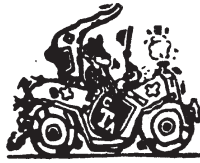


# OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, September 9, 2005



"The South's Liveliest College Newspaper"

## TECHNIQUE

Serving Georgia Tech since 1911

### Quote of the week:

"There is always some madness in love.  
But there is also always some reason in  
madness."  
—Friedrich Nietzsche

## OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

### Flagless Building

While the temporary removal of the flags from the Flag Building because of maintenance is understandable and necessary, it should not have passed unannounced and largely unnoticed.

On the part of the administration, the removal of the flags should have been communicated to the students, faculty and staff who refer daily to the building by its flags.

The final decision on the flags should incorporate the input of the Tech community, whether through responses to the change or a lack thereof; the current situation is temporary, and student input is needed.

While some might view the issue of the flags as trivial, the flags are part of everyday campus lingo and make up the identity of the building itself. Furthermore, each flag is a source of pride to the students whose home countries they represent.

A decision to put the flags up, however, must be carefully weighed. To replace the flags would mean a significant monetary investment for our school, but simply putting the flags back up would only delay inevitable problems, as the current flags are sorely in need of repair and are not representative of the current student body.

### Honor Code changes

The recent changes to the Honor Code now allow faculty members to handle honor violations on a more personal basis. They may now address issues by meeting directly with students and involving the Office of Student Integrity (OSI) in a more indirect capacity. This change reflects the willingness of the OSI to make the Honor Code friendlier to students.

Now both faculty and students have greater options in dealing with honor violations, so that they can find a situation that will be more comfortable for them in an extremely uncomfortable process.

While many faculty and students may still prefer to default to OSI than deal with the possibility of uncomfortable confrontations, those who do decide to take the new route will be able to cut through much of the red tape and waiting which are common in Honor Code violation hearings.

The new policy will also encourage greater interaction between faculty and students dealing with violations, minimizing the potential of misunderstandings and animosity.

Consequently, the changes do add a greater level of complexity to the honor system that could potentially be confusing. We recommend that all students familiarize themselves with the Honor Code and its policies. "I didn't know," is still not a good excuse for an honor violation.

*Consensus editorials reflect the majority opinion of the Editorial Board of the Technique, but not necessarily the opinions of individual editors.*

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By Erin Gatlin / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

### Engage in active communication

Aristotle believed that nothing in nature exists by accident. From this he reasoned that humans could only have the "faculty of language" because they are meant to interact and be "political animals." An essential part of being human is being part of a community that, get this, "communicates."

Using this rationale it seems an easy conclusion that as a community Tech necessitates open communication between students and instructors. However, often this seemingly simple concept is ineffectual in practice. Students and faculty must recognize the problem and their responsibilities if the lines of communication are to improve, or in the worst cases be opened for the first time.

My own experience interacting with professors at Tech has been a mixed bag. I started off my freshman year knowing several professors because of a summer research program. It was a great experience interacting with professors outside of a classroom setting. I had a chance to learn what they study and for them to understand my interests.

Once fall classes started however, limited time and increased pressure forced more constricted relations.

Limited time and an abundance of work are the two biggest factors that affect faculty-student relationships, except in those cases where the student or faculty member is apathetic to begin with.

In a utopia, the Institute would have enough professors so that no one was overloaded between research and teaching, and students would have enough time to intellectually pursue interests related to a class and get the required coursework finished. But in the real world the clock reamins a factor that will continue to exist.

Faculty members need to be conscious of making time to correspond with students, as it is incredibly ben-



"Students should not wait to reach out to instructors only when an emergency or situation dictates it."

**Amanda Dugan**  
News Editor

eficial to building this community of scholars.

In terms of combating apathy, responsible students must recognize that they have to stay engaged in the course material in order to add to the intellectual conversation that is learning. Responsible instructors must be responsive to students' requests for information beyond what is covered in lecture notes, that is too often time robotically distributed throughout large lecture classes.

Even given the restraints that exist, there are professors who set the standard when it comes to stretching students further beyond a standard curriculum.

A current professor's syllabus includes the comment to visit his office hours early and often, what a great way to reach out to students and encourage frankness.

I asked another professor this semester to talk about questions the day's lecture had brought up and ended up having the most stimulating talk on politics as they exist in the sciences. I don't expect every professor to be available all the time, but they must make themselves accessible some of the time.

