

OPINIONS

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Quote of the week:

"The thing that makes you exceptional, if you are at all, is inevitably that which must also make you lonely."
—Lorraine Hansberry

OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

Input needed

The Student Center, which this summer made plans to renovate and dramatically alter Tech Rec, received an architect's proposal for a new design for the facility this week. The new design has been in the works for several months, but Student Center management is only now beginning to solicit student feedback on the changes. Prior to this week, only a few students were aware of the planning process, and due to the timeline of the architect's work effort students now have only one week to make suggestions about the proposal. This is clearly an inadequate amount of time for any meaningful input.

Unfortunately, this failure to solicit student feedback on major decisions seems to be endemic to the administration of late. When administrators began investigating changes to the undergraduate curriculum, a process that will affect more than 12,000 students, only a few students were invited to participate in the initial conversation. Ray Vito, the new vice provost of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies, said more student feedback would be solicited as the process "wound down."

These two examples point to a pattern that is troubling: the administration is only paying lip service to the idea of student feedback rather than seriously seeking it. The assumption that students don't care to participate in the decisions about how their education is changed and money is spent is one we believe needs to be re-evaluated by all levels of Institute leadership.

Administrators frequently argue that Tech students are apathetic about issues that affect them, and even when they go out of their way to solicit feedback they don't get much input. This is, unfortunately, a very legitimate point: input is a two-way street, and students must take the time to actively give their feedback when it is requested, especially when the issue is one that affects them so dramatically.

However, the administration must realize that much of the apathy students feel is a result of a feeling of disenfranchisement: the weak attempts to solicit feedback on major initiatives have led many students to believe their opinions are not actually taken into consideration. The result is a vicious cycle—students don't respond, administrators don't ask, and students feel increasingly upset. This is an unfortunate and dangerous catch-22 that, if not dealt with, will result in a growing gulf between the opinions of the student body and the administration.

To address the issue, administrators should take a multifaceted approach to seeking feedback earlier and more frequently. That feedback should also come at more defined intervals—semesterly town halls on broad topics like the Student Center as a whole, for instance, may draw greater interest.

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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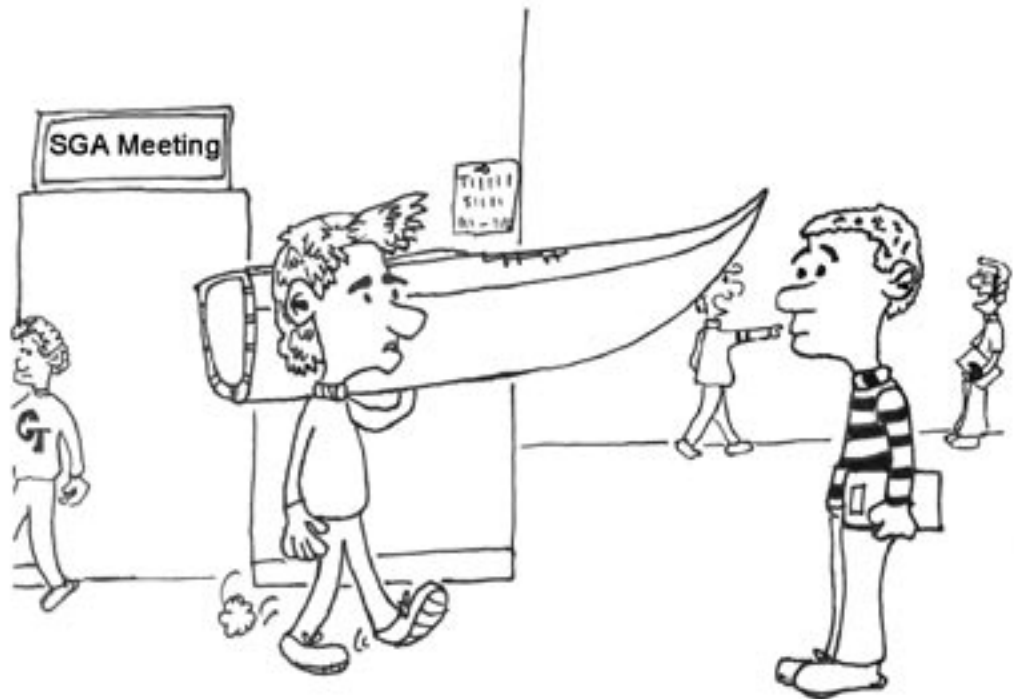
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"They only gave me two-thirds of the boat."

