

OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, March 4, 2005



"The South's Liveliest College Newspaper"

TECHNIQUE

Serving Georgia Tech since 1911

Quote of the week:

"When there is no peril in the fight
there is no glory in the triumph."
—Pierre Corneille

OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

Collective bargain

Recently the Residence Hall Association (RHA) and the Department of Housing have begun exploring Housing's collective liability policy in light of an increase in vandalism incidents in residence halls, most notably recent events in Eight Street and Center Street Apartments. The current policy states that students are jointly responsible for the cost of repairs of any breakages or damages within the common areas of residence halls and apartments. If the responsible party for the vandalism is unknown, then Housing can charge everyone in a hall or apartment for the damages equally. The policy is generally only invoked when there has been an excessive amount of damages caused to a hall, and the minimum amount of a fine is \$25.

While it may seem unfair to residents who have played no part in the vandalism incidents to pay fines, the policy is a necessary evil for Housing. Otherwise the costs of maintaining the dorms would increase. However, it is important that a revised policy be formed with more detailed information on how much students have to pay in proportion to the amount of damages incurred, how many residents are subject to fines depending on where and when the incident occurred, and detailed warning procedures before a fine is even accessed.

Since this issue affects 6,000 residents living on campus, it is important that students become involved in the decision-making process on what changes, if any, should be made to the current policy by making their views known to their RHA representatives. Housing is not your typical landlord, and students should understand that the rules for living on campus are entirely different from those for off-campus apartments.

Making a splash

After doing an exceptional job hosting the ACC Men's and Women's Swimming & Diving Championships, the Aquatic Center has become the venue of choice for premier events, with plans on the horizon to host future NCAA national junior championships, NCAA championships and tomorrow's NCAA Last Chance meet. The event brought much-needed publicity to our teams, who have worked tirelessly to build fan support at their new home since they moved in less than two years ago. Students who had never previously attended a meet were drawn from across campus, and many were able to watch the event while working out at the CRC. We applaud the work that Head Coach Seth Baron has done to build up the national reputation of Tech's athletic programs and facilities, and we look forward to upcoming years.

