

OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, February 1, 2002

OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

Lying never the answer

Résumé padding in the football program continues to blacken the name of Georgia Tech. Two of Tech's recently hired assistant football coaches put us in the news once again, when it was announced that both men had included false information in their biographies.

It was revealed on Monday that Defensive Coordinator Rick Smith did not play football or baseball at Florida State University, as his biography indicated. Smith offered his resignation to Head Coach Chan Gailey, but Gailey decided to retain him. Shortly after this was announced, Defensive Backs Coach Tommie Robinson told Mike Stamus, the Athletic Association's Director of Communications, that his biography incorrectly stated that he had earned a Master's Degree in Education from Troy State.

Smith did the honorable and right thing in offering to resign from his position, but that false information should never have been included in his bio to begin with. By submitting falsehoods about themselves, both of these men, at some point in their career, lied outright, the effect of which has already stung the Tech community as well as the community of observers. Lying, no matter what its purpose or circumstance, is wrong. There are no justifications for actions such as these. The lies these two men told have given everyone involved in the situation a bad name.

With the current state of the economy, students that are eagerly searching for jobs fresh out of college might feel compelled to embellish certain facts on their résumés. No one should ever put incorrect information on a résumé no matter what the situation. Lies have tarnished the image of Georgia Tech; the only solution to the damage already done is for each of us to conduct ourselves with an impeccable level of honor and integrity, both now and as we enter the job market.

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

CS should allow use of books

'It is a violation of the Honor Code to copy or derive solutions from textbooks, Internet resources or previous instances of this course unless specifically instructed to do so in assignment directions.'

The above is the Computer Science Department's view on the Honor Code, as it pertains to CS1321 and 1322.

It seems counter-intuitive to say that one can't derive the solutions to homework from textbooks or other resources at one's disposal. Calculus, Physics and most other classes here at Tech usually utilize just variations on problems in the textbooks.

I find it rather difficult to stomach that you can't even use the textbook you bought for the CS class to help you with your homework for the class. Think about it, folks. If a professor in any other class said you could not use your textbook to do homework, who would be able to pass any of their classes?

I understand not being able to copy code directly, as that is obviously cheating. But not being allowed using tools one has at one's own disposal is ludicrous. In the real world you use everything you can to get the job done the best possible way. If you're fuzzy on some-

thing you go back, reread it and relearn it.

Textbooks are our tools for learning. They often have different ways of explaining things than the professors, and this duality helps reinforce things that were taught in lecture. What is the purpose of taking notes in class and buying books from the bookstore if they cannot be used for homework?

This brings us to retaking the class. If one has to repeat either course, something that is known to happen often, you can't use your own Word. Why is that? You wrote it; they are your ideas and applications of the learning you were doing in the class the first time around.

This instance proves why only a slim number of universities actually have a separate college for CS and why most include their CS department as part of the Electrical and Computer Engineering school.

It is an immature profession and it is much more of an art rather than a true science. There are no hard and fast rules that exist to programming things; it's just my way versus yours.

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Quote of the week:

"It is dangerous to be sincere unless you are also stupid."

— George Bernard Shaw

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Cheating is not harmless, hurts everyone

The *Technique* has used its opinions pages (consensus editorial, 'The problem of cheating') to make the case that cheating is acceptable, given the right circumstances. There are no circumstances where cheating is acceptable; it takes integrity to realize that.

On the surface, cheating seems to be a victimless offense. If not caught, committing a 'minor' instance of academic dishonesty by copying, receiving improper aid or aiding others appears to harm no one while significantly helping the individual. In reality, however, there are ramifications to others, and therefore there are no 'minor' offenses.

The results are clear: grade inflation, devaluation of honest achievement and ultimately an erosion of the high moral standards that the workforce needs more than ever.

The real issue underlying the cheating epidemic is a lack of personal integrity and accountability. The problem we face in combating cheating is that it takes a united group of individuals, all making a stand, to eliminate the problem.

I am disappointed that the leadership of the *Technique* has used its public forum to provide a scapegoat for dishonesty.

The College of Computing faculty goes to great lengths to ensure a

level playing field. Issues like 'impersonal setup' of classes, manner of presentation and faculty discretion should be taken up with Georgia Tech's academic leadership, which has proven very receptive to constructive dialogue that helps everyone at Tech to perform better.

