

Tech's Master Plan Calls for Road Closures

Irene Sullivan
Copy Editor

Tech will begin closing several streets on campus to vehicle traffic beginning this summer. These will be permanent changes to the campus landscape that were part of the master plan from February 2014.

"Peachtree Street will be closed to vehicles from Wings Up Way to A Street. Stadium Dr. will receive streetscaping but will remain open to vehicles. University Drive will be pedestrian-only from Stadium Drive to where it ends at Foster Hall," Karen Lykins, Chief Information Officer, said. "Tenth street will also receive streetscaping."

Streetscaping is defined as the appearance or view of a street. Lykins said it would include trees, bike paths and improved lighting. There has also



The intersection of North Peachtree and University Drive on Tech campus on April 8th, 2021. Several campus streets will be closing in the future due to university master plans. Photo by Laura Navarro

been an increase in the use of bicycles, skateboards, rollerblades/skates and other alternative means of transportation, according to Lykins. The areas closed to vehicles will allow safer use of these types of transportation.

"As further improvements occur within the campus, the development of Peachtree Street and the adjacent parking areas will become essential to the unification and expansion of the Campus as a whole," according to page 14 of the mas-

ter plan found on the Capital Projects and Planning page of the Tech website.

"In conjunction with the removal and relocation of all parking central and adjacent to Peachtree Street and therefore no end destinations to draw

additional heavy traffic, the central section of Peachtree Street is proposed to be reduced to two non-oversized lanes and serve as touring and shuttle drive," according to the Master Plan.

"Bike lanes and a tree lined median running along its center will aid in calming Peachtree and transforming the street's current asphalt dominant character into that of a landscaped, pedestrian friendly boulevard. This central section of Peachtree could also evolve to a pedestrian-only concourse in the future," according to the master plan.

Pathways within these malls are proposed to be pedestrian only, but will be constructed to accommodate emergency vehicles as well as service vehicles, according to the master plan.

"The goals for this project focus

on safety and environmental improvements. Pedestrians are safer when foot traffic does not interact with vehicular traffic. The master plan emphasizes improvements that are safer for pedestrians," Lykins said.

"I think many of the changes will certainly make navigating campus safer, and we're so thankful that our campus leaders are considering the safety of all pedestrians," Chester Goad, Office of Disability Services director, said.

While pedestrian safety was the main reason given for the changes, getting to the finished product will not be without growing pains and possible hazards, especially for those with disabilities.

Goad stresses that advance public notice and communication are the key.

"In general any change to campus

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Supporting Research for ALS



Members of the Tech Chapter of Phi Delta Theta tend to a flower garden in Nashville. Members volunteer their time to support research for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. Photo by Brooklyn Driver

Brooklyn Driver
Online Editor

The Tech Chapter of Phi Delta Theta spent two days in Nashville volunteering for the Live Like Lou Foundation. This foundation supports research to develop a treatment for Lou Gehrig's disease, more commonly known as ALS.

ALS is Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. This is a degenerative disease

that slowly destroys the use of voluntary muscles and neurons in the body. The cause of this disease is still not known.

Phi Delta Theta's philanthropic cause has always been ALS. More recently, The Live Like Lou Foundation created new opportunities for brothers to get hands-on involvement.

Lou Gehrig was a

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Increase in Online Tests Results in Browser Lockdowns

Malaysia Talbert
Reporter

With the move to remote classes, Tech students have had an increase in online testing. The choice has led to an increase in the use of Respondus Lockdown.

"I have to use a lockdown browser with a camera every single time I take any assessment for any class. I never feel comfortable with a camera watching my every move," Grace Hajdik, senior accounting major, said.

LockDown browser comes in two versions. The first version closes all tabs on your computer and locks your computer out of everything other than the quiz or test.

The second version, Respondus LockDown, uses the student's microphone and turns on the camera. The version using a camera has

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Changes coming for Academic Calendar



Jennifer Lyuse checks her email on the Tech campus on April 8th, 2021. Students received an email informing them of new standardized time slots beginning in Fall 2021. Photo by Laura Navarro.