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

EDITORIAL BOARD

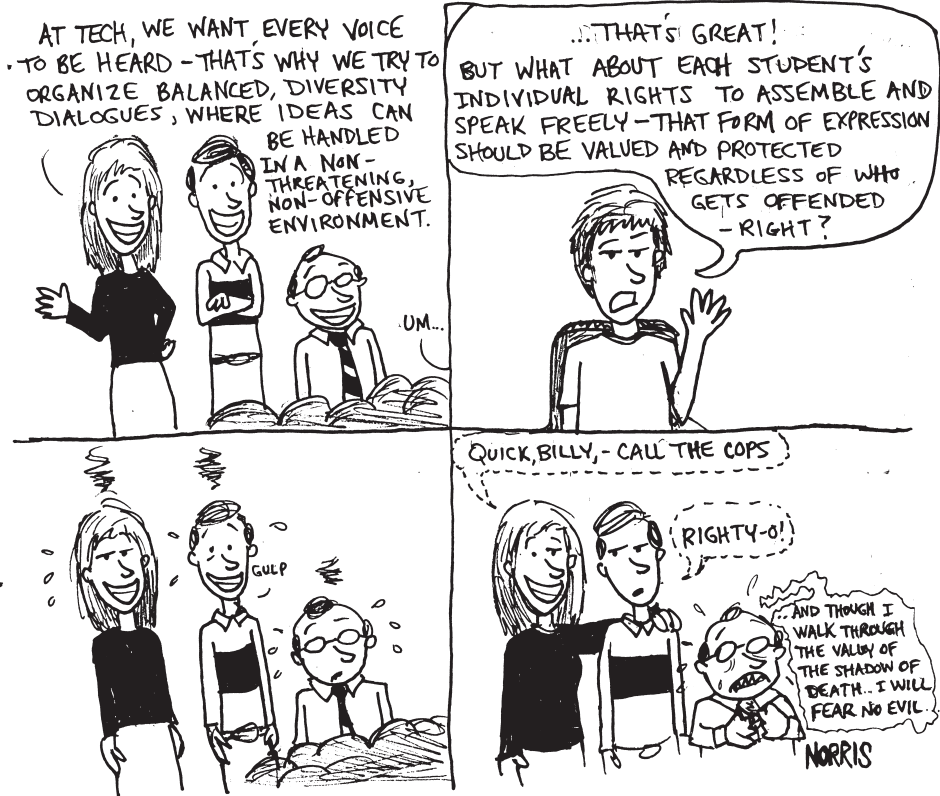
Daniel Amick, *Editor-in-Chief*

Jennifer Schur, *Executive Editor*
Stephen Baehl, *News Editor*
Jennifer Lee, *Focus Editor*
Hillary Lipko, *Entertainment Editor*
Kyle Thomason, *Sports Editor*

Kimberly Rieck, *Opinions Editor*
Jamie Howell, *Photography Editor*
Joshua Cuneo, *Online Editor*
Lauren Griffin, *Advertising Manager*
Art Seavey, *Development Editor*

Copyright Notice

Copyright © 2005, Daniel Amick, Editor-in-Chief, and by the Board of Student Publications. *Technique* is an official publication of the Georgia Tech Board of Student Publications. No part of this paper may be reproduced in any manner without written permission from the Editor or from the Board of Student Publications. The ideas expressed herein are those of the Editor or the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Board of Student Publications, the students, staff or faculty of the Georgia Institute of Technology or the University System of Georgia.
First copy free. Subsequent copies \$1 each.



By Matt Norris / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS
First printed Nov. 7, 2003

Leadership programs need retooling

How many student leaders does it take to screw in a light bulb? Well, it doesn't really matter if they can't afford a light bulb in the first place.

Intrigued by the latest squabble over the LeaderShape program, I began thinking. On campus, we have Emerging Leaders with a budget of about \$50,000. LeaderShape is priced around \$50,000 also. According to our leadership website (yes, we actually have one; I was surprised too: www.leadership.gatech.edu. Check out their "Levels of Leadership" section for a good laugh.) the Bradley-Turner Foundation at some point awarded Tech with a \$1 million dollar endowment specifically for leadership initiatives. These are not the only groups and programs.

The upshot is that leadership education involves a large sum of money. Yet we do not seem to have a clear idea about how exactly this expenditure benefits campus.

Therefore, I was pleased to read that Student Affairs will be taking an in-depth look at these programs. "We're in the process of trying to re-energize a discussion that started probably five years ago on leadership education programs," said William Schafer, vice president of Student Affairs, in the *Nique* last week.

This campus needs a debate about which is more effective, teaching students how to hypothetically lead, or on-the-job-training and having funds available so that the opportunities exist for students to step up as leaders. This is especially pertinent in the shadow of yet another choice between slashing Tier III funding and increasing our Student Activity Fee.

Current initiatives have a huge selection bias, meaning those who don't want anything to do with activities labeled as "leadership development" and all its connotations, will probably not sign up for a course or a weeklong workshop.

This begs the question: If these



"If these programs only attract 'leaders' anyway, then what are we actually developing?"

Art Seavey

Development Editor

programs only attract "leaders" anyway, then what are we actually developing?

Jennifer Schur wrote an excellent editorial back on Oct. 15, addressing the current student-organization system, which in my opinion is a side-effect of these leadership programs—a self-perpetuating clique of student leaders exists on campus, or rather "...elites serving elites..."

When I was visiting Harvard last year I had the chance to speak candidly with a professor in the Kennedy School of Government. We got around to talking about the different academic centers available to students. He volunteered the idea that, from his experience, these centers seem to come and go like fads in cycles of five to six years. He felt the leadership-education bug—also the itch of moment at Harvard—had been played and would slowly suffer the usual burnout.

