

OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, July 14, 2000

OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

Graduate health care

Health insurance. As undergrads, we don't think about it very much because we're covered by our parents' insurance. For graduate students, though, health insurance is a very real concern.

Just a short while ago, grad students received the option of purchasing health insurance from the Health Center. Now they want Tech to help subsidize their insurance costs. Having chosen to forgo the working world in favor of continuing their education, grad students have decided the opportunity cost of going to school is lower than that of going to work. That doesn't mean they shouldn't be entitled to some help with their health insurance, though.

There are limits to how much Tech can and should do, though. Paying for all of the insurance will create too large of a financial burden for the institute. And while subsidizing health insurance for the graduate student is a good idea, subsidizing health insurance for the student's family may be outside of Tech's means.

Subsidizing part of the cost of graduate health insurance is a smart move on Tech's part as it may be the pivotal factor in a student's decision to come here for graduate school. We want to be competitive with the other top grad schools in the country, so why not add a little incentive to encourage students to come to Tech?

Housing move-out

It seems like every month there is a new problem with Housing. July is no different as students are beginning to realize how inconvenient this summer's move-out schedule is.

Housing made the mistake of scheduling conference housing until August 12 before they had decided when Fall Semester would start and before they had decided when students would be able to move into their fall assignments. This means that students cannot move straight into their fall housing from summer housing unless they are on campus on August 14, which is right in the middle of break.

Most students will not be on campus over the break, which

means they must move out of their summer housing before they leave. This is a problem for students who do not live nearby and have nowhere to store their belongings.

Housing made a scheduling mistake, and in the future they need to plan ahead. They should make sure to set student housing schedules before allowing conferences to book on-campus housing.

The views on these pages are our opinions. If you don't agree with them, fine. Write us a letter. We would like to hear what you think. We will probably even print it in the paper. You might like that. So write us.

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

Course critiques

Course critique for regular summer classes will run from July 17 until July 28. We encourage you to fill them out at www.coursesurvey.gatech.edu/student_login.cfm. Professors really do take your suggestions into consideration!

YOUR VIEWS Letters to the Editor

Campus security definitely an issue for Tech students

This letter is in response to Sean Mendis, who wrote in a previous issue that campus safety is not an issue. I personally wonder if he even lives near or around this hellhole part of Atlanta, or if he even lives on this campus.

I have been here since the summer of 1995, and I can tell you, that security IS an issue here at Tech. Mr. Mendis has obviously never dealt with the "keystone cops," better known as the GTPD. These people are some of the sorriest, saddest excuses for law enforcement that have ever worn the shield. The various articles over the past 18 months about their response system only help to reinforce this belief.

Mr. Mendis tries to quote some numbers to make the GTPD look good. Mr. Mendis seems to be a spokesman for these people. In all fairness, they probably do meet some minimum requirement, but so does government cheese.

Maybe I'm just spoiled, but I came from a town just outside of

Tampa, FL and we had fewer police patrolling a larger area and yet we had fewer crimes.

I wonder why it is that people think that they're getting good security when there isn't a day that goes by when there is not a major theft or other crime reported on our campus. Mr. Mendis tries to compare our crime rate with those of large campuses like UCLA, but fails to mention that they have nearly FOUR times our student populations.

The problem is not that we have less crime, it is that fewer people will report them because most people know that the response by the police will be inadequate, if they bother to do anything at all.

Ryan Fernandez
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Quote of the week:

"If you don't like your job, you don't strike. You just go in everyday and do it really half-assed. That's the American Way." — Homer Simpson

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Editorial Art Spoofing 'Survivor'



Housing continues to frustrate students with policies

Housing has screwed me—again. Yes, I know, it's hard to believe, but it's true. First there was a computer glitch, now there's a scheduling mistake. When summer housing got messed up, I thought, "At least the fall housing process went smoothly." That's what I thought.

