

OPINIONS

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TECHNIQUE

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Quote of the week:

"You must be still in the midst of activity, and be vibrantly alive in repose."
—Indira Gandhi

OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

Raising the bar

In a few weeks, the Academic Senate will vote on whether to pass part of the proposed Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). The QEP is part of a two-fold effort to renew Tech's accreditation, while improving students' learning experience. The QEP's goal is to get more undergraduates involved in international education programs and research.

The proposed plan for the international component of the QEP would create a "pathway" that would integrate foreign language classes, study abroad, internships or work experience abroad, and a capstone senior program. The idea is that students would become proficient in a language through on-campus language classes and a study abroad program, and then apply their skills to work in an international business environment.

The international component would prepare students for the workplace in the same way that the Co-op program does. In addition, the experience would make students highly marketable to employers. Unfortunately, without significant curriculum changes, the international component of the QEP would not be easily accessible or attractive to most Tech students. It would be difficult for engineering and science majors to take enough language classes to become proficient due to the lack of free electives and humanities classes in their curriculum. The program would overwhelmingly favor students whose majors already require foreign language study. Another drawback is that currently the School of Modern Languages has trouble keeping up with the demand for its classes. Adding this program would require substantial investment in professors, new course sections, and new approaches to teaching. The benefits of a successful international program tomorrow might justify the investment of scarce funding today, but in order to attract large numbers of students to the program, these factors have to be addressed.

On the other hand, the research component seems to have the potential to appeal to a much larger percentage of the student body. Students sometimes have difficulty finding research projects because a centralized listing of research opportunities is not available. While a few schools openly publicize opportunities, others force students to seek out professors on their own. Many times, students fail to find a project because the professor lacks funding or they are unable to find a project that suits their interests. The QEP should incorporate opportunities for students to perform research outside their major.

As the QEP takes a more concrete form in the coming months, administrators should keep realistic expectations of student demand while working to make the programs easily accessible to all.

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By Erin Gatlin / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

What makes someone a leader?

The other day I was in class and my professor posed an interesting question. "What is leadership?"

Everyone, I am sure, has his or her own answer to this question. My professor began to call on us one by one.

Some people mentioned their parents, others coaches and teachers from high school, and this was all well and good, but the next question my professor asked really got to the heart of the debate.

"Is Osama bin Laden a leader; is Saddam Hussein a leader?"

Everyone, dumbfounded, stopped what he or she was doing. Most of the people that usually talked quietly amongst themselves during class looked up and the professor held the class's undivided attention.

It was at that point that I thought it was really too bad he didn't ask that toward the beginning of class; then I wouldn't have had to listen to some random girl rant about George W. Bush earlier.

This election year a lot has been made of "leadership." The Bush campaign, most notably, made it the motto of their rallies.

The Kerry campaign, on the other hand, relied on the decorated service of its own candidate to prove to the American people his readiness for the White House.

However, while we fight over which leader to carry us through these difficult times, there is a much larger and equally as difficult battle for "leadership" being fought on the other side of the world.

In Iraq, the U.S.-led coalition continues to offer its support and resources for the fledgling Iraqi government while insurgents and terrorists attack relentlessly.

This January, elections will be held in the war-torn country, and for the first time in history the Iraqi people will be given the chance to decide their own "leadership."

Here in America, most would



"Only by consistently questioning and demanding responsibility of our leadership will we ever see a better future."

Edward Tamsberg
Sports Editor

say they have already made up their minds about the success of Iraq and would probably divide almost perfectly on two sides of the aisle.

Those who feel the fledgling government in Iraq is failing sided with the Kerry camp, and those who fight for the success of the coalition sided with the Bush camp.

In many ways the fight in our nation for control of the executive is mirrored in Iraq by the war between the coalition and insurgents.

It is a bitter and harsh war between two well-entrenched opponents with a great deal of principle and ultimately the fate of their people at stake.

