

OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, April 15, 2005



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Quote of the week:

"When you can't have what you want,
 it's time to start wanting what you
 have."
 —Kathleen A. Sutton

OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

What's in it for us?

With textbook prices rising, Auxiliary Services and Barnes & Noble have increased their efforts to obtain more used books for students to purchase. We share their concerns, but Auxiliary Services and the bookstore's current initiatives only address part of the underlying problem and more options must be considered.

First, encouraging professors to send in their book lists ahead of time will mostly likely not make a significant contribution to increasing the book inventories. The current deadline of March 11 for Fall 2005 is far too early because many professors do not know whether or not they'll even be teaching the class by that time.

Additionally, while it is admirable for the bookstore to reach out to students through contests that include rewarding the student organization that brings in the most used books, they will not be sufficient enough to deter students from seeking out other sources for selling and buying their books. The bookstore faces intense competition from internet retailers like **half.com** and Amazon, not to mention on-campus vendors—students themselves who sell their books to friends and through **git.ads**—and the multitude of Tech book-trade websites. What's going to encourage students to sell a book back to the bookstore when they know they can get more money from another source?

The bookstore should examine how to give students more reasons to sell their books back. The first step is to survey students on where they typically sell their books, why they chose that venue and what would motivate them to sell back to the bookstore. The next step is for the bookstore to examine its own pricing structure. Why only pay flat rates of 10-50 percent of the purchase price? Instead, there needs to be a graduated rate structure based on the condition of the textbook. Books in almost-new condition should fetch a higher price, while books in poor condition should be offered to students at discounted prices.

While it is unlikely that the growing costs of textbooks will decline anytime soon, it doesn't mean that all of the costs and burdens have to be passed on to the students.

Vote one more time

This week's SGA election had a record 42 percent turnout, but voters' jobs aren't done yet—on April 18-19 there will be a runoff election between David Andersen and Andrew Howard for undergraduate student body president. Take the time to learn about both candidates' platforms before you cast your vote Monday at www.elections.gatech.edu.

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By Erin Gatlin / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Honors program needs a second look

As an incoming freshman, FA-SET leaders tell you, "Every Tech student was the smartest at their high school." Ask your average—or even above-average—student what he or she thinks about his peers, and the answer will likely include something about respect and matching intellect. So why do we need an honors program?

As covered in *Technique* recently, a committee has proposed a plan for such a program to the Provost's Office. The aspect of the proposed honors program that I'm most concerned about is consistency across majors. According to the committee, honors classes would be implemented mainly in the Institute core. However, for a student's third and fourth year, providing an honors curriculum would be up to that student's major school. As a result, as Vice Provost Bob McMath admitted, there would be "different development between schools."

Different—and likely inferior: there would be a disparity among schools whose chairs place different emphasis on the program, among larger schools and smaller schools. How is it fair, or desirable even, if the quality of your honors degree is dependent on your major?

As an Electrical Engineering major, I have a hard time seeing how a workable honors program could be implemented in a school the size of the School of ECE. Much of our major core includes lab classes that are run primarily by TAs, not professors. Our third- and fourth-year curriculum also includes the bulk of our 20-plus hours of major electives. The school offers a multitude of electives in each of its 10 concentration areas, but often no more than one or two sections of each elective are offered each semester. How should you choose between an elective you're interested in and an honors elective that you might not be interested in? More importantly, how do you find



"How is it fair, or desirable even, if the quality of your honors degree is dependent on your major?"

Jennifer Lee
 Focus Editor

enough professors and class space to provide a satisfactory number and diversity of honors classes?

The committee also defines an honors class as having better student-faculty interaction and more "intellectual vitality." But just designating a class as "honors" does not ensure this. I took honors math courses for Calc 2 through DiffEQ, and my experiences ranged from terrible to excellent. I've also taken regular elective classes where I felt I received honors-quality interaction because the professor got to know his students and engaged them through enthusiastic lecture, questions and well-crafted assignments.

An honors program might be beneficial in liberal arts classes, where small class size and attentive students may foster better discussion and participation, but in the case of most engineering classes, quality comes primarily from the professor. Honors classes can only take these exceptional professors away from students who may not be honors material but are still interested in what the professor wants to teach.

The committee also says honors classes will be more "interdisciplinary." But in core classes, the basics must be learned—there is only so much interdisciplinary material that can be incorporated.

In addition, most students who would be eligible for an honors program will likely have received AP or high school credit for much of their core. Instead, why not encourage interdisciplinary study by strength-

ening our under-funded Schools of LCC and Modern Languages?