Tech's student leadership must set an example for others to follow so that 'Georgia Institute of Technology' on a diploma is not just a symbol of academic excellence, but also of integrity.

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By Matt Norris / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Cheaters bear no responsibility without the absolute

Cheating is wrong. But who says so? A conflict arises when we insist, “all people are good at heart,” and then label the individuals who shared work as wrong. How can these people be wrong if they are good at heart? To right the situation we begin to assume that they were affected by their environment, they were simply pressured into cheating by a system. They remain good at heart, but the burden of responsibility is lifted and placed on a system or a college and not on the individual. As a society we continue to apply the pattern to every brand of evil on earth.

The famous lawyer of the Scopes trial, Clarence Darrow, in a 1902 speech to prisoners in Chicago’s Cook County Jail illustrates this pattern of failure by skipping over the individual and placing the blame on the environment or the circumstances:

“There is no such thing as a crime as the word is generally understood. I do not believe there is any sort of distinction between the real moral condition of the people in and out of jail. One is just as good as the other. The people here can no more help being here than the people outside can avoid being outside. I do not believe that people are in jail because they deserve to be. They are in jail simply because they cannot avoid it on account of circumstances which are entirely beyond their control and for which they are in no way responsible.”

Hannibal Lecter, the villain in Thomas Harris’s novel, *Silence of the Lambs*, comes right to the point: we must be able to label evil, evil.

“Nothing happened to me, Of-

“When we make moral judgment impossible, we make immorality possible.”

Matthew Bryan
Editor-in-Chief



ficer Starling. I happened. You can’t reduce me to a set of influences, Officer Starling.... Nothing is ever anybody’s fault. Look at me, Officer Starling. Can you say I’m evil? Am I evil, Officer Starling?”

We can’t reduce evil to a set of influences; it must be labeled for what it is.

When dramatic acts of terror happen the evil label resurfaces, just as it did on September 11. Most people would be willing to label Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda terrorist network in the same manner as the Nazi regime, evil, but young Anne Frank simply could not do that, as stated in her diary, “...I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart.”

What Frank failed to understand is that when we make moral judgment impossible, we make immorality possible. But, because our society has abandoned the absolute in favor of the individual we have made the world fertile for the growth of the amoral.

In the past three weeks the pages of the *Technique* have recounted over and over the absence of morality on our campus: Athletes who refuse to accept responsibility for sexual misconduct, students who

chose cheating over honor and coaches who decide to embellish résumés. And many more stories of immorality go untold in the pages of the newspaper but remain on the hearts of students, all detailing a fate that we have constructed because of an illusion of utopia, an illusion that somewhere within us lay perfection.

Mankind has been rebuilt as a machine, processing the data of our circumstances to judge the morality of our situation. And by refusing to accept the evil within our humanity we declare personal preference as our guide, praising action as truthful and enlightening but ignoring consequence, a practice that brings on the dissolution of moral conscience and the rise of evil in the world. Evil, like the destruction of the family unit, the rise of crime, the failure of education, an increase in government assistance programs and proliferation of dishonor in the leadership of our world.

As we are birthed into this “enlightenment” and continue to be rocked in the cradle of postmodern-individualism, real evil will only grow. To end its rampage we must first be able to identify it as evil. A process that is impossible without accepting the actuality of absolute

truth.

We cannot draw a line down the center of the page and place good things to one side and evil things to the other because individual choice will differ. With the disposal of guilt from our emotional vocabulary we seem only to be tuned to happy and sad, emotions that change with the individual. Guilt, in all its horror, must be restored if we are to find that still, small voice of truth within our being. That transcendent voice that we spot once in a while, mostly when we are brought to complete brokenness.

For, it is when the comfortable cloak of self is removed that we see our evil, the evil that lives in each of us. The personal will that we cannot bear, that part of us that longs for redemption. Redemption that can only come through recognition and not through some magical healing process, because, as C.S. Lewis stated, “to be ‘cured’ against one’s will...is to be put on a level with those who have not yet reached the age of reason or those who never will; to be classed with infants, imbeciles, and domestic animals. But to be punished, however severely, because we have deserved it, because we ‘ought to have known better,’ is to be treated as a human person made in God’s image.”