Irene Sullivan
Copy Editor

Tech students received an email from the Registrar's office in March informing them of the "new standardized time slots and minor changes to our academic calendar," beginning this fall.

"One week was

added to the calendar—from 14 weeks to 15 weeks," Karen Lykins, Chief Information Officer, said.

This fall, classes will start on Thursday, August 19, and will end on Wednesday, December 8, with graduation on Saturday, December

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Spencer Chandler checks a lockdown browser website on April 8, 2021. With an increase of online classes and tests, there has also been an increased need for Respondus Lockdown. Photo by Laura Navarro.

War of Wings Raises Money for PCAA

Kappa Delta hosts War of Wings event and raise money for Prevent Child Abuse America.

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Men's Golf makes a mark

Tech men's golf is back after a cancelled fall season. The team made their mark at the Golf Week Spring Invitational.

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Volleyball Ends with Winning Record

The volleyball season comes to close with two wins in a row against Belmont.

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created a concern for many students.

Regarding how it operates, the software can use facial recognition and even monitor students' eye movements. The primary complaint students have expressed is a feeling of an invasion of privacy. One student expressed the heightened level of test anxiety, due to Respondus causing additional distractions, and making it more difficult to focus on the actual assessment.

"Someone is watching my every move, even if it's not live; then, they watch it later. It freaks me out every time, and I tend to do worse on those exams," Hajdik said.

The software is new to professors at Tech, but is becoming more common after the shift to remote, off-campus classes. The use of the software is the choice of professors and is not required. While students understand that there is a need to val-

idate testing, other alternative methods could be a possibility.

"I believe a better way to do exams would be to either screen share or screen record while you take the exam or even take the exam over zoom that way nothing is recorded to be looked at later," Caylee Tollison, senior marketing major, said.

Furthermore, some students have suggested professors make their classes more hands-on instead of making tests easy to cheat on. This would allow a compromise on both parts while preserving the privacy of students.

Welcoming the classroom into a home can already be seen as difficult to students. Not everyone can calmly sit in front of a camera and conduct themselves in a normal everyday manner that they could in a normal classroom environment. Testing experiences are not equal and surveillance inside homes may

create unnecessary anxiety.

Pursuing a degree to better oneself and to prepare for a future career is something that many students take seriously. Their primary goal is to excel in their area with the hopes of taking that knowledge with them after graduation. Exploring other methods of assessment could allow students to continue their education while also feeling as though their privacy is important and respected by decision makers.

There are also tutors on campus who are available to assist with study habits. The main goal is to be able to adapt to situations around us and to be successful, so it is important to reach out if you find yourself struggling.

As far as advice to deal with test anxiety, Teresa Benson from the Tech Counseling Center gave the following suggestions of best practices: be well prepared,

study over days or weeks not "all-nighters," time management, have a positive attitude, read the directions, skim the test to know how to pace yourself, write formulas or key term in the margin to recall them, get restful sleep the night before, show up early, breathe deeply, do some "simple" ones first to build confidence, and focus on the question at hand.

For any student dealing with similar anxiety regarding Lockdown Browser when completing assessments, or test anxiety in general, there are resources available on campus. You may contact the Student Success Center. Students may also contact the Tennessee Tech Counseling Center for an appointment by calling 931-372-3331 or scheduling on the Eagle Wellness Portal to meet virtually with a counselor if test anxiety is overwhelming.

Student on the street

Laura Navarro Moreno
Reporter

"Have you ever had to use a Lockdown Browser? If so, what was your experience like?"

Gage Jones
computer science major
Freshman

"I really did not like having to pay fifteen dollars for it but also it only lasts for one semester so if you take two semesters of classes you have to pay for it again even if it's only for one class. Also, it makes you really nervous and uncomfortable for no reason even if you know you are not planning on cheating."



