OPINIONS

TECHNIQUE
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OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

Minority report

At first glance, the statistics on this fall's incoming freshman class—as detailed in a recent press release on the Georgia Tech homepage—sound like a cause for excitement. "Almost 800 women and 108 Hispanic students will join the freshman class in August, a jump of 30 percent and 52 percent, respectively," the release stated.

However, smart Tech students who take a closer look and do some number-crunching of their own might find that the numbers are somewhat misleading. Though the number of women in the incoming class has increased since last year, part of the reason is because the size of the freshman class has also increased by 15 percent to 2,550 students.

This means that overall, Tech's infamous "ratio" has not really changed all that much: last year's incoming class was 27 percent female, and this year, it is 32 percent. Thus, the ratio, unfortunately, still hovers around 7:3.

In addition, many of the increases in female freshmen are in majors that have already have a high percentage of women. For example, the largest increases this year were seen in Biology, Biomedical Engineering, Architecture and the Ivan Allen College. Majors such as Computer Science and Electrical Engineering, however, still attract a very low number of women.

So what is the Institute's goal? Is it simply to get more women on Tech's campus in general—or is it to attract more women to engineering? If simply decreasing the ratio is enough, then we may be getting there, and some of this credit may very well go to the increasing strength of our liberal arts programs.

However, Tech is still, decidedly, an engineering school, and thus efforts should be made to get more women to enroll in traditionally male-dominated engineering majors, majors where a female presence is lacking and sorely needed.

Though there are several existing programs that address this, such as Women in Engineering and the College of Computing's "Women@cc" program, these are all at the college level. The focus needs to be on recruitment at the high-school level, and the effort should be made by both individual colleges as well as the administration as a whole.

Women aren't the only minority where the statistics sound overly optimistic. Though Tech has a reputation for its diverse student body, the numbers indicate otherwise. African Americans will make up only six percent of the incoming freshman class, and this percentage is even lower (a little more than four percent) for Hispanics. It's true that these numbers are increasing slowly every year—but they should also remind us that we still have a long way to go.

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

EDITORIAL BOARD

Daniel Amick, *Editor-in-Chief*

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BOY, I CAN'T WAIT FOR THAT NEW CARPET! I HOPE IT'S THE FLUFFY KIND THAT GOES BETWEEN YOUR TOES AND MAKES YOUR FOOT COZY AND SQUISHY AND HAPPY TO BE ALIVE!

UM, BUT WE DON'T WORKOUT BAREFOOT...

THEN WHAT DO WE NEED CARPETING FOR, ANYWAY?

EASY FOR YOU TO SAY... PUT YOURSELF IN MY SHOES AND SEE HOW YOU LIKE IT!

By Mark Parsons / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Tech must take stand on gay marriage

The Pride festival roars into Atlanta this weekend with masses of revelers converging on Piedmont Park for a three-day celebration.

Although Midtown Atlanta is usually the epicenter of the legions of rainbow-colored flags, tight Abercrombie muscle shirts, and scantily clad women, the festivities rarely cross past the interstate and over onto campus. For the average student taking summer classes, the Pride festival is just another hot summer weekend.

While previous years' celebrations have always taken on a semi-political theme, the issue that is on the minds of many of this year's Pride participants is the upcoming referendum on a Georgia constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage in the state—a referendum the Georgia General Assembly approved in a contentious vote this past April.

After this weekend, the issue of same-sex marriage is going to be even louder and more unavoidable as a turbulent November voting day approaches. If the ban on same-sex marriage passes, not only will lesbians and gays not be able to marry, they will also be denied any benefits that would recognize their relationship as a couple.

Therefore, if Georgia's voters say yes to the ban, the gay and lesbian community will not be the only ones who suffer; Tech's reputation will also be harmed.

Universities as diverse as Princeton and Georgia State University are adopting policies that allow same-sex couples to have the same benefits as heterosexual couples. These institutions recognize the importance of tying success in a student's personal life with success in the academic world.

Although Tech currently has anti-discrimination policies for factors including sexual orientation, without including domestic partnership benefits, anti-discrimination policies are meaningless.

Tech currently does not offer benefits to students in same-sex relationships. By comparison, the Institute does provides a wide range of benefits to heterosexual couples.