Students should not wait to reach out to instructors only when an emergency or situation dictates it.

My first semester I was good about meeting with my professors; however, my second semester I was so busy that I didn't have conversations with all of my professors until my grandmother passed away. They

were all very helpful and open in what was a difficult time, but it forced me to realize that the time to knock on a professor's door is not when you need to ask a favor or explain an absence.

A recent addition to how honor code violations can be handled is encouraging open communication in the worst of circumstances. It is never a good thing when a professor suspects a student of cheating; however, creating an even playing field where a faculty member can discuss their suspicions directly with a student is a step in the right direction.

By introducing this option, Tech is working towards an environment where neither the student nor the instructor feels that they are unable to talk to each other about their concerns.

No system of communication is perfect; there are missed meanings, missed undertones and missed opportunities that happen no matter how great the relationship behind a conversation.

However, a great thing about relationships is that they are dynamic; just because a relationship has existed one way for so long does not mean it is static.

If students and faculty acknowledge both their mutual limitation of time and their desire to learn beyond what is already presented, they can work to open the floodgates of communication and accessibility on campus.



# Honor Code needs clarification on Word

All freshmen are bound to face the following situation: it's the day before your first math test and you have no idea what to expect or how to prepare. You turn to an upper-classman for advice and he says, "Just use Word."

What is Word? At Tech, the term refers to exams, quizzes and coursework from previous years. The most available type of Word on campus is old exam material. To some students, like members of organizations that distribute Word, it is not only a means of attracting members but also a time-honored tradition. For others, Word clearly exemplifies a cheating behavior that compromises fairness.

While students often do obtain Word legitimately, its distribution engenders difficult ethical and policy issues. The current policy is not clear enough to minimize ethical gray areas. It gives suggestions rather than requirements, leaving professors with the room to be unclear.

Take the student whose professor has said nothing about Word. He or she may feel that using Word is equivalent to cheating (as it usually is in high school,) but knows for sure that others will be using old tests to prepare. Not only does this make the class unfair, but it also could provoke him to take an action against his own code of ethics.



"Banning the use of Word is not the best option, but the policy should be rewritten."

**Nikhil Joshi**  
Assistant News Editor

Consider the situation in which the teacher allows Word, but makes no mention of it on the syllabus and does not provide old or practice exams. Again, the student must face the truth that students who use old exams will unjustly affect the grade distribution. An equally bad outcome is when the student wants but cannot find old exams.

In a larger sense, these situations compromise the integrity of the institution. The policy should be rewritten, with stronger language, in order to force professors to be clear beyond any shade of doubt.

This is what the Honor Code attempts to do, but it falls short. Despite its preciseness in other areas, the code leaves a considerable amount of interpretation up to the professor concerning Word. Section 4 of Article II of the Honor Code says, "Faculty members are expected to create an environment in which honesty flourishes."

Labeled "Faculty Responsibilities," Section 4 goes on to list several recommendations to instructors: "Make known... as specifically as possible what constitutes appropriate academic conduct as well as what comprises academic misconduct. This includes but is not limited to the use of previously submitted work, collaborative work on homework, etc."

Other relevant points include "Provide copies of old exams to the Georgia Tech library for students to review," and "Avoid the re-use of exams." The section also states that professors should include a paragraph regarding the Honor Code in their syllabus.

The problem lies in the weakness of the message; the points mentioned in the Honor Code are "expectations" rather than strict requirements. In addition to the Honor Code, the Honor Advisory Council wrote a bulletin addressed to faculty directing teachers to "substantially reduce

the 'gray areas' in regards to academic misconduct for every assignment, test, quiz, etc."

The bulletin urged instructors to inform students of the appropriateness of Word in their classes, stating, "The main reason why students use these materials is that in many courses professors do not change their coursework from semester to semester. The best way to deal with this problem is to alter your tests."

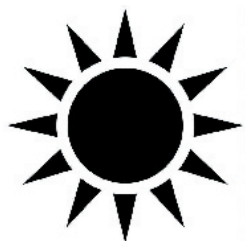
Again, although this may be good advice, professors are not required to follow it. Some chose simply to avoid the issue of Word. Students are then left to wonder if it is legal to use Word, why is there no mention of it on the syllabus? Is it a discouraged but legal activity, or is it encouraged?

