

## OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

# Violations present key lessons

*Tech must learn and improve from NCAA penalties*

Without question, the Institute deserves its share of blame for the penalties handed down by the NCAA last week. The Tech officials directly involved in the situation should have been more cautious and aware of the guidelines, especially given that Tech was still subject to repeat offender status following major NCAA violations in 2005. Athletic Director Dan Radakovich is experienced enough to know that when there is even somewhat plausible evidence of a player being ineligible, the player needs to be pulled from the games. The players should be aware of the implications of their actions, but at the same time, the onus is on Tech's athletic department to properly educate them in such matters.

However, despite the fact that the NCAA held legitimate claims on certain issues, many of their allegations were based on conclusions drawn from inferences, rather than hard information. Also, though the NCAA insisted that

they had no intention to set Tech as an example, it was plainly stated that this was to be a “cautionary tale” for other colleges. The penalties, the purpose of which were to punish the Institute and its sports programs, affect the players from the 2009 team more directly in reality. The NCAA unjustifiably damaged the legacy and the pride of dozens of players on the 2009 team who were not directly involved in the scandals in question.

Given that the penalties from the investigation were largely due to Tech's poor response to the inspections, it is necessary in the future for Tech to proactively seek external assistance if available staff appears unprepared. While indications are that mistakes by Tech's inexperienced general counsel were at the root of the trouble, Radakovich and other administrators must take responsibility and back up their vows that Tech will enact measures to ensure that any future situations are handled properly.

*The Consensus Opinion reflects the majority opinion of the Editorial Board of the Technique, but not necessarily the opinions of individual editors.*

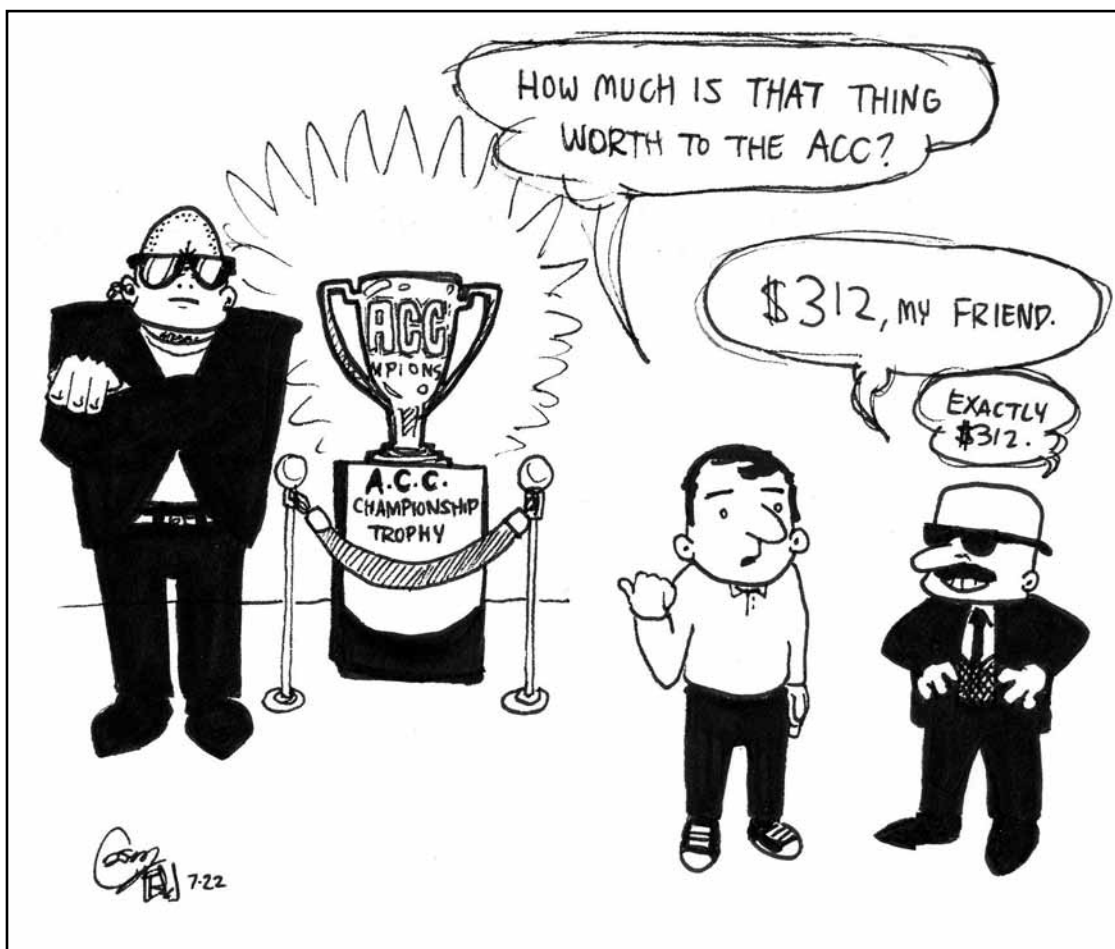
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## EDITORIAL CARTOON BY CASEY TISDEL