Redemption demands punishment to resolve our guilt.

We must believe that people are imperfect, people are not “good at heart.” For in the perpetuation of that lie we perpetuate immorality in our society. We must recognize evil and label it as such and we must seek redemption for our wrongs.

I have seen the future, and the future is old

Roughly fifty years ago, the auto shows were ablaze with concept cars and future cars. Manufacturers festooned these cars with such things as a turbine, tailfins, and bubble tops. These were the dream machines. These were the future cars—two-plus ton steel vehicles that looked like a tarted-up Bel Air. Cosmetic changes to cars that would herald the next generation of automobiles and drivers—all while housing a pushrod V8.

Zoom ahead to the present. What are the cars of the future? Pardon the pun, but the cars of the future seem to be from Japan and Europe while the American cars have taken a backseat. While the best-selling vehicle in the US is still the Ford F-series (GM, Ford and Chrysler still command 66% of the market), the Honda Accord is the best-selling car in the US. Doubt the Magic 8 Ball-shakers at GM and Ford saw this coming fifty years ago. With the Accord, there’s no tailfins, no huge greenhouse, no V8. Some car of the future, it doesn’t even have a turbine engine. However, the Accord does possess an intuitive transmission, and variable timing which changes the lift of the valves in accordance with engine speed helps improve performance while not draining the gas tank. If only things were that nice for Ford, whose darling of the dealer lot gets roughly 16 miles to the gallon with the V8.

The funny thing is, it seems that the cars of the future are, in fact, retro. The Detroit auto show is a good example. Ford offered a new Lincoln Continental, with suicide doors harkening back to the Continental of the 60s. GM showed a

“Pardon the pun, but the cars of the future seem to be from Japan and Europe while the American cars have taken a backseat.”

Jamie Schulz
Advertising Manager



concept of the Bel Air. And Motor Trend voted the Ford Thunderbird the Car of the Year. GM has given the green light for the SST, a truck that closely resembles a late-’50s GM or Ford truck. The PT Cruiser from Chrysler definitely piqued interest for the other automakers, as demand was high and dealers could get a hefty profit from the sales of the retro-themed auto.

The antique/retro-themed cars certainly have a niche in the market. But they share a platform alongside the concepts that many carmakers produce for auto shows. They’re nice, but they don’t necessarily work for the majority of the car-buying public.

Where are the *real* cars of the future? I’d like to see carmakers show a greater endeavor toward making and previewing cars that reflect the needs of the next few decades. We have seen the quick death of electric cars—heralded at first but not up to handle our thirst of acceleration and long commutes. GM’s EV1, at best, could get roughly 60 miles to a charge and was probably outpaced by most ride-on lawn mowers in terms of acceleration. While hybrid power cars such as the Toyota Prius and Honda Insight are receiving a positive reaction from buyers and car

critics alike, they still rely on gasoline as their primary source of fuel. What may change is the Honda Dualnote. Honda’s concept gets 40 miles per gallon, and includes a 300 horsepower V6 with an additional 100HP electric motor at each wheel. Probably nothing more than an exhibition of what Honda can do, but it would be nice to see such a car produced. But for many people, it has the go-fast DNA that the Prius and Insight lack. And the fact that its emissions are almost nil makes for a strong point for all the green Earth flag wavers in the world.

In terms of new technology, the “true” cars of the future seem to be fuel cell cars. A fuel cell car gets its power from the reaction of hydrogen and oxygen to produce, in terms of emissions, water. The time has come for car manufacturers to put fuel cell vehicles in the spotlight. The clock’s ticking for oil-burners, and with gas prices heading the opposite direction of Kmart stock (sorry, it was inevitable), its time that consumers take notice as well.

While such organizations as the Sierra Club and demands of CARB, many automakers are working for cars that produce less and less emissions. The availability of fuel cell vehicles may still be a glimmering

speck on the highway of progress. But carmakers such as BMW already have a production 7 series that runs off cells. Major hurdles to overcome are still the weight and cost of the fuel cells and the overall reaction by the car-buying public. A hydrogen-powered car won’t turn into the next Hindenburg in the event of a car accident. There won’t be traffic reports announcing that a mushroom cloud has been spotted on 285 with HAZMAT crews holding up traffic. While it’s all fine and good for carmakers to continue on showing concepts of gas powered cars; they should also start gearing up the public for changes.