The great difference between these two contests is that we, in America, know where we stand. The question is: what do the Iraqi people really consider to be "leadership?"

Many experts fear that the Shiite Muslim majority of Iraq will overwhelm upcoming elections and elect a government unrepresentative of all its people. Then what?

What are the Kurds and the Sunnis going to do if this government becomes a theocracy?

What is going to happen if that new government asks us to leave? Will we?

In his most recent videotaped appearance, bin Laden chose to direct his message toward the American people. He spoke at length about his own reasons for 9/11 and attacking America.

Chief among them was the free-

dom of his people to choose their own way of life.

"We fought with you because we are free, and we don't put up with transgressions," bin Laden said. "We want to reclaim our nation. As you spoil our security, we will do so to you."

Many would discredit any statement made by bin Laden, but what if he is being truthful? I think that if anyone would be able to shed light on the motivation of a terrorist attacker it would probably be Osama bin Laden.

However, whatever you believe, this adds a whole new layer of conflict to an already deadly and complicated war of principles and arms.

Personally, I believe my professor had the best solution. Only by consistently questioning and demanding responsibility of our "leadership" will we ever see a better future.

It is not their place to tell us where to go; it is their place to ask where we want to be and how we want to get there.

Nothing makes me happier than to see the turnout at this year's election, but I certainly don't believe that either candidate, whichever won, could have walked away with any kind of mandate.

It is on us as voters and citizens not to be simply an echo for our candidate if he won or give up if our candidate lost.

It is our responsibility and right to stay involved, be informed and always demand better.

Personal finance education vital, ignored

After three years at Tech, I've learned everything from how to solve calculus problems, conduct physics experiments, to speak Spanish, but not how to become financially independent.

When it comes to building up my credit history, finding the best auto insurance company, doing my own taxes and investing for my future, I don't have all the answers. I don't know that I have any.

Sure, you're probably thinking that if I can learn calculus, how hard would it be to figure out the government tax forms or how to build up credit?

It's not even that I haven't had to make any financial decisions at all either. I've had numerous summer and part-time jobs where I've had to pay taxes since high school. Not a day goes by when I don't use a check card. But all of my knowledge in the area has been limited to what my personal financial advisor (my mom) has taught me, and I know I'm not alone in this predicament.

Many of my friends are just like me and have only a few clues about how many aspects of the "real world" work. Most of us are still on our parents' medical and auto insurance policies and are putting off finding our own until after we get our first job.

Students are faced with having to make decisions each day



"Would it be out of the question to teach students how to become financially responsible?"

Kimberly Rieck
Opinions Editor

that will affect our financial history for the rest of our lives, or as long as the credit card companies keep the records.

It's not an uncommon sight to see credit card companies perched on Skiles Walkway with offers of a free T-shirt in exchange for applying for their credit card. Not surprisingly, you usually see a few take the representatives up on their offers.

But how many of those students actually have a complete grasp and knowledge of what they're signing up for? Do they know their rights as a consumer under the Fair Credit Reporting Act? Or how to fix bad credit with solutions other than those given in cheesy late-night commercials?

Unless their high school taught a home economics course or their parents gave them a lecture on responsible credit card use, many students lack the information they need to make

sound financial decisions.

Personally, I haven't had a single class at Tech that's touched upon any of these topics. Maybe if I were a Management major, my classes would cover these basic issues. But would it be out of the question to teach students in all majors how to become financially responsible?

While it wouldn't be difficult to take the time to meet with a professional financial advisor or do research on our own about the topic, is there any reason why Tech can't offer lessons about these topics for all students?

My suggestion is for Tech to offer a personal finance class to teach students these key concepts.

A perfect place to teach personal finance would be in a seminar class like GT 1000. Having served as a Team Leader for the course and taken it myself, I know it does a great job of teaching freshmen basics about

succeeding academically and socially in college, but when I took it, we only spent a class period on living on a budget.