By Abhishek Jain / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Public transport a necessity

I only live three miles from campus, with a travel time of about five minutes. But sometimes I get stuck in the dreaded afternoon rush hour, which means the trip time should be multiplied by three or four times that total. Sitting in traffic like that everyday wears me down and I've only been doing it for three months.

This frustration takes me back to this past summer, which I spent in Europe. I am sure everyone has had to endure the enlightening conversation of someone relaying how great public transportation is in Europe. No one likes to hear how their way of doing things is horrible compared to someone else's way, but they couldn't be more right. The rail and bus systems are efficient as well as timely. Clogged highways are not as common a problem.

Sitting in monotonous traffic I cannot help but wonder what is the problem with Atlanta, not to mention the rest of the country, and its lack of transportation options. Only New York City offers any sort of public transport comparable to that of Europe's. Every day the subway system of New York serves over six million riders. The next closest on that list is Washington D.C., which serves only a million riders a day and Chicago with 600,000 riders. MARTA clocks in at a little over 200,000 riders a day.

There are over five million people in metro Atlanta. Why aren't more of them using public transportation?

I think it all boils down to people just not caring. Atlanta is known for its traffic—even mocked for it at times—and the residents of the Metro area just keep adding more cars to the road, like it's a contest.

But I am as guilty as everyone out there. I don't want to use MARTA. I don't exactly have \$1.75 every day, plus no one really has the bus schedule memorized. So it's quicker and more convenient to just hop in



"There are over five million people in metro Atlanta. Why aren't more of them using public transportation?"

Matthew Winkler
Editor-in-Chief

the car and go, rather than crafting my schedule around someone else's. This trap of ego-centric attitudes catches us all.

Everyone asks, "Why should I do it when no one else does?" So every year more and more cars get added to the road. Rush hour drags on for hours more—not to mention what it's doing to the environment.

The problem isn't just with the rider; it is also with the system itself. MARTA was originally meant to expand to all five metro counties. In the end only DeKalb and Fulton followed through with the deal. Why didn't residents of the other three counties want a system that serves their immediate residence? In the next two years the system is scheduled for update and expansion, but it seems like it's a day late and a dollar short.

Looking at this problem from a broader point of view, it's easy to see how cities like Atlanta got this way. Atlanta's population boomed after World War II. The growth was just too fast. The transit system wasn't constructed until 1971. The system was basically built on an already existing infrastructure, and other American cities have the same history.

Even now we are seeing how our habits of not taking action immediately are affecting us directly. Georgia has been experiencing a drought all summer, but only in the past month have people been trying to consciously conserve.

Learning from history we need to go ahead and predict that preparing for the future is our best option. All statistics predict Atlanta experiencing growth for years to come. So as residents of this sprawling metropolitan area, let's go ahead and prepare for it. No one likes change, but something has to give or Atlanta will solidify its hold on some of the worst traffic and pollution in the country.

I'm a civil engineer-in-training, and this topic has constantly come up in my classes over the past four years. I may have a more vested interest in the topic, but everyone needs to take an interest in the subject. By investing in and encouraging the spread of public transportation, not only will we begin clearing up the congestion, but also the air quality. So even if one is naïve enough to believe that climate change is not occurring, easing the congestion will just make the city a more pleasant place to visit.

Hopefully in the future MARTA will improve and the public will begin to accept public transport and other means of getting from one location to another. I know I haven't done my part, but using the excuse of "I'll wait until the next guy," is simply unacceptable.

I hope residents at least start trying. It's not a problem that can be fixed overnight, but hopefully rush hour will soon be a thing of the past and I will eventually find that \$1.75.

Half-time show not worth cost of entry

I love Tech football. Even when we get stomped 27-3, I stay 'til the clock runs out and clap as the disappointed players march back to the locker room.