In order to avoid these questions, the Honor Code should require teachers to post a clear policy on Word in their syllabi. It should also require teachers to provide students with old and/or practice exams if they expressly permit the use of Word in their classes. In short, the Honor Code should force teachers to be clear. This is the only way to ensure certainty and fairness.

Banning the use of Word is not the best option, but the policy should be rewritten, with stronger language, in order to force professors to be clear beyond any shade of doubt.

## OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

### HOT- or -NOT



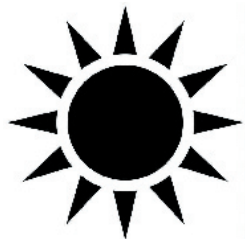
#### Taming the Tigers

The Jackets once again started the year with a Tiger trouncing. Tech's defense was stifling, Calvin Johnson displayed his regular acrobatics early on, and Reggie Ball turned in a solid performance to start the season. P.J. Daniels rushed for over 100 yards, showing no signs of last year's nagging injuries. Tech plays North Carolina at home at 3:30 p.m. tomorrow.



#### Media bungles

The media really dropped the ball Wednesday when they reported that Tech was closing the Coliseum to refugees due to scheduling conflicts. We aren't seeking glory and credit for the aid we've been providing hurricane victims, but we don't deserve blame, especially not wrongly-placed blame. Next time the media should check their facts before making accusations.



#### Nerdfest '05

Tech nerds reveled at the annual Dragon\*Con. True Destiny brought Dragon\*Con, Atlanta and Labor Day weekend together so that students could pull away from their schoolwork and make it out to enjoy the many ornate costumes and the parade down Peachtree. Tech may be a Nerd Nirvana after all.



#### Bye bye Boyd

The Tech community will sorely miss Dean Boyd's friendly presence when she leaves us later this month. A leader of the community for seven years, Dean Boyd has made her mark on campus and in our hearts. Despite the fact that she will be heading off to UGA, we wish her the best of luck in the future.

## YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Race taints relief efforts

Though there was no water, no food and no electricity in New Orleans after the hurricane, America would rather cross an ocean to restore order than make a short drive to one of our favorite party towns.

Several experts say that the trapped citizens could survive for three days without the bare essentials they lacked, yet in last Friday's *AJC* (four days after the tragedy), a headline read "Helpers sit, Wait to Deploy."

We can only speculate about why these victims were not attended to in a timely manner, but in an era of buzzwords like

"homeland security," it bothers me that my email and book list can be perused, but reports from the Army Corps of Engineers and hurricane simulations that told us that this very event could happen at any time are overlooked.

Now many cringe at implications of racial motivation, yet the *AJC* specifies that New Orleans officials knew full well that in the event of a large hurricane, 200,000 citizens would not be able to evacuate, but they decided that these people could not be accommodated ("No plan ever made to

"It bothers me that my email and book list can be perused, but reports...that told us that this very event could happen at any time are overlooked."

See Letter, page 10

#### Letter Submission Policy

The *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](mailto:editor@technique.gatech.edu) or hand-delivered to room 137 of the Student Services Building. Letters should be addressed to Kyle Thomason, 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 the *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.

#### Advertising Information

Information and rate cards can be found online at [www.nique.net](http://www.nique.net). The deadline for reserving ad space and submitting ad copy is noon on Friday, one week prior to publication. For rate information, call our offices at (404) 894-2830, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Advertising space cannot be reserved over the phone. The *Technique* office is located in room 137 of the Student Services Building, 353 Ferst Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30332-0290. Questions regarding advertising billing should be directed to Grant Schissler at (404) 894-9187, or Rose Mary Wells at (404) 894-2830.

#### Coverage Requests

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](mailto:editor@technique.gatech.edu).

## BUZZ

### Around the Campus

#### Where would you like to study abroad?



**Christin Leroy**  
Third-year ID

"Spain."



**Sidney Hale**  
Senior ECE

"Iceland."



**Robert Poppell**  
First-year ARCH

"Africa."



**Sabrina Walczak**  
Senior IE

"Venezuela."

Photos by Ben Keyserling

## Letter

from page 9

help New Orleans' most vulnerable" on 9/1/05.) It just so happens that the vast majority of the aforementioned group are poor blacks.

So while we were declared to be 100 percent humane decades ago, we now find out that our citizenship is still proportional to our gross income.