For example, heterosexual married couples can pay a nominal fee that allows their spouses to use the services of the Student Heath Center and Campus Recreation Center. Their spouses can also receive BuzzCards, use the library facilities, and otherwise have their relationship recognized by the Institute through any other incidental benefits.

Another example is Tenth and Home, the new family housing facility that is currently being built, is one of the signature projects of the Institute. According to the promotional material on its website, "Tenth and Home is a family housing building; with the exception of single parents living with their children, no singles will be permitted to live at Tenth and Home."

This advertising proves deceptive. According to Dan Morrison, Associate Director of Residence Life for the Department of Housing, "At this time, we are only able to offer family housing to married couples whose marriage is recognized by the State of Georgia," a fact not mentioned in any of the materials on the website.

If Tech continues to lag behind other universities in offering these benefits to same-sex couples, then it is possible that gay people will

choose to attend a university other than Tech where their rights and relationships are recognized.

Some people believe that same-sex marriage, or any official recognition of those relationships, violates their moral or religious beliefs.

But there was a time in Tech's history when "moral and religious beliefs" were used to prevent women and African-Americans from attending. While each of the communities has faced different struggles, the opposition they encountered was always the same. History shows the real motivations behind these "religious and moral" arguments: ignorance and fear.

Sitting in the gallery of the Georgia House of Representatives, I listened as legislators spewed their hatred and animus towards lesbian and gay persons. While they would cloak their arguments in biblical verses to protect the sanctity of marriage, they failed to understand the core argument in this marriage debate:

You cannot separate acceptance of lesbian and gay persons from acceptance of the relationships of lesbian and gay persons with each other. Hatred of the same-sex relationships is little different than hatred of gay and lesbian people individually.

Ultimately, the opinions and beliefs of either individuals—or the state government through a constitutional amendment—will not prevent gay and lesbian persons from falling in love.

> "For the average student taking summer classes, the Pride festival is just another hot summer weekend."

Michael Handelman
News Editor

All these new eats are making me hungry

I remember my first semester at Tech—summer 2001. I was living on East Campus, and Brittain Dining Hall was closed for renovation.

Since I didn't have a car at the time, I didn't have many choices for places to eat that were within walking distance. There was Junior's Grill and Quizno's, but Junior's was closed after lunch, and I got bored of Quizno's after a while.

There was also the Student Center Food Court, but it was also only open for lunch, and it did not have as many choices as it does now. There were some options for delivery food, and, if you got desperate, there were always the ever-present vending machines.

Fast forward three years to summer 2004. We now have Italian at Pandini's (my favorite), Asian food at Tin Drum, Mexican at Moe's, Ribs and Blues, St. Charles Deli and more. And, excitingly, there are more choices to come.

Einstein's is opening in the Student Center Commons this fall, which will provide us with more breakfast choices.

Tech Square will also be featuring some new venues as well: Khao, an international food market, is scheduled to open soon, along with a Mediterranean restaurant, Great Wraps and some other choices. H_2O Cafe

"Are all these restaurants really a good thing, in terms of improving student life on campus?"

Suyog Mody
Sports Editor

for the health-conscious is opening at the Campus Recreation Center in the fall as well, and a new Jake's ice cream is scheduled to open at Tech Plaza during this summer.

Even Woodruff, Brittain and the Food Court, with their recent renovations, have expanded and include more choices than ever before. The dining halls also offer more variation in meal plans than before, since you can choose from the Gold, White, Blue, Casual or West Side plan.

And, if you still insist on delivery, you can now go to **www.campusfood.com** for online ordering and delivery from eight to 10 restaurants within the vicinity of campus.

So much for my shameless publicizing of all the new eateries. The real question is: are all these new restaurants really a good thing, in terms of improving student life on campus?

Or is Tech getting too commercialized from the opening of

fast food chains that just want to make a profit and don't care about the students?

I would argue that we are better off than before. It used to be that students would have the problem of not being able to find places to eat their favorite type of food.

Soon, though, students will have a far more attractive problem: one of having too many places to choose from. Our dining halls do a great job, but even freshmen could do with eating out every once in a while. Sure, it's easy to hate on fast food chains for being unhealthy, but people eat at chains outside of campus anyway, so why should we avoid them on campus?