Josh Mays
MET major
Junior

"It was pretty straightforward. I felt comfortable using it but I didn't feel comfortable being recorded and that's because I don't like being recorded. But, other than that I understand why the professors use the recording part to prevent cheating. Overall, I like it, it's nothing too bad where you can't handle it."

Alex Darnell
computer engineering major
Junior

"I thought it was just fine for the most part. It only got a bit frustrating whenever you would look down to use a scratch paper or something and immediately the screen would flash and tell you to look back up or else it would flag in some sort of cheating event. But, other than that I did not have a problem with it."



War of Wings Raises Money for PCAA



Kappa Delta holds fundraiser for Prevent Child Abuse America on April 7 at Leslie Town Center. Donations for wings went to the national philanthropy. Photo provided by Savannah Young

Savannah Young
Reporter

Kappa Delta hosted their annual War of the Wings event Wednesday, April 7 at Leslie Town Center.

This event is hosted by the sorority every year to raise money for Prevent Child Abuse America, one of their national philanthropies. For five dollars, guests were able to attend and enjoy unlimited wings provided by local restaurants.

"We get so excited to host War of Wings each year! We put so much work into this event and seeing students from different clubs and organizations across campus come support us and PCAA is amazing. Everything we do is for such a great cause and all of the hard work definitely pays off in the end," AliJane Gilbert, Kappa Delta's VP-Community Service, said.

Students, faculty, family and friends gathered Leslie Town Center on the 7th to partake in the wing eating event. Brenden Bristow, a member of Kappa Sigma said, "War of the Wings is a fun

event. For five dollars we can eat as many wings as we want and get to help these girls raise money for an organization they are passionate about. It's pretty cool."

War of the Wings is one of the biggest philanthropies on Tech's campus. In 2019, Kappa Delta raised \$25,000 for PCAA with their War of Wings event. The sisters collect donations, have a coin drive, sell wristbands, and have a wing eating contest. All proceeds are donated to PCAA.

"Our 2021 event was a huge success. We are so thankful for everyone who attended and helped support PCAA," Caroline Cathey, President of Kappa Delta, said. "While we don't have an exact total on all that was raised, we feel confident that we met our goal of \$25,000. Once all the donations have been processed, we will be able to announce our final total on our social media. We are thrilled to see the impact that will be made in so many lives across the country," Caroline Cathey, President of Kappa Delta, said.

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Find an error? Contact the managing editor:
Morgan Lee mglee44@tntech.edu

Oracle Staff

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Peachtree Street will be closed to vehicle traffic starting summer 2021. Photo by Laura Navarro

structure or pedestrian traffic has the potential to create barriers for students with a variety of disabilities. Temporary changes that are necessary for construction and campus improvements are less problematic when they are communicated in advance. I will note that campus communication regarding campus environment has improved through the years, but again the key is communication," Goad said.

Currently there are as many as 20 full-time blind or visually disabled students who are generally able to navigate campus. Construction and work on campus improvements can hinder that, albeit temporarily. "Advance notice is especially important for students with mobility-related and visual disabilities because they often travel "fixed routes," Goad said. "Unlike non-disabled students who may be able to easily take a

shortcut or an alternate route, disabled students often have less options. In most cases, they rely on sidewalks, curb cuts, crosswalks to navigate campus."

Goad said that advance public notice is necessary so that students proactively seek out temporary alternate routes. He said that other options like the campus shuttle system could be used to eliminate barriers.

"The access to parking lots will be changed, but they will still be accessible," Lykins said.

The work will be done in phases to minimize the impact on the campus community. Work is expected to start in Summer 2021.

For a complete list of the capital projects master plan go to <https://www.tntech.edu/capital-projects/master.php>

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before Christmas. Spring classes begin Monday, January 10, 2022.