# Google+ establishes new social media standards

By John Davis  
*The Crimson White*

(UWire) — Facebook and I have fallen into a “married with children” type relationship. We’ve been at it for so long and invested so much time into one another that, despite any real flaws, we’re pretty much content.

Privacy concerns aside, Facebook performs all the necessary functions I could ever want, and even some useful ones that I didn’t know I would use until they were presented to me.

It’s a cloud of its own, where all my pictures and even my thoughts are saved. All my friends are on Facebook, as is most of my extended family — for better or worse.

Still, in Internet years, Facebook continues to grow longer in the tooth with each passing year, and I suppose it was inevitable that at some point a legitimate challenger would appear in the guise of colorful letters and a slick, minimalist interface. Just as Xanga and LiveJournal gave way to MySpace, and MySpace eventually gave way to Facebook, it’s time for social media to reach its logical conclusion: Google+.

At first glance, it’s easy to brush off Google+ as nothing but a Facebook clone with an impressive brand name. After all, there is a “Friends” list of sorts, though those people are listed as “in your circles.” The stream looks very familiar, and you can share thoughts and videos and pictures and anything else your heart desires. So why switch?

A friend put it into perspective best: “In...the space of a day, Google+ has made me feel like one of those ape people at the beginning of 2001: A Space Odyssey. If Google+ is fire and civilization, everything I have been using feels like hitting rocks with other rocks.”

That’s a pretty powerful thought considering the ubiquity of Facebook.

There are a few key features that separate Google+ from Facebook and even Twitter, for that matter. Chief among them is the concept of “circles.”

Essentially, it works the same way your social circles work in real life: when you befriend someone, you place them into a circle, or a type of category.

So if you have inside jokes with your college friends that your high school friends won’t get, simply specify that your post be only seen by your “College Friends” circle. Alternatively, if you’re the type of person who likes to get drunk and swear a lot on Facebook, Google+ can make sure your parents never see it.

Another key feature specific to the mobile app (an app that is Android-only at the moment) is the Huddle. The Huddle is basically a text message chat room: choose a circle, send a message and everyone in the circle gets the message. When one person replies, every-

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[letters@nike.net](mailto:letters@nike.net)

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one gets that message as well, negating the need to relay one person’s text to five other people.

Google+ is, for all intents and purposes, the perfect combination of Facebook and Twitter.

It takes the Twitter route when it comes to making connections, i.e. you can add a person to a circle without that person doing the same.

Thus, you can create a circle for news outlets and comedians, and much like a Twitter list, you can filter your Stream to show only posts from a specific circle. But whereas Twitter only allows for 140 characters, Google+ lets you share as much as you’d like and even edit a post after it’s already been posted.

Beyond all the cute new features, beyond the Sparks and Hangouts, beyond the appeal of the new and exciting, there is one crucial piece of information, one critical little tidbit that should send social media sites running and users flocking to Google+: Google already makes money.

Yes, I know Facebook technically does too, but hear me out. In the beginning, Facebook didn’t make money. There was no business plan, and outside of advertising dollars, there was no revenue. Even today, Facebook has a theoretical value (though they’re filing for an IPO in the near future).

And in the beginning, Facebook had a clean interface devoid of clutter from applications. To help bring in money, Facebook created things like the Marketplace and allowed for all those little games that live off micro transactions—all things that took away from the Facebook experience should you choose not to participate in Farmville.

With Google+, there is no incentive to be anything other than just another Google application. When you sign up for Google+, there’s even a button you can click to opt out of having your information shared with non-Google websites (which should be an opt-in feature, but we can’t all be perfect).

The scary part is Google+ hasn’t actually gone live yet. There are only a handful of us signed up, though check Facebook for friends soliciting invitations. Join me because Google+ is like Facebook, but it’s not Facebook.