For the upcoming school year, my three friends and I are living in Center Street. When we were signing up for summer housing, the staff at the housing office—several different people—told us that we had priority for our fall space if the students living there in spring did not stay. If they did stay, we had priority for another room in Center Street. However, two of us ended up in Center Street (not in our fall space though) and the other two got stuck in Howell. How did that happen?

I later learned that the housing office was using a new computer program to assign rooms and roommates. It had a glitch. So almost everyone who requested summer housing had an error with their request.

My roommates and I were upset, but we figured there was nothing we could do about it because so many people were affected by the glitch. We accepted the fact that we couldn't live together and looked forward to the fall when we would be together.

And we are still living together in the fall. But moving in is now a major problem.

As you probably know, many of the on-campus housing buildings not inhabited by students during the summer are used for conferences. Apparently, the housing office scheduled conferences for the buildings up until August 12. But the

"Housing has caused me to dread the semester break and my mind to fill with worries rather than relaxing thoughts."

Julia Trapold
Opinions Editor



summer semester ends August 4. So what are returning students supposed to do?

Usually, as in the transition from Spring Semester to Summer Semester, returning students move out the last day of the term or the day after, and may move into their new housing the same day. This results in students living in their new housing over break. For the transition from summer to fall housing, returning students who remain on campus over the break may switch rooms on August 14—they must be out of their summer rooms by then and cannot move into their fall rooms before then. Students who are not returning to campus housing must be moved out by August 4. Now what about the students who are returning but will not be on campus during the two week break? That's where the problem lies.

Personally, I would like to be home for as long as possible since I rarely get to visit my family and friends back in Pittsburgh. I will be home from August 6 to August 16. That means I won't be on campus for the move out date. What am I to do?

Well, I talked to housing. Several times. I must move out completely by August 14, which means I have to move out before I go home. When I return to campus, I may

move in as long as it is past August 14. My problem is I have no idea where to store all my things. I have a futon, a recliner, a computer, bookshelves, and tons of clothes. I can't take that all home with me. Maybe half of it can be stored in my car, but what about the rest? Housing has caused me to dread the semester break and my mind to fill with worries rather than relaxing thoughts.

My main irritation is that I am moving from the zero floor of Center Street South to the third floor of Center Street South. Why should I have to remove all my belongings just to move them back in two weeks later? I politely asked housing if I could at least move my furniture and larger things to my new apartment before going home. They said no. I have two solutions: change my plane ticket so that I return to campus on August 14, wasting several days that I could have spent at home, or get storage off campus. Both solutions will cost me money that I shouldn't have to spend.

I understand why certain buildings that are being used for conferences cannot be opened to students until August 14. But why not the buildings that are being used by students now? If the people in my fall apartment are moving out on August 4, I don't see why I shouldn't be allowed to move in that same

day. If they were staying till August 14 I could move in the same day. The reason I was given for not being able to move in on August 4 was that housing needs to clean the apartment. But if the students in my apartment stayed until August 14 and I moved in the same day, they wouldn't get to clean it. So shouldn't it be up to me if I want my apartment cleaned or not? It'd be much more convenient for me if I could bypass the cleaning and move in earlier. Housing needs to consider the needs of the students. Maybe they don't want to give Center Street and Sixth Street — the two apartment complexes open during the summer — certain exceptions since other buildings can't be open till later, but that's just stupid. I chose to live in Center Street because I knew it would be open in the summer and I thought I wouldn't have to move twice. I was wrong. I am being forced to move out and move back into the same building in the span of two weeks. That's ridiculous.

I don't really have any suggestions for housing. I just think they should be more understanding. And they should let returning students move into their new rooms as soon as the previous residents have left. I don't want to come back to campus early just so I can move upstairs. I also don't want to pack up all my things and pay to store them. Housing made the scheduling mistake — they should try to accommodate us.

Julia has only been at Tech for one year, yet she is already frustrated with numerous campus services. She hopes, but doubts, that her complaining may help her current housing situation.