I love hip-hop. I have been to more rap and hip-hop concerts than I can count on both hands. I used to break dance. And I try not to go too long in between MJQ visits.

But putting the two of them together? Bad idea.

There were just so many things illogical and wrong about getting Outkast member Big Boi to perform for a mere nine minutes at half time of the Virginia Tech football game last Thursday. The fact that Tech's Athletic Association spent \$43,000 on the Big Boi halftime show is not the least of the issues.

The only good thing about that was that Big Boi did this show for free; he personally received no monetary compensation for performing during Thursday's game, according to Wayne Hogan, Tech's Associate Athletic Director for Public Relations.

But wait, you say! Then where the heck did that \$43,000 go? Apparently it went to pay for promotion, advertising, staging and labor for the show. Staging and labor I understand, but personally I didn't see an ounce of promotion or advertising



"The only good thing about [the performance] was that Big Boi did this show for free."

Blake Israel
Online Editor

except through a few megamod emails. I have asked around and have yet to find anyone who saw any sort of advertisement other than email and word of mouth about this event. I would love to see a further breakdown of the costs and expenditures related to the show.

The official reasoning behind even getting this half of Outkast to perform during the VT game was to "drive ticket sales." There were 1,121 more fans in attendance compared with 2006's Thursday evening game. With tickets going for \$45 a piece, that's \$50,445 more in the Athletic Association's coffers than last year.

Was this comparative increase of ticket sales mainly due to Big Boi? Considering last year's Thursday night game was against unranked Virginia, I doubt it. Either way, there is no hard evidence to accurately tell whether the half-time show

contributed to the increase, and if so, to what extent.

The other incredibly disappointing aspect to the halftime show was its brevity. Big Boi sang three songs for a whopping total time of nine minutes. That means that it cost us more than \$14,300 dollars per song or over \$4,750 per minute of the performance.

Besides the fact that the show was a complete waste of time and resources, it should be stated that it was executed poorly. Big Boi performed on an approximately 300-square foot stage facing the west stands, which consist almost entirely of alumni and other fans who generally enjoy their football games sitting down. I'm sure they "enjoyed" the performance that way too... If they even stayed until half-time, that is.

Well, at least us students could hear him over the speakers that were ever so kindly positioned in front of us... at least if your

section's speakers were plugged in. The clowns operating the speakers in front of the SWARM section and the section next to it seemed unable to figure out how to insert the speaker cables into their appropriate holes.

The problem with not enjoying the performance stems from having to observe it from your seat, especially when said seat happens to be a good 50 yards away from and behind the stage.

I think I'd feel closer to the performance if I were in China watching it on my laptop. The general fun of going to a concert and seeing a musician you like perform live is being so freaking close that you can reach out and be inches away from giving them a high five, and maybe even receiving one.

A couple of years ago, I got this wonderful gadget some of you might have heard of. It's called an "MP3 player." It plays music with near CD quality reproduction directly into my ears and it's so teeny, it fits quite nicely in any of my pockets! Hot damn!

Wait! Couldn't I just listen to all the songs Big Boi sang on that thing? Hold on a minute, I could even listen to a few other ones, too! Maybe I could have the better half of Outkast perform on

See Big Boi, page 10

OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT or NOT



Aiming high

The basketball season kicks off tonight as the Jackets face off against UNC Greensboro. Though the Jackets lost star players Javaris Crittendon and Thaddeus Young to the NBA draft this summer, they return three starters including Jeremis Smith and Anthony Morrow. The team will look to improve on last season's 20-12 record and make it to the NCAA tournament for the second consecutive year.



Rerouted

While Parking was kind enough to inform students that Ferst Drive would be down to one lane near the Weber building this week, no one bothered to mention that the street would be closed entirely from Russ Chandler Stadium to the Ford Environmental Science and Technology building. Sadly, communication on construction plans from Auxiliary Services continues to be woefully inadequate.



INTA matters

The Board of Regents approved a new Ph.D. program in International Affairs, Science and Technology last month. The new program is a further sign of the progress the Ivan Allen College has made in expanding its programs and making Tech more appealing to students not fitting the typical engineer profile.



