"I have talked to the main programmer at GTCN and he said that he had just recently heard about this," said Webb. "He said it could probably be done, but that he wasn’t sure. I’m just concerned that we don’t know enough facts yet."

Senator Yasser Bhatti explained why the bill had come up so quickly. "Asking SGA for money is sort of our last option," said Bhatti. "Other senators felt that the money would be well spent for this event."

"We pay $1,000 for student groups to rent the Ferst Center for one night," said senator Kent Siebeneck. "This event will run for over a month and will be open to every student living on campus."

Although the debate on the issue was well divided, when the vote was called, nearly all of the senators voted to allocate the funds.

In other business, two other bills allocating funds to the Tech Gymnastics Team and the Tech chapter of the AIAA passed unanimously without any discussion.

"Stepping up when no one else will," said BME Rep Jen Hinkel. The amendment passed 28-1-2.

One amendment to cut $3,000 from the UHR budget and another to cut the entire budget of the GT Flying Club were tabled until next week. Three more amendments corrected minor oversights and cut funding for a Pride Alliance telephone bill. Reps then tabled the budget until next week.

In other business, reps allocated $4,000 to the Cricket Club can buy broadcast rights for the 2003 ICC Cricket World Cup, which will air from Feb. 8th through March 10th on GTCN.

Allocations to the Gymnastics Team, to GT Women’s Ultimate, and the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics passed as a slate without discussion.

Reps approved by unanimous acclamation a resolution expressing condolences to the family of Kenneth Vann, a GT student who recently passed away.

UHR closed in unusual fashion with consideration of a bill to impeach two members for excessive absences, Freshman Rep Brandon Clifford and Management Rep Randi Truelove. The Chief Justice of the Undergraduate Judiciary Council, Daniel Crook, presided over the vote.

"I’ll be very up front with you. I don’t know how this works," said Crook.

The House brought motions of impeachment against each rep individually, then voted to remove each with a three-fourths majority.
McFerrin e-mailed several administrators, spoke with the GTPD and was also quoted in a recent Atlanta Journal-Constitution article about campus safety. McFerrin says he wants to see improved lighting in and around parking decks, the installation of call boxes and security cameras, and the hiring of parking attendants.

“I looked at the lights on top of Curran and maybe four of 20 were working. Usually the [Curran] gates are up or broken. Anyone can just drive in. There’s an attendant’s booth, but it’s always empty,” McFerrin said. Criminals “seem to know it’s an easy target.”

McFerrin also wants to raise student awareness.

“You only tend to hear about this stuff when it happens to you or your friends,” he said.

Wypasek acknowledges that several parking decks including Curran, Burge and Peters have been seen driving in and out, breaking into cars. Crime rates also tend to be higher on the outer boundaries of campus than in the core.

Criminals “seem to know it’s easier to operate,” she said.

McFerrin and Wypasek believe work will decrease crime is increased cooperation and coordination among the GTPD and departments like Housing, Facilities and Parking. Wypasek cited the recent Department of Housing decision to lock interior doors in some dormitories as a model for prevention of crime.

“Crime is not just a police thing,” he said. “It’s a community thing.”

Crocker wants to see increased educational efforts designed to inform students of risks and personal safety measures. One example is a campus safety meeting held last Friday to address student concerns.

“While many people don’t realize it is that the population on campus changes every year. You have to continue to educate people. They’re coming from completely different worlds and completely different places. That’s one of the key factors and obviously something that we need to do a better job of,” she said.

Crocker advises students to take advantage of shuttle services like the Stingerette, go out in groups rather than by themselves and, above all, use common sense.

The GTPD has recently become aware of an increase in certain crimes on campus and are currently taking steps to address some of the problems.

“Lighting has come up as an issue in the last few weeks,” she said. As of last Friday, she said, all lights on Curran “were burning.” She also said tests concluded that lighting around Curran “was at standard.”

“Certainly, that does not mean that more light could not be added,” she said. “Cameras are great. They really are. I just can’t tell you why [camera as have not been added]. A picture’s worth a thousand words,” Crocker said.

She cautioned that she has no previous experience with use of cameras inside a parking deck and doesn’t know if they would prove effective in that setting.

As for attendants, Crocker says that they are no guarantee of security or protection.

“There’s nothing to stop someone from just paying the twenty-five cents, going in, breaking into a car and leaving,” she said. Wypasek added that it takes only a matter of minutes or seconds to break into a car.