# Grade inflations discredit earned merits

An A and a 4.0 GPA mean less today than they did 50 years ago. Many students, high in hubris and low in modesty, wear their high GPAs on their sleeves proudly, while many of their As were given rather than earned.

The relative percentage of As given out has been on the rise in college classrooms for decades. One recent study puts the total percentage of the As throughout the U.S. university system at 43 percent, making it the most doled-out letter of the grading alphabet.

Half a century ago, grades were distributed on a fairer, more centrally balanced scale. As made up 15 percent of grades, while Bs and Cs each accounted for 35 percent of the pie, respectively.

As current students, it would be convenient to conclude that we're smarter than past graduates. Unfortunately, that's no more than wishful thinking according to the study and in-class evidence.

Everyone has sat in at least one class when a professor has asked a question based on prerequisite material, expecting the entire class to recite the answer as easily as the Pledge of Allegiance, only to find a crowded room of furrowed brows and uncomfortable silence.

This is a byproduct of grade inflation and the fact that we as students are spending less



**"Not only are they cheapening the Tech degree, they're cheapening the meaning of a high GPA at Tech."**

**Matt Schrichte**  
Advertising Manager

and less time studying and completing assignments.

The whole situation is a bit of a Catch-22. Students' (and their parents') wallets are fortunate for the curve, especially with the HOPE Scholarship creating a sort of artificial grading floor that many students can't go under. Surely, it and similar scholarships have had some hand in the recent inflation rates.

The intellectual integrity of Tech and other four-year institutions is in a precarious state and suffering. Students are used to the higher grades, even if they aren't always earned. And teachers are getting used to giving students the grades they want, not the ones they deserve.

I know of multiple students who have broken down into tears in front of teachers for a letter grade adjustment, convincing professors that there is some family emergency or medical crisis when there isn't—and then gloating about it afterwards with glar-

ing smiles as if they pulled off some sort of magic trick.

These professors and students are doing a disservice to the part of the student body who accept what they have earned, As or Fs. Not only are they cheapening the Tech degree, they're cheapening the meaning of a high GPA at Tech.

It's hard to blame the professors either. They have huge incentives to pad their students' grades. Good reviews can in turn lead to faster promotions and better pay.

The authors of the study call the overall effect of higher grades "consumer-based," by which professors allot higher grades to improve their students' customer experiences. The effect is clearly more prevalent at private universities, but is also present in public institutions like Tech.

But while paying to go to school does make students consumers, grades aren't and shouldn't be a negotiation. They are a measurement of not

only knowledge, but student character. Even a bad grade says something about a student.

A real grade shows the true character of its earner. An inflated one, like most things filled with hot air, will either pop or deflate given enough time in the real world.

Interestingly enough, the inflation effect is severely restricted or even nonexistent at non-selective public schools (those with rejection rates of about 15 percent or less and GPAs at or below 2.8) and community colleges.

It's hard to imagine the trend reversing, or even slowing down, as long as it persists at other schools.

It seems that Tech, a school traditionally known for its challenging grading curves, is only following the paths of its peer institutions in an effort to recruit the best students. All students should get second opportunities, but not free passes.

As the study shows, Tech is hardly the worst inflation offender. And not all of its academic shifts have been for the worse. After all, drown-proofing no longer exists. So while we can't hold our grades (after adjusted for inflation) over their heads, at least we don't have to worry about getting an F in Drown-proofing, or what Tech students used to call "Drowning 101."

# Bittersweet sensations follow *Potter* finale

After seven earlier films and novels reaching back over a decade, the *Harry Potter* saga came to a solid and satisfying conclusion this month in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2*.

As the series closes, however, I can't help but find a little discouragement in the fact that there will be no more *Harry Potter*.

True, there's Pottermore, if you're into that sort of thing. I feel that deep down, there has always been a part of me either waiting for the next of the Rowling novels or the next film experience since the first days of third grade. This feeling, however, is now being silenced forever.

The final movie conjures up enough awe and solemnity to serve as an appropriate finale, and has a stark contrast to the innocence within the first novel, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, read all those magical years ago.

As I was watching the final film, I couldn't help but feel a sense of melancholy achievement: a bittersweet goodbye to a large part of my childhood.

Harry, Hermione and Ron are grown up now, and Harry has even grown the facial stubble required of all epic heroes. The time has come for him to face Lord Voldemort in a final showdown, not unlike a final duel from Luke Skywalker and his dastardly father Darth Vader.