Time slot changes include going from a 55 minutes class to a 50 minutes class on Monday, Wednesday and Friday classes. Monday-Wednesday and Tuesday-Thursday classes go from 80 minutes classes to 75 minutes classes. The one night, weekly evening classes are 150 minutes with no change.

These new course schedule time slots and calendar dates are a result of recommendations made by the Course Scheduling Committee and the Calendar Committee in 2019, according to the email from the Registrar's office.

"One goal of both committees was to streamline the start and stop times in order to alleviate major scheduling issues and also to open up space for courses to be offered across campus. We cut the number of start and stop times from 200+ down to approximately 25 unique start and stop times. This created much more clarity in student scheduling and more flexibility around how the space is utilized," Lykins said.

"Some classes' start and stop times did not align with other classes, creating conflicts in

the schedule," Lykins said. "We had fielded complaints about this from students and faculty. One of our primary goals was to minimize these types of conflicts in scheduling courses to give students more options."

The number of minutes a student attends class in a given semester is the same and is regulated by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. These scheduling changes did not increase the number of minutes a student attends class.

Lykins said she doesn't think adding 5 calendar days will be a deterrent to prospective students because the overall time in class is the same.

While the changes may be necessary, the timing of announcement of the changes left some people upset. The announcement came on Monday, March 29, one week before registration for the summer and fall semesters. At this point, many students had already lined up internships and jobs for the summer, and booked vacations for what they thought was the week after graduation in December.

"The only reason I'm a little upset about the earlier start date this year is that I have to cut

my summer internship by three days," Daniel Augustus, a junior English major, said. "I only have a one day turn around from when my internship ends and when I have to be back at Tech."

"There is a tremendous amount of planning and an approval process that must be in place in order to make changes like this. We have faced challenges in classroom space and scheduling for a number of years. This modification to the schedule and the start and stop times resolved a number of those challenges," Lykins said.

This fall, Tech will be using a 50% room capacity utilization to allow for social distancing. Classroom utilization will be very high this fall. With the new calendar/schedule format, Tech will be able to fit more courses into existing classroom spaces, thus being able to offer more in-person courses.

The modifications will allow departments to offer more sections of classes. Due to COVID-19 and social distancing guidelines, more sections are needed; the new schedule will allow more flexibility in meeting the scheduling needs of students.

"More sections of courses are offered. Now, due to the stream-

lined start and stop times, five or six classes may be offered in that same classroom on a given day," Lykins said. "Additionally, students voiced their desire to have less down time between classes in order to customize their schedules around their work or other extracurricular activities; the new schedule has fewer overlapping courses which allows for more scheduling opportunities."

"I am really excited to see how the new semester will be with these schedule changes," Grace Durham, a sophomore nursing major, said.

There will be a large number of classes on ground this fall. Over the next few semesters, Tech plans to transition back to the pre-COVID operating schedule.

There were over 25 departments represented on the two committees. They were made up of people who were either appointed or in other cases, individuals who came forward and volunteered to serve on the committees.

The committees met with groups of students, such as attending SGA meetings asking for feedback on the plans. The committees also conducted surveys of students around this topic.

Live like Lou continued from pg. 1

professional baseball player who began his career in 1923 with the New York Yankees, who he would spend the next 17 years playing for. Gehrig is also known as a notable Alumni of Phi Delta Theta and is recognized today for the modern name of ALS.

The Live Like Lou Foundation was created in Pennsylvania in 2012 by Neil and Suzanne Alexander. Neil Alexander was a brother in Phi Delta Theta as well.

"My husband and I started Live Like Lou as a grassroots effort when he was diagnosed with ALS in 2011. Our cause at the time was to support other families and research in our region," Suzanne Alexander said.

Since 2012, the expansion of the foundation has spanned across the country with the help of Phi Delta Theta. Millions of dollars have already been raised to support ALS.

When Neil Alexander passed away in 2015, his wife Suzanne took on the role of running the foundation.