Or how about undergraduate research? Though it's part of the new Quality Enhancement Plan, Tech's undergrad research is nowhere near the status of, for example, MIT's Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program, which is a core component of its students' undergrad education. At Tech, though there is plenty of undergrad research going on, the responsibility to find a professor and research interest lies primarily with the student. A stronger, more centralized undergrad research program would offer an equally powerful incentive to attract students to Tech, and would have additional benefits as well.

But if the Provost's Office is set on an honors program, then aspects of the current plan needs to be seriously reexamined.

They must not simply look to peer universities' honors programs for guidance; they must consider the unique dynamic of Tech's student population.

It seems like the real reason for all this is simply to get back the students we might lose to universities with honors programs (namely UGA). But with no scholarship component, the proposed program may be less effective. Let's not turn the honors program into a second-rate President's Scholarship. It would only create even more of a divide among students at a university that prides itself on the quality of its student body as a whole.

Value your time in college, but get over Tech

Tuesday I was accepted to a summer internship program. This requisite college job conjures up images of walking the hallowed corridors of Capitol Hill and strolling with high-powered society on the Mall.

That's how things were for me last summer. This summer, though, in between leaving Tech and heading to graduate school, things will be a little different—I'll be on a farm.

Have I ever been on a farm? Not exactly, as long as petting zoos don't count. Sunscreen and gloves will be a drastic change from suit, tie and briefcase.

People who know me can't even fathom me attending such a program. It's sure to be something along the lines of *A Simple Life*, except far worse for those watching since I'm nowhere near as hot.

This is not just any farm. It's thousands of acres of living labs designed for sustainable agriculture systems. I wasn't adventurous enough to pick the project involving cow fecal sampling; slow-moving plants are probably a better choice for me.

The farm is near Goldsboro, N.C., also new to me. We were mapping it out online and had an immature laugh when we discovered it's right next to an Air Force base named Seymour Johnson. We never grow up here at the newspaper.



"Don't frame your life around Tech; wearing it like a tag for the rest of your life is depressing."

Art Seavey
Development Editor

It's less than an hour from the Outer Banks. Ocean and sun will be my roommates. Communing with nature, getting away from it all, manifest destiny and all that American junk; I felt like I should try it for once.

There are 15 other interns in the program, and get this, 12 of them are girls (go figure), and there are six hours of credit attached (though useless post-commencement).

Why would I want to do such a thing? I'm still not quite sure, but when your friends laugh at the suggestion, something gnaws at you saying it's needed.

The spark though, came from my one and only LCC class. We were reading *Walden*; it just gets to you after a while, especially actually reading it this time around. I almost switched out of the course. Instead, I stuck with it and loved it, planning my summer differently because of it.

Why worry about the time,

why worry about the money? (I won't be getting a stipend.) Live to live, see the "natural" side of life for a while, sans skyscrapers and cars. I'll have to ride my bike on site; I'm not quite sure if I still have one. The point, take an LCC class. There's at least one more point to this swan song, sorry to put you through it.

After I'm finished, I'll be heading to Duke for a Masters degree. It's safe for you to surmise that they don't have one in agriculture. So why the diversion, why the sudden cut? We all need to step outside our element, especially the routine of Tech. Three years has been enough.

I won't miss Tech when I'm gone. I will miss college as an undergraduate. They are not the same. It's disheartening to hear people say how much Tech has changed their lives or how they plan to get season tickets and play benefactor the first chance they get.

Take Thoreau's advice and

get back to self-reliance. Your education and experience here were not shaped by Buzz.

Take some credit. The gold GT on your shirt had little to do with it. People at other schools love their school just as much and will miss it just as much as you. Uh oh. Who is right?

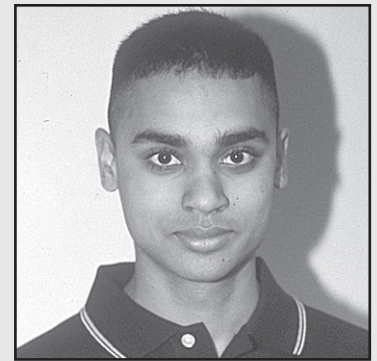
Most of us could have easily gone to myriad similar-caliber colleges and we wouldn't be worse off for it. Don't frame your life around Tech; wearing it like a tag for the rest of your life is depressing.

Please don't end up like those embarrassing drunken redneck alumni at football games, reminiscing about the past while withering away in the present. Move on, use your degree for good in the world and make new experiences. Be proud for the effort you put in, but don't dwell on it.

To everyone worried about missing Tech: get over it, starting at commencement. Start at the moment where you eagerly wait to cross the stage, excited that you will get to touch some administrator adept at writing propagandistic columns in the *Technique*, and superficially pretend you're smarter instantly because of it.