**"There has always been a part of me either waiting for the next of the Rowling novels or the next film experience..."**

**Will Folsom**  
Photo Editor

The conflict within *Part 2* is staged in a series of special effects sequences containing power and conviction that would surely make the early Pixar go absolutely bonkers.

Despite my deep longing to do so, I refuse to reveal a single crucial detail about the story itself, lest I offend the potential legions of Potter fans that are reading this article.

Besides, as far as you know, innocent moviegoer, the film may be completely different. Maybe in a bizarre twist Harry dies by Hagrid's hand, Voldemort is triumphant and evil reigns for eternity.

Don't let my long-winded rose-colored pretenses throw you off. I have had plenty of other childhood franchises that could make me go weak in the knees during a powerful conclusion.

Anything pertaining to *Zelda*, *Half Life*, *Toy Story* or even *Star Wars* has potential to set my heart ablaze with passionate nostalgia, and make my eyes start fiercely pouring with large, gushing tears.

I feel that these and other stories have personally affected my growing up, and that honestly my life would not be the same without them.

Perhaps this is why I analyze the ending of *Harry Potter* so deeply. Of the franchises that have had the most profound effects, I feel that it is the longest running and perhaps most deeply inspiring.

But let's be honest here, you'll miss the *Harry Potter* franchise, too.

Whether or not your pastor, overly protective parents or elementary school principal would let you read the *Harry Potter* books is none of my concern; as long as you were born on this side of the Milky Way, chances are you've been hearing about *Harry Potter* for quite some time now.

You've been touched by some element of the novels; you've heard that the author used to be homeless; you've seen pictures of Emma Watson you probably shouldn't have. Whatever the case may be, our society has had an obsession

with the franchise. And hopefully, you were allowed to read them. Even if you didn't read the novels, hopefully it was up to your own personal preference, and you stood firmly against the novels for good reason.

As for those who read the novels with such fervor as me, let this humble opinions essay be a jaded reminder to you that a certain flame has been extinguished. We can no longer look forward to more from "The Boy Who Lived" and his posse.

We must forevermore re-read the broken-spined remnants from a time long ago, and will never be able to forget what actually comes at the end of book six, despite all our efforts. The series will never be new to us again, and Harry will never feel as magical as he did on the first read through.

As we move forward into a potentially less magical age, one without Hogwarts or Space Shuttles, remember the time you spent invested in *Harry Potter* fondly.

Let it not be a wasted time; everyone could stand to learn a few things from the series, and the good versus evil debate is one that is older than the solar system itself and will likely never be solved.

As J.K. Rowling herself said, "It does not do well to dwell upon dreams for so long that we fail to realize them as we live."

# BUZZ

## Around Campus

### What did you think of the Women's World Cup?



**Abhishek Shroff**  
Second-year CS

**"The games have heart and are fun to watch."**



**Nicholas Robson**  
Third-year CmpE

**"It doesn't matter to me."**



**Rob Agocs**  
Second-year ME

**"Everyone's a winner, it doesn't really matter."**



**Courtney Gibbs**  
Second-year INTA

**"I didn't know what teams to watch."**

Photos by Will Folsom / Student Publications



## OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT<sup>-</sup> or <sup>-</sup>NOT**Campanile waterpark**

After years of dutifully performing the functions of a sundial, the Campanile fountain has finally started running once again. Students can now frolic in watery delight after long stressful weeks of test and projects. The stream of life across the middle of campus, gives the campus a much more lively appearance, not to mention a new attraction for eating lunch or taking naps.

**Library reforms**

It would seem perfectly counter-intuitive for the reconstruction the Library West Commons to take place during the end of the summer semester when finals and projects are due. Students not only have to walk into the library and be reminded by the empty land where the computers used to be, but also have to forcibly relocated to the constricting East Commons for work.

**Buzz Lightyear**

Alumna Sandra Magnus proudly served as a mission specialist on the final launch of the Space Shuttle Atlantis on July 8. Magnus' involvement in this historic event is symbolic of Tech's long-standing influence within NASA programs. Indeed, this is far from Tech's last involvement as the Institute will continue to be involved in the push toward the final frontier.

**Tough break**

Tennis standouts Kevin King and Guillermo Gomez both fell in the first round of the Atlanta Tennis Championships this past weekend. While Gomez fell in straight sets, King won the first set and was actually serving up 5-4 in the second set for the win. However, a break by opponent Nicolas Massu propelled him to win the next two sets and prevent the upset by King.