A one-hour credit course, offered for either a letter grade or for a pass/fail basis would do the job quite well. The course could count as a free elective credit. It could fall under the College of Management or under the Registrar in the same manner that GT 1000 does.

Tech wouldn't be the first college to offer the course either. Siena College's School of Business offers a personal finance course that's open to all non-business majors. Siena College's FINC 025's course objective is "analysis of the problems involved in efficient handling of personal finance and consumption expenditures." Rochester Institute of Technology and Meredith College's business programs also offer similar courses.

Even the University of Georgia offers a "Peer Financial Counseling Program" where students can take a series of courses on financial management from the School of Family and Consumer Sciences.

Tech students have proven themselves to be among the best and brightest engineers and entrepreneurs in the country. It's now time for us to learn how to be the most fiscally responsible.

OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT- or -NOT



Uncensored

Taking a class based on a professor's favorable grade distribution isn't anything new, but getting to read what past students thought of them is. Thanks to the efforts of SGA and CETL, instead of picking classes based on graded distributions, you can do it based on the written opinions of former students. It gives us a better excuse than extra credit to fill out a survey at the end of the term.



His last shot

After a love affair with the camera on Bravo's *Manhunt*, the judges have unfortunately decided that ME senior Paulo Rodriguez will not be America's Next Top Model. Rodriguez was able to prove that not only can MEs solve thermodynamic equations, but they're good at skydiving in their underwear too. At least he was able to dispel the old Tech myth "the odds are good but the goods are odd."



Let's get it started

After a disappointing loss to Virginia Tech, we finally have a reason to start cheering again—men's basketball starts tomorrow with an exhibition game versus Kennesaw State. The Jackets took us all the way to the Final Four last year, and we can't wait to see what this year has in store.



Daniels sidelined

Sadly, the football team will not be able to use one of their best weapons, leading-rusher P.J. Daniels, against N.C. State tomorrow. Daniels is still suffering from a bruised knee in an injury sustained against Virginia Tech. We wish P.J. a speedy recovery and hope to see him on the field again soon.

YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tech girls make dating tough

[Editor's Note: This article is in response to the editorial "Dating not impossible for Average Techie" published in the Oct. 8 issue.]

Thanks for your informative article on dating at Tech. Finally I know how to find love on this dried up, socially dead campus. Rest assured I will put your advice into practice and have a girlfriend by the end of the week!

Actually, based on your overly simplistic tips I should be happily married by now.

Truth is, dating at Tech is nowhere near as cut and dry as you made it out to be, although you're right in saying "dating at Tech is not like dating anywhere else. In fact, I do everything you instructed—I shower regularly, hold the door open and don't creep girls out by debating which computer language is the best. However, I will readily admit that in my four years at Tech I have only been on two dates with Tech girls. Now I know I'm not every girl's dream man.

I don't have Bill Gates' fortune, John Stewart's wit or Brad Pitt's tight butt, but there has to be a reason for my lack of success. Well, there is a reason: Tech girls themselves.

Tech girls play an equal part in the social problem at this school. Today's Tech girls were yesterday's top high school scholars. They took AP classes, scored high on the SAT and had one of the highest GPAs at their schools. Like our male population, Tech girls were also nerds in high school with little or no social skills.

So what happened when they graduated from high school? They came enthusiastically to Tech ready to take calculus just as most Tech men did. However, as a bonus they found themselves in hot demand with the fantastic odds of three girls to every seven guys. Now the awkward ugly

See Dating, 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 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 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.

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BUZZ

Around the Campus

What would be your ideal job at Tech?



Gabriell Washington
IE Fifth-year

"I'd be G. Wayne because he's the hottest white man I know."