Banner manners

The banner commemorating Tech's Final Four run in March 2004 was stolen from the Alexander Memorial Coliseum last weekend. The large number of entry points to the Coliseum makes security difficult, but it is still sad to lose such a valuable piece of memorabilia. We hope the thieves return the banner.

YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR Policies follow state law

The Nov. 2 issue of the *Technique* carried another letter from Ruth Malhotra that tried to make the frivolous lawsuit she and Orit Sklar filed against Tech administrators appear to address problems in the allocation of Student Activity Fee (SAF) funds. The problems simply do not exist, and it is actually Malhotra who fails to understand the law governing student fee allocations, particularly since she does not seem to be aware of the fact that SGA recently adopted a new policy for handling SAF funds to clear up any misconceptions about the policy. As one of the primary architects of that policy, I would like to correct some of her mis-statements.

The SAF policy does prohibit certain allocations, as required by law. The Georgia Constitution declares, "No money shall ever be taken from the public treasury, directly or indirectly, in aid of any church, sect, cult

or religious denomination or of any sectarian institution." Some would say that precludes allocating SAF money to religious student organizations.

However, SGA has a documented history of providing such allocations, and the new policy merely precludes the funding of "activities which support religious worship and proselytizing" in order to simultaneously comply with Georgia law and U.S. Supreme Court rulings.

Furthermore, SGA does not prohibit funding "partisan political" activities, and there is documentation of having funded campus political groups in the past.

The new policy only precludes funding activities primarily intended to "support the election or defeat of a candidate for public office or to provide a monetary contribution to a political party."

See Policies, 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 Matthew Winkler, 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 7 p.m. Tuesday 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. 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 billings should be directed to D. McCall "Mac" Pitts 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.

BUZZ Around the Campus

What building should Tech construct next?



Jonathan Crockett
First-year BIOL

"New dining facilities."



Ashley Kunkle
First-year MGT

"We need a Waffle House."



Juan Duran
First-year BME

"The next building should be the Halo building!"



Molly Randall
First-year INTA

"A visual arts center."

Photos by Hanjie Song

Big Boi from page 9

it, even! If the AA insists on having halftime show performances I think they need to sincerely rethink both who their primary audience is and how they execute it.

In a press release on **Ramblin-Wreck.com**, Wayne Hogan said, "Big Boi's unique presence will bring Georgia Tech football into the mainstream of the Atlanta entertainment scene...we are striving to provide a blockbuster entertainment experience for Atlanta's young and diverse community. What better place than in the heart of Atlanta—as a part of Georgia Tech football?"

I have an idea for providing a "blockbuster entertainment experience" at Tech games: Try winning some football games on at least a semi-consistent basis.

And about bringing "young and diverse" Atlantans to Tech games?

I don't think some urban Atlanta youth is going to rush out and buy a \$45 ticket to a football game to see a three song performance during a game where the home team can barely hold onto the ball. But hey, I could be wrong.

Maybe if the AA hadn't made it so apparent last year that they were running out of money, demanding the mandatory student athletic fee be increased, then go and blow \$43,000, I wouldn't be complaining.

I think the Athletic Association needs to reevaluate its priorities, and put the recruiting and training of winning teams ahead of gimmicky promotions to try to drive up their ticket sales.

Policies from page 9

Again, there is a prohibition in Georgia law against giving public funds to candidates and political parties, so SGA tailored this restriction as narrowly as possible.

Malhotra does have a point in that Georgia Tech is required "to distribute funds in a viewpoint neutral manner." SGA has worked hard to meet this standard. Recently-passed amendments to SGA policy documents and others in preparation have not only made clear that SGA must allocate SAF funds in an unbiased manner but also will establish an appeals process for any student on campus who feels that SGA has not done so.

In the future, if students have questions or concerns about SGA policies, I hope they will thoroughly address the matter to student leaders before wasting the time of many on campus to fight a lawsuit designed to bring attention to the plaintiffs.

Mitchel T. Keller
mitch.keller@gatech.edu
Math Grad student

Ticket distribution timing does not compute

This year has been an interesting year in my attempts to get football tickets. I am a fifth-year who has never missed a home game. My question now involves how all the student tickets to the Virginia Tech game could sell out in less than 15 minutes with no outstanding line. I was at the Athletic Association of-

fice at 9:20 a.m. and they were out; graduate tickets sold out before 10 a.m. Where have they all gone?