And it wouldn’t hurt to see such strides taken in fleet vehicles as well. While stringent emissions policies are made for consumer cars, I have yet to see strides taken to curb emissions by freight trucks and mass transit. Heavy costs, instead of incentives are still associated with lower-pollutant vehicles, such as natural gas Tauruses and buses. Studies in the application of fuel cells to buses and cargo would definitely make progress in warming the consumer population for cell powered vehicles. Price incentives would aid cities wanting mass transit but can’t afford to take a hit in their air quality index using gas-burning buses.

Like any other warm-blooded American male, I enjoy the rumble of a big-block V8. But in terms of what the future holds, I am willing to sacrifice my desire for a gas hog in order to cut emissions. Not because I have a strong desire to sidle with Greenpeace, but because these are the dream cars that I am sure the carmakers are going to produce.

TECHNIQUE

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Question of the week

“What do you think about this week’s heat?”



Buzz Around Campus

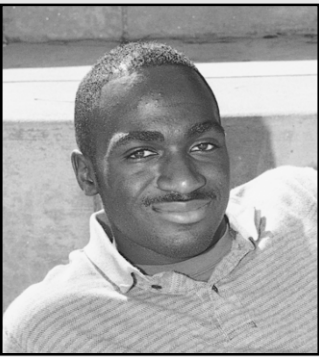


Feature and photos by
Marques McMillan



Lisa Pitsko
Bio Senior

“Love it.”



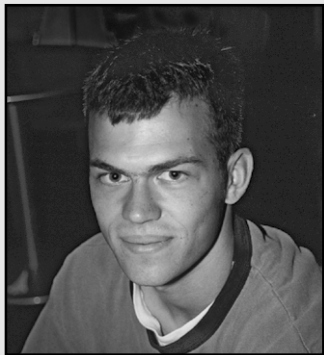
Kwame Ofori
ME Grad

*“Great to see the
ladies lookin’ right.”*



Nicolas Posada
CE Sophomore

*“Love it, just like
home.”*



Scott Sample
ChE Sophomore

*“It’s probably going to
get cold again.”*



Liz Gooding
BioMed Sophomore

*“Makes me want to
quit school.”*



Denis Barreto
Arch Sophomore

*“I’m from Miami.
This isn’t hot.”*

Editors cannot make excuses

I am thoroughly incensed by reading your editorial board’s consensus opinion of the recent CS cheating scandal. Your cursory and reckless assessment of this issue shows little regard for the only certainty in this whole affair: cheating, no matter the circumstance or situation is morally wrong.

Maybe at Georgia Tech students do not see clearly the utility of this standard, but I assure you, any responsibility that a Tech grad is going to assume in the real world will demand it.

Rationalize all you want, blame the system, discredit the professors for their intense scrutiny, but know this: the only blame in a situation like this lies with the students themselves. They knew the rules, they chose to break them and now they will pay the price.

Maybe you could better focus your efforts on helping your readers to better understand that honor and integrity are the very foundation of our personalities. Without virtues such as these, we are but useless wretches who have no place in society.

Bennett Christman
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If you would like your ideas and thoughts to be heard, feel free to submit a letter to the editor. Please email opinions@technique.gatech.edu or editor@technique.gatech.edu. Letters should be no more than 350 words.

Atlanta, North misrepresented

I am writing this in response to Derek Haynes' editorial. First, I would like to make it clear that I am from the north, and Atlanta did prove a culture shock. Every reader should realize, however, that the north is not a land of intolerant racists. Yes, there are racist people; you'll find them anywhere. But it is extremely offensive that Mr. Haynes would slander the rest of us by representing himself as every northerner. Most of us despise racism as much as anyone else.

Mr. Haynes would have you think that diversity is bad. Actually, since I moved to Atlanta, I've experienced cultures I would not have encountered otherwise. It's awkward ordering from menus that I don't understand, but most people will abide ignorance if you are making an attempt to try their point of view.

Many of Mr. Haynes' statements about Atlanta are unfair to the city itself. If you don't like the weather, deal with it or go ahead and leave. I love cold weather, but I'm not going to tell people not to come here just because it's warm.