"Today we are a national non-profit. I run Live Like Lou from my husband's desk. We raise

money and we deploy volunteers. Our national philanthropic partners are Phi Delta Theta Fraternity. Lou Gehrig was their brother and my husband was their brother too," Suzanne Alexander said.

Suzanne continues to work side by side with brothers of Phi Delta Theta to help as many families as possible. The fraternity provides administrative, financial and volunteer support to the foundation.

"Phi Delta Theta provides a foundation for ALS awareness and we are one of the largest donors to the ALS community," Shilp Patel, Phikeia Educator for the Tech chapter, said.

Tech's Chapter of Phi Delta Theta worked alongside the Middle Tennessee State University chapter to help a family in Nashville who is directly affected by Lou Gehrig's disease.

On Saturday, April 3, 2021, both chapters met at the family's home to do some yard work. The brothers mowed the yard, pulled weeds, trimmed limbs and bushes and mulched the landscaping.

The brothers also set aside time to play with the children of the family and have a few laughs



Phi Delta Theta brothers volunteering in Nashville at the Live Like Lou Foundation. Phi Delta Theta works to raise awareness for ALS alongside the foundation. Photo by Brooklyn Driver

with everyone too.

On Tuesday, April 6, 2021, both chapters met once again at the Nashville home to help with a fundraiser for Live Like Lou. The brothers set up tables and chairs and served drinks and food to the guests throughout the event.

The brothers from Tech were recognized by the speaker of the event, Suzanne Alexander.

"Phi Delta Theta works hard for us and they can see the impact they are having first hand. These young men absolutely hate ALS," Alexander said.

The money that Phi Delta Theta has helped raise alongside

the Live Like Lou Foundation is going towards a new research wing of Vanderbilt University Medical Center. The scientist working in this new facility will research methods of treatment for ALS patients, as well as work towards finding the cause for this disease.

If you are interested in learning more about the Live Like Lou Foundation, you can visit www.LiveLikeLou.org. To learn how to support or donate to local families affected by Lou Gehrig's disease you can contact the Tech Chapter of Phi Delta Theta.

Sports

Volleyball ends with a winning record

SETH JONES
Sports Editor

The newly designed volleyball season has come to an end with a 9-7 winning record for the first time in many years, ending their season with two wins in a row against Belmont.

The beginning of the season had a rocky start because of the COVID-19 restrictions. This caused the schedule to change shape by causing teams to go against each other back-to-back, as well as having fewer games in the season, but they still had their first winning record in years.

The team consisted of only one veteran, senior player Ali Verzani. She was able to take on this responsibility head on.

"I knew I would have a lot of weight on my shoulders ... It is a tough role to take on as a senior because you want to do the best for your team, but sometimes it's about taking care of the ball. It is a different role to take on ... but it was okay, and I was up for it," Verzani said.

Morgan Gish, junior, also played a role in creating a winning season.

"This season, our team made great strides. We have so much talent and each player played a part into every success. This year we learned how to grit it out together and



Ali Verzani attempts a kill despite defensive pressure from a Bruin on an attacking push Sunday night in the Hooper Eblee Center. Tech swept Belmont in a 2-game series (3-1, 3-1) to end their regular season. Photo by Braden Wall

play as a team better than we ever have," said Gish.

Verzani spoke on how different it felt to be in a season set up this way.

"9-7 doesn't even speak to the work we put in ... Overall, I wish the first weekend was different for us, but I am so excited for what's to come for this team ... If you look at Tennessee Tech volleyball records previously, they were not good. We've made such great stride since I've been here and since the new staff has been aboard and I just think the sky is the limit for this team...

Once we get over the obstacles, we'll be unstoppable," Verzani said.

Verzani gave her final thoughts on the season and her senior year.

"Going with the thought that this was my final season, and this is my last semester at Tennessee Tech, I just am so thankful for the opportunity to be played here and I just think that the town of Cookeville is such a wonderful place to be, and I would tell anyone considering a university, especially to be an athlete, to go all for [Tech]," Verzani said.