Tech's student body has never been one to jump on the latest fashions; maybe the Institute is catching the leadership jive too late. Have our current student leaders so quickly disappeared that we need to institute some bureaucracy as a stop-loss measure? Come on now, what we call civilized society has existed for thousands of years. Any charlatan posing as a "leadership consultant" portraying it as a novel concept will have some ulterior motive.

If pushy donors who earmark funds are the reason we have all this money for leadership initiatives, then the issue is more tenuous;

however, Tech still needs to stand firm. Money should not be taken just because someone wants to give it; every program has unintended consequences. Donors need to be educated that the Institute might be in a better position to decide how to allocate their contributions than they are.

I'm going to give our administrators the benefit of the doubt and assume that leadership programs are worthwhile. In that case, let's prove it. We have an entire community on this campus skilled in taking unwieldy, politically charged problems and determining the cost-effectiveness of programs: the School of Public Policy.

Funding a short, two- to four-year longitudinal study of student leaders and the leadership-development architecture on campus would be an excellent living lab for policy students. If the results were to come out positive then fantastic, we have been doing well and now have something tangible to display to donors and other schools. We may also learn where our returns will effectively be diminished.

If we find that our programs have serious flaws and the money could be better spent elsewhere, then that's just as beneficial a result. At least we would know where we are and how to change for the better.

To me, it seems we are currently leading leadership blindly. An unbiased, academic study is the only way to make sure that the light bulb gets installed properly.

Student Center display prompts new debate

This past Tuesday morning began like most Tuesday mornings do, only this Tuesday morning was to include a fatefully uncooperative egg. Upon pulling the bowl filled with what was supposed to be a slightly overcooked sunny side up egg out of the microwave, the yoke suddenly exploded into my eye. I suppose my dad would have said that the yoke was on me.

I thought that the day couldn't get any worse (or stranger), but then I went to the Student Center. And saw the display case.

Entitled "Feminist Fantasies," the case was filled with all sorts of propaganda put together by the College Republicans. At first I was shocked and taken aback by the audacity of some of the content, especially considering the display was next to an advertisement about the events of Women's Awareness Month.

When I examined the Republican ad further, though, I had to chuckle because whatever message they were trying to send wasn't very clear—I couldn't quite figure out what the point was of the collected quotes and pictures of Republican women like Ann Coulter. It wasn't just me, either; I had friends corroborate my uncertainty.

Was the argument that talking about women's issues openly is devil-inspired? Or maybe



"Was the argument that talking about women's issues openly is devil-inspired?"

Jennifer Schur
Executive Editor

that women are evil for having abortions?

Either way, using Coulter as a face in any publicity campaign, for or against women's rights, automatically puts it on the fringes of reality. I understand there are radicals for every viewpoint, but parading them in the middle of my Student Center is no way to win my heart and mind.

No matter how valid the Republican's argument might be (assuming of course, that there is an argument to be found somewhere in the display), I'm not going to search very hard for it once I'm turned off by one of the most incendiary pundits there is!

I can just read the letters to the editor now, so before you write in about the newest case of *Technique* liberal bias, let me say that I'm all for right-wingers like William Safire, the illustrious and recently retired *New York Times* op-ed columnist, and

Ainsley Hayes, a Republican lawyer from the first few seasons of the *West Wing*. All I'm arguing for here is that the organizers of the display case should have decided what the point of their space was, and if it was simply to make the people who already agree with them nod happily as they pass by and see something bolstering their preconceived views, then well done. But if the aims were higher, to teach people who disagree something new and give them reasons to take pause and re-evaluate their opinions, then you've failed miserably by instead putting your observers on the defense.

Regardless of whether I agreed with the message or how effective the Republican group transmitted their beliefs, I applaud them as a student organization for putting forth the effort to take a political stance and publicly exhibit their views.

Political activism seems to be

void from the student body except every four years when people, mostly without any real political thoughts, cares or knowledge, put a sticker on declaring their preference because that's what everyone else is doing.