Harry Potter is magical—can't we just leave it that way?

Like many Atlantans my age, I spent the later part of last Friday night in Buckhead...only I was at a bookstore, waiting for *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, the latest book in J. K. Rowling's immensely popular series about a boy wizard. Like many people of any age, I had been eagerly awaiting the new *Harry Potter* book. I wanted to know what would happen to Harry, Ron, and Hermione as they tolerated Draco Malfoy, avoided Professor Snape, and foiled You-Know-Who's latest plots at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Like much of the world, I have fallen in love with *Harry Potter*.

Much of the world does not include all of the world, though, and like any wildly popular phenomenon, the *Harry Potter* series has its share of detractors. *Harry Potter* is sexist. *Harry Potter* promotes the occult. *Harry Potter* is harmful to children. *Harry Potter* should be banned.

In at least thirteen areas around the country, *Harry Potter* books are considered unacceptable reading material for children, and steps have been taken to ensure children do not gain access to any of the books. School districts have requested that teachers not read *Harry Potter* books to their students. In fact, last October, Elizabeth Mounce, a South Carolina citizen who asked the state's Board of Education to remove Har-

"Remember to pick up both the quote and the picture box when moving this onto your layout. Don't change the picture size!"

Huda Kazi
Acting Editor



ry Potter from the school libraries, was quoted as saying, "The books have a serious tone of death, hate, lack of respect, and sheer evil."

Excuse me? Sheer evil? Did we read the same books?

Yes, the books have some serious moments, and yes, they deal with issues such as death, hate, lack of respect, and evil. So do the Chronicles of Narnia, probably one of the most beloved children's series of all time. Neither series is out to corrupt children. Rather, they present the darker side of life via a story everyone can understand. Draco Malfoy hates all Mudbloods (wizards and witches who have non-magical ancestry) and shows absolutely no respect to his teachers, but nobody who has read the *Harry Potter* series can mistake Malfoy for one of the good guys. The message here seems to be pretty obvious.

Some parents have expressed concerns over the predominance of magic in the books. They are worried their children will begin to believe too

much in the occult instead of religion. Let's give these children the credit they deserve, shall we? Children are bright enough to recognize the books for what they are—imaginative, fantastic stories. I doubt any child over the age of ten is in danger of abandoning his religion in favor of becoming a warlock simply because of *Harry Potter*. And as for children under ten—well, they are always in danger of believing too much in something, and that's where their parents need to be sure to do *their* job about setting the record straight.

Then, of course, there are those who believe *Harry Potter* is chauvanistic. "Harry's fictional realm of magic and wizardry perfectly mirrors the conventional assumption that men do and should run the world," writes Salon.com columnist Christine Schoefer. "From the beginning of the first Potter book, it is boys and men, wizards and sorcerers, who catch our attention by dominating the scenes and determining the action."

Schoefer goes on to account for Hermione, Ginny, and Professor McGonagall, casting each aside as flawed and a poor representative of the female gender. She neglects to mention any other prominent female characters, and conveniently overlooks the equality with which boys and girls are treated at Hogwarts as well as the drawbacks to the boys' characters. Ron and Harry, unlike level-headed Hermione, often neglect to think things through before pushing forward. The result is often Hermione covering for them with Professor McGonagall.

Admittedly, there are paths in *Harry Potter* where the boys have more to do than the girls, but I don't see that as a covert plot on the Rowling's part to downplay the roles of women in society. When the main character in your high fantasy novel is a boy, he will necessarily end up performing many heroic feats—perhaps even more than the girls.

Harry Potter is a story, not a guide for how to live your life. Please don't spoil the pure magic of the books by tearing them apart for cult references and sexism. Certainly don't take them away from children, who for the first time in a while have finally found a *book* they love. And if you haven't read them—do.

Swan songs traditionally close with thank-yous...but mine have been relegated to empty ad space on page 10.

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