Men's golf makes a mark at invitational



Bracton Womack places third during the Golfweek Spring Invitational on April 5-6. Currently, Tech is standing 7th overall. Photo by Thomas Corbarn

JONAH STOUT
Reporter

Tech Men's Golf team has been back in action this semester after having their fall season cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. Tech placed sixth at the Golfweek Spring Invitational in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina on April 6. The team will compete this week in the Big Blue Intercollegiate at the Hermitage

Golf Course in Old Hickory, Tennessee, before the Ohio Valley Conference championship on April 25-27.

Polk Brown, head coach of the golf team, has been in for a challenge this semester due to the coronavirus, but is glad his team is able to compete during the pandemic.

"Navigating this COVID-19 environment has been a chal-

lenge to say the least, but we are very fortunate to be able to play this semester," Brown said.

The golf has been the easy part. Otherwise, it has been quite the adjustment taking care of the protocols to ensure the safety of our student-athletes and afford them the opportunity to compete."

Brown also said that as the semester and season come to an end, the mindset of the team in the classroom is just as important as the play on the course.

"I think the main thing for our team the rest of the semester is just to put in the work and keep a positive mindset given the challenges that come with the end-of-semester school requirements and juggling that with practice. Attitude and work ethic are controllable things, and, if we do those things well, we will be in good shape."

Bracton Womack, senior member of the golf team, shot nine under par in Myrtle Beach last week to place third overall and earn all-tournament honors.

After not competing for nearly a year, Womack is happy to be back out on the course this semester.

"This season has been a lot different just because of covid. From having to get tested every week and having to play our tournaments with our own team as opposed to playing with other schools ... it's just all been weird and different, but I'm thankful we still get to play," Womack said.

Womack also said that being a student-athlete can be difficult, but he tries to keep a positive mindset and be appreciative of the experience.

"Playing golf for Tech is stressful at times ... trying to balance school while constantly being out of state can get tough, but it's an experience most people don't get to have, so just reminding yourself of that helps a lot," Womack said.

For more information on the Men's Golf team, visit the Tech Athletics website and follow them on social media.

Seth Speaks Volumes Back-to-back game dilemma

SETH JONES
Sports Editor

Sports have been hit with many obstacles when it comes to 2021. Most of them had to reschedule and adapt to new rules and regulations. Coming off this season, is it reasonable to have college athletes do back-to-back games?

Tech Volleyball had this dilemma for their 2021 season. They had to change their whole schedule to have games back-to-back on Sundays and Mondays. This had to have been a strain on the team.

Going from one game to the next can be exhausting. With that in mind, imagine having to go to school on the Monday before the game. This could leave a heavy strain on the athlete.

It could be a strain on other sports as well. Tech Baseball must go against opponents one night after the other occasionally, but luckily those games tend to be towards the end of the week. That does not mean it will not take a toll on the mentality and

stamina of the players.

With that in mind, it may be harder for athletes to bounce back after a tough loss the night before. It could damage the mentality of the team. Breaks in between games allow for a day or week to refresh and learn from the mistakes. Considering how much athletes prepare for games, that less-than-a-day does not give them enough time to prepare again.

Imagine having to wake up early in the morning, and make time to eat, train and workout to prepare for one game. Then, you must do it again the next day. That does not give athletes enough time to digest what occurred the night before and give them the mental break they need.

I appreciate the adaptive nature of all Tech's athletes, and I know they can handle it. But, if the cards were on the table, I think that they should not have to do games back-to-back.

With most professional sports, they are at least given one day to prepare for the next game. That does not mean this happens all

OPINION



Seth Jones gives his opinion on all things sports in every issue of The Oracle.

the time, but it happens a lot of the time.

Keeping a strong mentality is a major focus when it comes to sports. It is hard keeping that when there are games back-to-back and on a day of classes. A lot of these back-to-back games happened because of COVID-19, so I would not be surprised if they were to change it again.