Come on, we all know that the precise instantiation of brilliance actually comes in the mail two months later.

BUZZ Around the Campus What did you think of the Sting Break events?



Omar Sardar
EE Freshman

"Ludacris needs to come here every week!"



Deborah Stephens
MGT Second-year

"I actually didn't go to [any of the events]."



Karolyn Babalola
ECE Second-year Ph.D. student

"Sting Break was cool despite all the fire alarms that went off."



Sid Roy
BME Freshman

"It was incredibly intense."

Photos by Michael Skinner

OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT- or -NOT



Cool it

After days of sweltering in on-campus residence halls, the air has finally been turned on in traditional halls. While we understand that the old buildings use the two-pipe system that forces Facilities to make the difficult choice between hot air to protect us from the cold and cold air, we just wish the weather hadn't been sweltering in the days leading up to the cold air conditioning's joyous return.



mtvU was here?

Last week, there was the Ludacris Concert, and the popular Dogwood Festival, not to mention Greek Week events. Somehow in the midst of all of that, mtvU expected us to turn out Saturday to the Burger Bowl without much publicity. Um yeah, sure thing because we had nothing better to do that weekend. Next time, try picking a time that doesn't conflict with everything else in our lives.



A real debate

For once a scheduled academic debate on campus actually became a real debate earlier this week when Academic Freedom was the hot topic at an event that featured professors, 80-plus students and one of the bill's co-authors, State Sen. Bill Hamrick. More of this type of discourse is exactly what we need.



What's the big deal?

From the four networks' choppers flying overhead and having breaking new coverage of the IBB, one would have thought there actually was a real chemical spill. However, it was simple infraction of proper lab safety protocol that was blown way out of proportion, and disrupted classes.

RIAA spells trouble for I2

Staff Editorial
Independent Florida Alligator

(U-WIRE) U. of Florida —Increasingly restrictive legislation sought by the government and intellectual property organizations already has led to visions of a "Big Brother" future, and the Recording Industry Association of America wants to make it clear that no one is safe.

Striking a blow for pampered corporate executives the world over, the RIAA plans to file lawsuits against students who have been using the new Internet2 allegedly to trade copyrighted material music and movies.

Internet2 is a network used by researchers at universities all across the world to explore the future of the internet—and it just happens to be exponentially faster than traditional internet.

As expected, ultra-fast internet access plus college students has equaled a certain amount of illegal file sharing.

Of course, these students are a microscopic fraction of the

huge number of internet users who share files, and the files they share are a raindrop next to the vast ocean of illegal sharing.

Internet2 is a new frontier in the digital age, however, and the RIAA is making sure that it will be the first to set foot upon virgin soil and plant the first giant warning sign.

Cary Sherman, president of the RIAA, wants to send a message that Internet2 isn't "a zone of lawlessness where the normal rules don't apply," according to the Associated Press.

But file-sharing surveillance, apparently, should be a zone of conduct in which normal rules don't apply. Access to Internet2, as could be expected of any experimental technology, is restricted.

Doug Van Houweling, Internet2's chief executive, told the Associated Press that no special access has been provided to the RIAA for it to gather information for these lawsuits.

See RIAA, page 12

Letter Submission Policy

Technique welcomes all letters to the editor and will print letters on a timely and space-available basis. Letters may be mailed to Georgia Tech Campus Mail Code 0290, emailed to editor@technique.gatech.edu or hand-delivered to room 137 of the Student Services Building. Letters should be addressed to Daniel Amick, Editor-in-Chief.

All letters must be signed and must include a campus box number or other valid mailing address for verification purposes. Letters should not exceed 400 words and should be submitted by 8 a.m. Wednesday in order to be printed in the following Friday's issue. Any letters not meeting these criteria or not considered by the Editorial Board of *Technique* to be of valid intent will not be printed. Editors reserve the right to edit for style, content and length. Only one submission per person will be printed each term.

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Press releases and requests for coverage may be made to the Editor-in-Chief or to individual section editors. For more information, email editor@technique.gatech.edu.

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Grad community needs more than labs to flourish

This last column of mine I was going to spend extolling the difficulties faced by graduate students at the beginning of every semester as they struggle to pay their fees, housing and health insurance.

While this is a huge problem, it is rather well known, and I feel I have touched on it enough in previous columns. Today I wish to discuss a similarly large problem—one for which sources and solution are far more vague than the semester start-up problem. The issue is the sense of community among graduate students, or rather the lack of community.

What is community and how do we achieve it?

To me, community is the feeling you get when you belong somewhere, feeling as if your presence is important and valued.

It often seems that we graduate students just disappear into our labs, into our work, into our own little worlds.