In fact, I would venture to say that there is still a need for more places to open up on campus. For example, there is still not an Indian food place near campus. With such a large Indian student population, it's a sure bet that this would be a popular location. And

I'm also sure even students who are not Indian would enjoy the taste of chicken curry with naan or some tasty samosas.

Even the Food Court could be open late for dinner. I had a friend come to Tech recently and he was extremely surprised that our Food Court closed after lunch. I'm sure this is something that has been discussed before, but if it would be possible to keep the Food Court open, that would be another great option for students to eat, socialize and study (sometimes).

Another issue that must be dealt with, with all these new restaurants, is expanding the use of BuzzCards as methods of payment.

Except for Ribs N' Blues, most of the near-campus locations don't accept Buzzcards. Though this is something for the restaurant owners and the BuzzCard Center to sort out, this should be promoted as an option, since sales are almost guaranteed to be boosted if BuzzCards are accepted.

As Tech continues in its effort to improve campus and enhance the standard of student life, the easier they make it for students to manage non-class-related issues, the happier students will be.

Of course, students would be happier if classes got easier, too…but that's a topic for another time.

## OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT – or – NOT
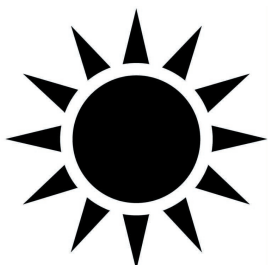
Track and field
Members of the track and field team excelled at this month's NCAA Championships. The women's 4x100 relay team took sixth place, pushing the women's team to a 15th place finish, unprecedented in the team's history. Chaunte Howard won the national title in the women's high jump, making her a four-time All-American and qualifying her for the U.S. Olympic trials in California this July.

Don't come to Papa
Papa John's was the first off-campus restaurant to accept BuzzCard. Now, due to conflicts with the BuzzCard Center, it no longer does, meaning that cash-strapped students won't have BuzzCard funds to fall back on when they need a midnight pepperoni fix. It's also disappointing news to anyone who was looking forward to expanding BuzzCard usage to other off-campus establishments.
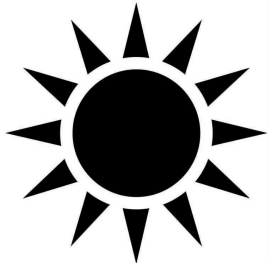
No more school!
Well, for some of us, anyway. Students enrolled in seven-week summer sessions will be finished with classes next week, providing a nice vacation before fall semester begins in the next few months. Those of us in regular summer sessions, however, will still have five more grueling weeks to go—so hang in there.

A weighty issue
One of the most frequently-used areas of the CRC, the weight room, will be closed starting this week. Determined students can still work out at the Barbell Club in O'Keefe, but other patrons of the CRC will just have one less option for exercising indoors during one of the hottest months of the year.

Can't beat the real thing

By Maria Nicole Smith
The Pitt News

(U-WIRE) U. of Pittsburgh—I was offered the opportunity to experience e-learning when a class I wanted to take went over capacity. The professor e-mailed me, suggesting I take the class online. Online? Was he crazy?

The traditional classroom is the perfect learning environment for me. Quirky personalities can't hide behind a screen and fancy rhetoric in a classroom. In class, what I see is what I get, and I like that.

Some disagree with me. For some students, online education offers more mature discussion and flexibility. There's no snoring, and everyone has time to fully develop and proofread his or her thoughts before clicking "submit" on the discussion board. According to a *U.S. News* article, enrollment for online education has shot up by almost 20 percent this year. And by 2005, the e-learning market will top $4

billion.

Don't let the popularity fool you, though. The fantasy of instructor-less education quickly fades as courses have little or no personal interaction—sometimes online courses are just the contents of books uploaded onto Web sites—and posted dropout rates are as high as 60 percent. To make up for this, several online courses have been adjusted to allow for more dialogue via discussion boards and e-mails. According to the article, there is also a push for smaller class sizes.

Regardless of the modifications, cyberspace cannot serve as a substitute for the classroom. It's like thinking a phone call from a friend is the same as having that friend show up to talk with you. Utilizing technology and having resources for class discussion available online is a great supplement to, not a replacement for, education. Even with the best technology, e-learning needs a human touch.