# Tech students should actively seek participation in government roles

I have spent the past two months in Washington, D.C., feeling like something was missing from the city. I only realized what was missing when I told one of my co-workers about an energy bar my friends and I use for hiking, which is so effective that we call it "Lembas bread." She stared back at me, blankly, not getting the reference.

D.C. suffers from an acute lack of nerds. That's not to say that we don't exist in Washington. I virtually rounded up as many people from Tech as I could find to figure out why we had collectively come here.

Some of us came to pursue an interest in politics, while others found straight engineering jobs. All of us, engineers and engineers-at-heart, wanted to get right to the center of organizations which weigh in on the policies that affect us all.

"I was able to not only see members of Congress in action, but I was able to talk to them and question them on issues like the debt ceiling, legislative strategy, the political party system and more," said Hunter Hammond, a Hill intern and third-year MGT major.

Ronnie Foreman, a second-year AE major, wanted an experience with the media industry.

"I'm interning with CNN, largely studying the intersection between science and journalism and the extent to which news coverage impacts what people care about and ultimately how they vote," Foreman said.

It's time for Washington and other centers of government to get more people like Foreman, Hammond and the rest of the students



"Our world is defined by science and technology — it only makes sense that our leaders have solid backgrounds in those fields."

**Mike Donohue**

Columnist

from Tech spending the summer in D.C. who want to jump into the thick of the policy arena. Our world is defined by science and technology—thus it only makes sense that our leaders have solid backgrounds in those fields and be able to think in the ways that only Tech can make them think.

Amira Choueiki, a fifth-year EIA major, shares the sentiment.

"Working in D.C. at a think tank, my boss told me that he was sick of people that came to D.C. and didn't know how to problem solve—with today's problems we need people that aren't afraid of the technical world and working with those people collaboratively," Choueiki said.

Thankfully, the Institute has begun enacting programs that will give Tech students the tools and inspiration necessary for them to begin entering this crazy world of politics and policy. The Office of Government and Community Relations' new scholarship funding otherwise unpaid internships is the perfect first step.

Now it's up to other offices and schools at Tech to follow their lead. The Ivan Allen College should actively encourage both its students and students from the other colleges to spend a summer in D.C. and provide them with the connections and resources to suc-

ceed. The administration should make sure its vision of being the definitive technological research university of the 21st century includes a diverse stable of alumni in governments across the nation who understand the work that the Institute does.

Most importantly, it's time for more of the student body to passionately strive to become leaders in government. Those who are interested in that path need to take the excitement stoked during our summers abroad and translate them into the beginnings of real political action. They need to make sure the efforts they begin this Aug. last throughout the year and beyond by building robust organizations and initiatives.

"Tech makes us unafraid," Choueiki said about Tech students' place in D.C. "We're excited by the complex issues we face today, we're used to working with different types of people, we know how to get our hands dirty and we know how to work hard."

As we return to Atlanta for the fall, those of us interested in policy and politics have a chance to help awesome people do awesome things through sound policy and passionate advocacy. Immediately and confidently, we have no choice but to seize that chance and begin changing the world.



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i know it was just a dream, but i wanted to stay there... with her slivers >>> tweets  
Gamestop in Tech Square? AND it's going to take Buzzcard? Bye bye, Buzzcard money.

Do you think its possible to do a real barrel roll?

I was never this annoying

haha I just saw a black Scottish man

Where is Uniclyce dude?

LONG LIVE SKILES...

This girl needs to get off me... I know at Tech it unheard of but trust me

MAC MILLER RADIO ON PANDORA

Mr.Saxabeat... where are you?

I just got addicted to Reddit

Remember when campus actually was campus...I still remember Food or Sex?

yea that is hard

unless she is ugly

but maybe the ass is worth it?

\*crosses arms and really thinks

TECH REC IS AWESOME!

I think everyone is more excited about Gamestop than the new pub

Reporter: GTRI has yet to discover a cure for TBS... They have yet to gain any leads.

Random person: OHHH so that's what they are working on!

woody's has been taken over by the national puppetry festival and faset,

i never thought i would miss teach for america

105 freaking degrees.... I sat thru traffic with no A/C and my class is over by the time i get there

What would you do for a Klondike bar?

Dining Options my ass.

dear sliver editor, please print this...because you're awesome :D

it's not my trick. it's my illusion.

...and I call forks, "food rakes."