Let me explain why this is so perplexing.

Assume the ticket windows open at 9 a.m. Monday morning. Also assume that 3,500 tickets are given to blocks, which at the least (assuming every block has the maximum number of tickets, which is 400) would constitute nine people. That would leave 3,000 tickets to non-block students.

Assuming three windows are open and the windows can each serve one person every 20 seconds, and each non-block student request the maximum number of tickets (10) then each window can distribute 30 tickets a minute to non-block students or can serve three block students a minute.

Therefore, to serve the nine block students would take one minute, and serving the non-block students (300 students with 3,000 vouchers) would take approximately 34 minutes. As such, at the most efficient, all undergraduate student tickets could be sold in roughly 35 minutes.

I was at the ticket office at 9:20 a.m. and there was no trace of a line, announcements were already posted, blinds closed and people gone.

I have camped out for tickets in the past, and it has never taken less than 45 minutes for tickets to sell out.

How can it be that that many tickets were sold so quickly, when I assume the fewest number of people ask for the maximum number of tickets? Are there no limits on the number of block seats (and if there

aren't limits, are we really allowing a mere 17 people or groups exclusive rights to football tickets)? These are the questions I would like to have answered.

Zack Schreer
schreer@gatech.edu
Fifth-year ECON

House bill does not restrict educational freedom

A Nov. 2 letter to the *Technique* claims that House Bill 154 is an attack on education by Georgia's General Assembly, an assertion that couldn't be further from the truth. HB 154, the "Intellectual Diversity in Higher Education Act," which seeks to ensure a free exchange of ideas on Georgia's public university campuses, is driven by the people at the grassroots level: students, parents, taxpayers, donors and alumni. It is the people's first step towards asking our public universities to value intellectual diversity and ensure that they are held accountable for their actions and use of the taxpayers' money.

The public has begun to recognize that for quite some time Georgia's universities have failed to emphasize viewpoint diversity, and realizes that this must be addressed in order to maintain the highest quality of education for all students. Intellectual diversity is defined in the bill as "the foundation of a learning environment that exposes students to a variety of political, ideological and other perspectives."

The only requirement in the bill is that universities file, and post online,

an annual report on the actions they have taken to implement intellectual diversity. It includes eleven suggested actions universities can take in pursuit of intellectual diversity—none of which are mandatory. The content of the report is entirely up to each institution.

One suggestion is that universities "establish clear campus policies to ensure freedom of the press for students and report any incidents of student newspaper thefts or destruction." At UGA over 1,000 copies of *The Georgia Guard Dawg*, an alternative newspaper, were stolen in September. In January, a pro-life display at Tech was also vandalized.

Another suggestion is that the colleges "eliminate any speech codes that restrict freedom of speech." A federal lawsuit has already forced Tech to repeal its code.

In March, UGA's Student Government Association endorsed House Bill 154 and it is time for Tech's SGA to do the same. Attempts to increase transparency and ensure that students are getting the education they deserve and taxpayers are getting a return on their investment should be applauded rather than discouraged.

HB 154 is all about accountability, and it is the actions of those who oppose shining light on the situation that should be questioned. It's a measure of much-needed sunlight, and as the eminent Supreme Court justice Louis Brandeis put it, "Sunlight is the best disinfectant."

David Hotle
gtg123y@mail.gatech.edu
Fourth-year CompE



Get involved in DramaTech!
Just stop by and ring our doorbell!

For more information, call 404-894-3481
or visit our website: www.dramatech.org

Macbeth

Show: Oct. 26-27, 31
Nov. 2-3, 7-10

Variety Tech / Let's Try This

Auditions*: Sep. 30 @ 7 pm
Show: Nov. 30- Dec. 1

Urinetown

Show: April 4-5, 9-12, 16-19

What Happened to Mr. Sugarlumpkins

Show: June 27-28
July 2-3, 5, 9-12

All shows are at 8 pm
at DramaTech Theater

***Auditions are open to all who are interested**
No experience necessary
Come with a warmed up voice
and comfortable clothes for dancing