Living such isolated lives, we never seem to achieve any sense of community.

This feeling of seclusion may be especially acute for students who feel isolated from the other members of their lab because of gender, race or culture.

I have spoken to other female graduate students who tell me that they are the only women in their laboratory, and they are lonely. This is not an invitation for the men to try their pick up lines on every lab



“The communities we form in graduate school...may be every bit as important as the theses we turn out.”

Karen Feigh
Columnist

lady.

Similarly I have spoken with individuals who say that they are the only person in their laboratory who doesn't speak a certain language and all of their colleagues continually converse in this language, thereby excluding them (probably inadvertently).

Perhaps the greatest challenge in the development of community is the precious commodity of time.

Who has time to sit down just to talk to someone?

Who has time to do anything but attend their classes and mind their research?

I for one often feel that I definitely don't have time to commit to anything or any one. This is wrong.

Taking the time to get to know your colleagues, to be involved in something else besides your research is not just a good idea, I'd say that it is vital to begin to build a sense of community.

After all, these are the people whom you will someday work with in the mythical “real world.”

Another aspect of community

building is that it cannot be done en masse. Communities are built one brick at a time; one friendship, one lunch, one activity at a time.

I would argue that communities are built in small groups, not large ones.

As wonderful as the large scale concerts and events that take place around campus, I do not come away from them necessarily having met any new people. Mostly I just come away knowing the small group of friends I went with a little bit better.

My point being that these large activities are not necessarily the best ways to grow or expand the feeling of community.

Some ideas (mostly borrowed ones from other universities) that might help establish and foster a greater sense of community within the graduate student population at Tech include: dinner groups, cooperative graduate dining halls, activities aimed at graduate students just as there are activities also aimed at freshmen.

Graduate students are the individuals that will be teaching and taking the lead in the sciences, engineering and social sciences in the coming decades.

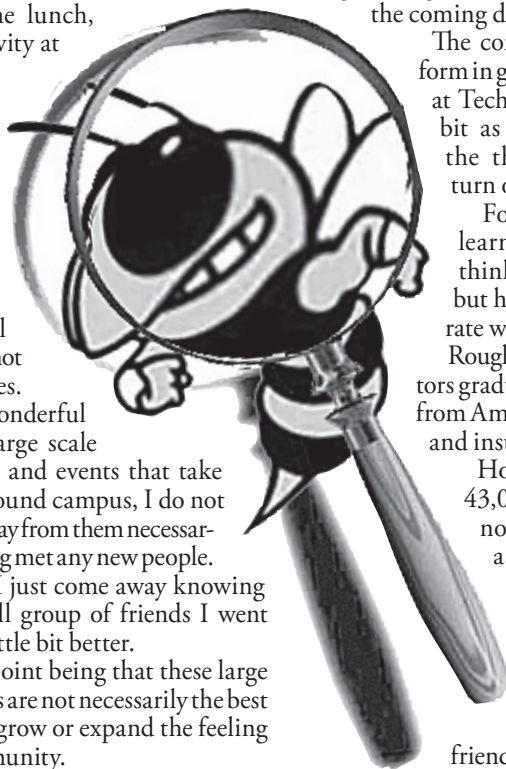
The communities we form in graduate school at Tech may be every bit as important as the theses that we turn out.

For we need to learn not only to think for ourselves, but how to collaborate with others.

Roughly 43,000 doctors graduate every year from America's colleges and institutes.

Hopefully these 43,000 doctors are not just viewed as individuals, but are instead viewed as co-workers, colleagues and more importantly, as

friends.



RIAA

from page 11

So how did the RIAA find out exactly who had been sharing what, when there theoretically is no way for it to access Internet2? As of yet, the RIAA officially has declined to reveal what measures it took to acquire this information, saying only that there was no unlawful action involved.

Let's see if this sets any alarms off: This powerful organization found a way to access technology it shouldn't have been able to access, obtain information it shouldn't have been able to obtain, and then used this information to prepare lawsuits against private citizens—all without having to reveal its sources or methods.

But hey, it's OK: They pinkie-swore they didn't do anything illegal. This is disturbing enough by itself, but also that this is a university-based research system that deals with powerful, society-shaping technology and information. If the RIAA can take a peek whenever it wants into the file-swapping records of Internet2's users with impunity, what other, more sensitive information could be taken by anyone with enough money to “discover” a way in?

If the RIAA wants to sue students for file sharing, that's its prerogative. Using questionable means to obtain private information, however, is an entirely separate story. The RIAA needs to prove that it has nothing to hide by revealing its sources. There had better be another lawsuit filed if it chooses not to do so, and we aren't talking about copyright violation.