One strategy that Crocker, Wypasek and McFerrin believe will work to decrease crime is increased cooperation and coordination among the GTPD and departments like Housing, Facilities and Parking.

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By Charles Frey / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

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ID from page 1
need to protect a student’s social security number as much as possible,” said Pete.
Rosalind Meyers, VP of Auxiliary Services, agreed with the need to protect students’ social security numbers. “The primary reason was to protect student and staff privacy by moving away from the social security number as the primary identifier,” said Meyers. “I think I was working at Tech for about two months when a couple of students first approached me about their security concerns. That was in 1995.”
However, the reasoning expanded beyond that basic need. The group presenting to the senate also commented on the need to connect the various offices that required identification numbers.
“These offices have been largely self-supporting up to this point,” said Pete. “These groups didn’t speak to each other and each had their own identifiers for students within their own systems. We are trying to move toward a much more integrated system with this plan.”

Fees
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only psychiatrist available to students works part-time.
The $75 per semester technology fee also received the committee’s attention. “There’s been no increase in the technology fee in many years,” said Michaels. “Among other areas, we added, ‘we want to put more technology into classrooms.’
Furthermore, Michaels feels students cannot depend upon the Institute’s own identifiers for students within their own systems. “We are trying to move toward a much more integrated system with this plan.”

Although most students may not realize the problem with multiple identification numbers, this is especially a problem with international students. Students who have recently entered the country to attend Tech may not have been issued a social security number. This leads to the creation of temporary identifiers which continue to exist even when the students is issued a social security number.
“This leaves some students with multiple records on the system,” said Pete. The creation of one Tech identification number would result in only one record.
The new identification numbers which exist will become available through the Banner system. Students will be able to access their individual numbers by visiting www.gatech.edu after March 1. Each student ID number will be a unique nine digit identifier similar to the social security number. However, in order to avoid any confusion between the two, the ID number will begin with a “9,” the only digit that social security numbers do not utilize.
Once the Tech ID numbers are released, social security numbers will no longer be used by OSCAR or any other Tech computer program. In fact, as part of the new Tech social security number policy adopted last August, all departments and services are no longer permitted to use the social security number. Current students will have the option of using their social security numbers to logon to OSCAR until Dec. 31.
With the addition of the new ID numbers, a new design for the BuzzCard will be introduced as well. Although students may trade in their old cards for new ones, it will not be required.

“Ask Dr. Clough”
President Clough answers your questions from last fall’s State of the Institute address

What plans are underway to develop and enhance student life initiatives (i.e., cultural events, concerts, service activities, etc.)? A few of the most recent developments to enhance student life include:
“Ramblin Nights” (Friday night social programs preceding home football games), which in its first year seemed to be very successful.
More student-oriented performances at the Ferris Center (i.e., Beck, Lewis Black, Room) and more student rush tickets.
Development of a partnership with Hands on Atlanta double community service opportunities for students.
Development of a Leadership Portfolio (a new program to document student involvement in leadership activities).
We are also working with the SGA on a new approach for planning social events that will be fun and enjoyable during the spring and around non-football weekends.

What is Georgia Tech doing to address gender diversity? Increasing gender diversity is an Institute goal at all levels. The Office of Undergraduate Admissions has a comprehensive strategy for student recruitment that includes personal-to-person telephone calls, chat sessions, invitations to visit campus, and letters. All of these activities focus on providing personal attention in the recruiting process.
Undergraduate Admissions is currently developing a brochure to send to women to encourage them to consider Georgia Tech when they become seniors in high school. This year, the College of Engineering invited prospective women interested in engineering to the Engineering Career Conference on October 10-11. Undergraduate Admissions also partners with the other colleges in February each year and hosts a program called “Furnees” for women in high school who are interested in careers other than engineering.
On the faculty side, through the ADVANCE program, Georgia Tech is participating in a national effort to increase the participation of women in the scientific and engineering workforce through the increased representation and advancement of women in academic and engineering careers. The Georgia Tech ADVANCE team incorporates a diverse array of faculty, staff and institute leaders in this collaborative endeavor. We have already made progress. Over the past five years, we have hired more women faculty and promoted more to the full professor rank than at any other time in our history. We have also appointed several women to endowed chairs and professorships in the past five years, which is a substantial accomplishment given that none existed before that.