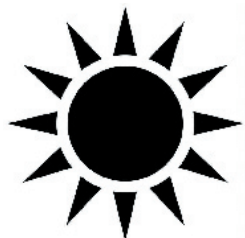
Although we're absorbed in our respective classes, student groups and social circles, we should all still take the time to be informed about what's going on in the world around us. At least a weekly read of the online edition of a national paper will suffice, so that when things like this display case present themselves, you'll know enough to have an informed opinion. Plus, it's one more subject for conversation in your social circle.

The Student Center display case and last year's soapbox debates on Skiles Walkway were great. They encourage the student populace to have real discussions about opinions—things that are sadly absent from typical Tech classes. And what is the true college experience without late night debates among friends, arguing until you don't remember what it is that you're arguing about?

The College Republicans' ad got me to reexamine and defend my opinions about issues that affect me, and there's not much more I could ask for out of a bulletin board in the Student Center.

OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT- or -NOT



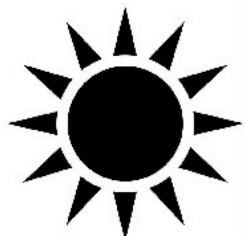
Seniors' farewell

If you're part of Luke Schen-scher, B.J. Elder, Will Bynum, Isma'il Muhammad, or Anthony McHenry's posse, tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. is your last chance to support them in their final home game at Tech. Senior day against the Clemson Tigers is a game that b-ball fans should try to attend to support the Jackets in their quest for a ticket to the upcoming March Madness tournaments.



Mixed signals

Just when we thought it was safe to break out the shorts and T-shirts, Mother Nature gave us a slap in the face with the recent onslaught of dreadfully cold weather. Now this weekend, the temperature is supposed to warm up, but who knows how it'll turn out with the unpredictability we've witnessed as of late. We wish Mother Nature would make up her mind already, we're tired of her hot-cold personality.



Surveying students

Throughout each stage of the job search for a new chair for the School of Industrial Engineering, ISyE students have been given the opportunity to sit in on interviews and open forums with the candidates. By including students' opinions and concerns into the process, ISyE is certain to remain No. 1 in the rankings.



Advertise, please

Instead of sending out useless emails about WebCT changes that won't take effect for months, a better use would be to let us know about major events that will be hosted on campus. We should be hearing about all of these high school basketball tournaments and concerts that we keep missing.

YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tolerance misunderstood

[Editor's Note: This letter responds to the Feb. 25 letter to the editor Tolerance of differences avoids slippery slope.]

In the idea of tolerance, there is a crucial, underlying element: disagreement. We cannot tolerate someone who shares our own views. Tolerance is reserved for what we think is wrong. Current popular opinion overlooks this element. If you think something is wrong, you are labeled as intolerant, especially concerning the issue of homosexuality.

I find it ironic that in order to tolerate something, you must first think it is wrong, yet doing so brings the accusation of intolerance. However, one may disagree with and reject another's ideas or behavior without rejecting an actual person.

Ivan Raikov misses this point in his letter in the Feb. 25 issue. Mr. Raikov claims that promoting tolerance of homosexual persons does not force homo-

sexuality on anyone. However, it is not homosexuals as people that the rest of society takes issue with, rather their behavior.

Tolerating people is distinct from tolerating ideas/behavior. The first requires that the views of all people receive acknowledgement but does not imply that all of these views have equal merit. Rejecting another person's ideas/behavior does not mean automatically rejecting that person.

Calling someone intolerant because he disagrees with the someone's behavior is a warped view of tolerance. The issue has been turned upside down—tolerate most behavior, but don't tolerate opposing beliefs about those behaviors. It seems that contrary moral opinions are instead "imposing your views on others."

Dawn Parker
gtg087g@mail.gatech.edu

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.

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 billing should be directed to Corey Jones at (404) 894-9187, or Rose Mary Wells 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's the best way to deal with stress from classes?



Pierce MacMillan
INTA Fourth-year

"Skip the work."



Betsy Gooch
STaC First-year

"Watch TV drama."



Kevin Smith
ISyE Second-year

"Bang my head against a wall."