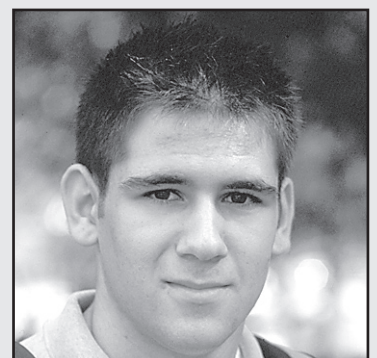
Nick Varner
AE Sixth-year

"I'd be the manager of Starbucks. That way I can get lots of free coffee and pastries."



Nandita Teshala
AE Graduate

"A Stinger driver: travel and music."



Jackson Elam
AE Freshman

"One of the provosts, so I could influence the future of Georgia Tech."

Photos by Andrew Saulters

Dating

from page 9

duckling of high school has become the beautiful swan of Tech as these once neglected girls are the pick of the litter at a school dominated by men.

Honestly, Tech girls don't understand what they are doing because they don't know how to handle their new-found fame. It's like what happens when a starving child gets locked in a room full of chocolates. Soon they overdose and are bed-ridden in their dorms with a bad case of the infamous TBS.

It's time that we look at this social problem objectively and stop pointing fingers emphatically at Tech men.

Sure, it's easy to condemn every guy to the classic nerd image because those men do exist at this school. But to put full blame on Tech men is wrong.

The heart of this school's social problem lies in the fact that since Tech girls have the odds in their favor they get to point fingers.

I fully realize that I am not helping the situation by casting a stereotype on every Tech girl. Just as there is a wide variety of Tech men, our Tech girl population is also very diverse.

Truth is, I know plenty of great girls on this campus that defy any stereotype. I'm sure that my offensive opinion may even enrage some girls. Well, enraged is how I felt when you so mistakenly spelled out how "easy" it is for me to date at Tech.

Jason Deas
gte920z@prism.gatech.edu

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Graduate assistantships comparable to feudal system



"Only about 50 percent of your ability to make it through graduate school will depend on your intellect."

Karen Feigh
Columnist

savvy of your supervisor.

So let us return to the graduate school-feudal system analogy. From the above list of attributes you need to have, it is clear that your choice of laboratory and supervisor play a critical role in your chances of gaining the advanced degree you seek. (Note 2: most of what is about to be said only really applies to students completing a thesis.)

By far the most important choice you will make when deciding upon a graduate program will be your choice of supervisor. Your supervisor will be like your liege.

You will owe this person total allegiance for quite possibly the next four to seven years of your life. And make no mistake, your life will depend on them.

They will provide you an income either as a GRA or as a GTA. Even if you are not working directly for them, you have a paying job because they stood up for you at those ever-so-important meetings where GTAs are handed out.

They will also provide your livelihood: office, computer, lab

equipment, air, etc.

Your supervisor will also be your champion and your protector (or at least good ones will be). This means that they will protect you from other lords who are bent on pillaging or harassing the local peasants (read fellow grad students).

The stronger your lord (advisor) and the more able and willing he or she is able to provide for you, the more you will produce. Only in this century, we are now talking about contract deliverables and journal papers instead of sheep and potatoes. All three traits are equally important.

One mistake that students often make when choosing a supervisor is mistaking this power for empire. You see power does not necessarily mean money, and if a Lord has too

many serfs to feed and defend, then you will most likely be left to fend for yourself (for a few years anyway).

Consequently, pledging your allegiance to the lord with the biggest castle is not necessarily the surest path to success.

Choose wisely, for just as a serf is tied to the land he works, the graduate student is tied to his laboratory. Neither can leave without being verbally flogged in the process and quite possibly causing a feud between the old Advisor and the new Advisor. Additionally, all subsequent students will surely suffer for your treasonous act.

Fear not though. In the end, you will most likely graduate. This is the point at which you must choose to escape to a distant land known as the real world, or stay in academia.

If you stay, you will be awarded your freedom, perhaps even knighted (Summa cum laude) and allowed to roam where you will and charge for your services.

Having been forewarned, you are now prepared to apply for graduate school and to attempt to earn your knighthood.