We were tagged looters and anarchists, and it bothers me that a desperate minority is blasted across airwaves to represent me and my fellow black students and citizens, just as we are named BOLO on various bulletin boards across campus.

It is ironic that we enjoyed the drama of MTV's *The Real World* as it was taped in a mansion that is shouting distance from the drama of the real world.

New Orleans is unique in that the poorest projects share the blocks with the biggest mansions, thus reminding the disadvantaged of how little they are considered.

Yet we wonder what drives this madness when they reach for their piece of the "American dream" by seizing the opportunity that rose from the chaos.

I just hope that we will turn our ears to the birthplace of jazz when she cries the blues. But then again, no one will believe that there is an issue unless I tell them in my best Dave Chappelle voice.

Luqman Abdur-Rahman  
President Emeritus, African American Student Union  
gtg109m@mail.gatech.edu

# Find sense of self in aftermath of devastation

*The following column marks the beginning of a new series for the Technique.*

*Voice of the Community will provide a forum for all members of Tech—students, faculty and staff—to bring forth their opinions on thought-provoking issues that affect us all.*

*Different from a letter to the editor, the purpose of the column is not to respond to the paper itself, but to address the campus as a whole, provide insight, exchange ideas and bring vital concerns to the forefront.*

With so many depressing events occurring simultaneously around the world, sadly to say, I'm having trouble deciding which headline to be most depressed about. How do I know which humanitarian causes deserve more than a brief cessation from daily activity?

This inundation of bad news is causing us all to live with a certain level of desensitization, which can produce apathy. "AIDS Epidemic Rages in Africa." "Innocent Lives Lost at the Cost of Democracy in the Middle East." "Suicide Bomber Kills Bus Load." Click! Next channel, please.

We turn off the latest televised tragedy and go out with friends just as we would leave a disaster movie and go out to dinner.

Now the city of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast are broadcasting a message that is not as easily turned off and forgotten: for those living in shelters of complacency—wake up!



"I challenge you to focus on at least one cause, ranging from local to international charity, and break out of your closed cycle."

**Brian Srikanthana**  
Second-year BME

These people are remarkably like us; they could be in fact, our families and friends—our world.

My media—computers, newspapers, and TVs—tell me a story for which I still await the credits to roll.

But they don't. Instead, more scenes flow from places not far away. It's hard to tune out and become lost in ourselves as we may customarily do.

America breeds an equality that has strong potential to erode any appearance of individuality. We work hard and for what? To buy our BMWs, mini mansions, Birkenstocks and Nike Shocks. "Why?" you ask.

Because the TV said so. Because I want my BMW, too. Because we're fitting in with mainstream culture.

America's middle class is being branded by our franchises and cable TVs, none of which should have anything to do with who we really

are. Yet our focus on these superficial elements isolates us from the world beyond and from ourselves.

Too many of us live by the dictates of pop culture (MTV/BET/CMT) and the influence of mass media. Too few ask, "Is MTV portraying my culture, or am I becoming MTV's culture?"

Ever heard the quotation, "If you win the rat-race, you're still a rat"? This is my challenge: embrace middle-class America while reclaiming your self-identity.

Let me explain. Generally speaking, we behave as we were raised to: if you went to church, synagogue, temple or mosque, you did so because your parents did; you ate your mother's cooking not necessarily because it was your favorite food, but rather because that's what was for dinner.

Admittedly, your parents' significantly affected your lifestyle.

For most, though, despite the jocular threats of becoming replicas

of our parents, we are at least by some minimal degree singular.

As time goes by, many of us may gain an appreciation or preference for foods that were not offered on Momma's dinner table and this is because we breached what was known, whether that was an accident or on purpose.

We are more than our immediate environments. Unfortunately, too few actively break out of their immediate circles of influence to analyze why they are the way they are.

Katrina with all her devastation reminds us that not all is well with the world and, yes, life and needs do exist outside our circle of friends, social events, and plans.

People like us are suffering terribly, and we identify with them. Did we identify less with tsunami victims several months ago?

Do we remember that over 220,000 died in that tsunami?

I challenge you to focus on at least one cause, ranging from local to international charity, and break out of your closed cycle. Actively seek to define yourself and your singular values.

Let Katrina remind us that our sense of individuality and our belief in what constitutes fullness of life greatly depend upon our willingness to wake up and actively interact with the world at large.

*If you are interested in writing a Voice of the Community, contact opinions@technique.gatech.edu.*