I don't know if I'll always live in Atlanta. I prefer my old climate, and I don't like the traffic. I ask that wherever anyone else decides to go, please don't approach it with Mr. Haynes' attitude. Mr. Haynes, you are not like me, and I don't appreciate you saying that you are.

Kevin Mitchell
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Techs and the City: Us, Atlanta, and the elusive five-year plan

By Jennifer Hinkel
Focus Editor

I came to the realization some time ago that most everyone at Tech had a five-year plan. Professors were looking for tenure, students were looking for the eventual graduation date and the administration was working diligently on the enigmatic Master Plan. The five-year plan is the pinnacle of looking forward. Those with plans are to be envied, and those without are left behind in the dust. Living in Atlanta has shown us the disaster that life becomes when you forego the five-year plan and (insert shocked expression here) just go with the flow.

When I drive out to the vast suburban lands of Roswell and Marietta, my fears intensify. I see what will happen if I don't plan well enough, fast enough and soon enough. My life will turn into an endless landscape of urban sprawl: disorganized, hectic, and spread too thin in a geographic area that's too far away from the beach. If I plan ahead, my life becomes Peachtree City, free of pollution and traffic and filled instead with wealth, a pretty house, 2.5 lovely children and plenteous hours to sip mint juleps or read novels.

Amidst the planning whirlwind, I have learned several things. First, if you start planning too late or derail from a good plan (whether by your own fault or force majeure), you'll be screwed for life.

"Forcing yourself into a plan will only cause heartache later."

Jennifer Hinkel
Focus Editor



You have to start a Roth IRA practically yesterday so that you have plenty of cash when you're seventy, or so it seems when explained by my trusted First Union investment banker. On the other hand, don't get married too soon—or too late. And make sure you've planned your classes since that first day of totally clueless registration your freshman year, because if you haven't, you'll need 1.3 hours of social sciences credit to graduate, not to mention the fact that your study abroad credits will count only for free electives. Freshmen, beware. Nonetheless, Tech will still take you five years of hard work before you can get out.

The problems with planning so strictly are many. The people who set rules that are too rigid inevitably fail. Although I'm not a materials scientist, I can tell you that brittle things break and flexible things, well, flex. The five-year plan, as good as its intentions are, strikes me as something sinister and cruel. Forcing yourself into a plan will only cause heartache later. Your plans will be derailed. You'll

fail a class and have to repeat it. You'll fall in love and decide not to take that internship in Peru.

The five-year plan is a synonym with impossibility. The die-hard planners might achieve the goals they set back in the day, but once they get there, they might also realize that the goals they set at twenty are not the things they want at twenty-five.

I planned to graduate high school, come to Tech, and get out in the Spring of 2004 with a degree in INTA. Instead, I came to Tech a year late, added a major a few times, and won't graduate until at least Spring 2004. Plans change.

Setting limits and rules for yourself is good, except when it prevents you from seizing an opportunity or taking time to maintain your health and sanity. Some of my friends have experienced life-changing events they never would have seen if they had not taken a semester off, dropped a course to join a club, or transferred schools to spend more time with friends. The best parts of life often fall within the riskiest deci-

sions. Over-planning might look great on your piece of graph paper or Excel worksheet, but when you get to year three and realize you're still on year two of the plan, you will be left feeling unsatisfied and disappointed. Let yourself off the hook.

Instead of the five-year plan, I would advocate an alternative of setting goals every four years and then reexamining where you are every once in a while. Don't put strict timelines on your achievements, schedule your relationships or beat yourself up over bumps in the road. Tech readers, I know you are cringing at this statement the same way you would if someone told you it was okay to have a two-page résumé.

Strict rules are good for Catholic school children, but when applied to the adult population at large, they tend to fail miserably. The five-year plan likewise causes problems. Whereas some degree of looking forward is necessary to ensure your retirement funds or to prevent endless suburban sprawl, planning your future to the most minute detail fundamentally undermines what can contribute to rich, fulfilling life experiences. Without room to seize the moment, life follows a recipe invented five years ago. I wouldn't buy a five-year-old computer, so why should I follow a five-year-old strategy? Sorry, five-year plan, you'll have to go. I'm replacing you with excitement and opportunities.