Chika Umolu
EE Third-year

"Sleep and watch movies."

Photos by Matt Bishop

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Grads' compensation packages need closer examination

Let me begin by stating that the opinions expressed in this column may not necessarily represent the opinion of its writer. Instead the ideas are points of discussion that deserve to be put forward for public debate. Please remember that what is written or related as personal experiences probably does not necessarily reflect my present situation, but comes from other sources close to the author.

Having said all of this, we can now safely embark upon this column. The topic is one close to the heart: reality and livelihood of all graduate student workers. Having seen graduate student life on two continents and in two different departments, I can clearly tell everyone that there is a certain amount of similarity between the lives of graduate students everywhere.

The first topic of discussion is the amount to which graduate students are valued in the research university setting. It can be opined that the economic model upon which the research university is based would fail were it not for the raw talent, time, sheer effort and more time applied by graduate students in coordination with their advisors. When one pictures the classic graduate student, one image comes to mind: TAs and research assistants, the people who just seem to hang about Tech for years on end without ever seeming to get any closer to graduation. Research not only provides Tech with a large source of income but is also one of



“What would we like to see more of? More time with our advisors, brilliant ideas from the divine, and MONEY!”

Karen Feigh
Columnist

Tech's main recruiting draws to undergraduate students: the potential to attend a top research institution and work with leading researchers. This is a “win-win” situation for new recruits, the real RATs at Tech. Not only do they learn from the best faculty, but they also gain experience in a major research setting. This experience is greatly influenced by the graduate students that they come into contact with both in the classroom and the laboratory.

Most of you do not need convincing of your importance to Tech, so back to the question of value. How are graduate students compensated for filling such valuable shoes? What motivates us? What would we like to see more of? More time with our advisors, brilliant ideas from the divine, and MONEY!

Let's focus on the money for now. On one hand you could argue that students at Tech are lucky; most of us get paid to teach or do research while attending school. Not bad you say, considering that a GRA and GTA at Tech includes tuition, amazing flexibility of work hours and

20 percent of health insurance costs. Even though graduate stipends have been on the rise over the past few years, the stipends graduate assistants receive are both taxable and benefit-deprived. While I can understand paying into Social Security (may we actually be fortunate enough to benefit from our contributions) and Medicare, as we are a state school, it seems that a tax exemption would be in order. It used to be this way, but all that changed in 1986 when stipends became taxable. And recently the IRS tightened rules to eliminate them.

The one exemption we do still enjoy is not a true tax exemption. Student stipends are FICA (Social Security, Medicare, etc.) exempt. This means we are actually cheaper than ‘regular employees’ because as our employer Tech does not have to contribute to FICA or any retirement account on our behalf. A graduate student's cost to Tech is limited to the cost of their stipend and a few hundred dollars in health insurance supplements.

Tech officially has three levels of

employment: regular, temporary and student. Students are not “regular” employees and are not eligible for a variety of benefits extended to “regular” employees. So what is the difference between “regular” employees and “student” employees? Well very little of substance: “regular” employees must work at least 20 hours a week, “student” employees may work no more than 20 hours a week. One may argue that “regular” employee turnover is lower, but considering the average time it takes to achieve a PhD at Tech, I'd say that graduate student turnover rate isn't all that high.

I put forth the notion that this is not fair work practice. As far as I can tell, as “student” employees, graduate students are not eligible for the following: dental insurance, disability insurance, flexible spending accounts, life insurance, retirement plans (where the State contributes in addition to what you invest), substantially subsidized health insurance, the ability to pay for parking passes monthly out of pre-tax dollars and the list goes on. “Regular” employees are also eligible for tuition reimbursement for tuition and fees for up to six

credit hours a semester, and as every graduate student knows our “fees” are hardly ever waived.

If graduate students are such an important part of the economic livelihood of the Tech community (which we are), why aren't we afforded at least some of the same benefits as “regular” staff? My guess is there are two major reasons: it would be too expensive and because we've never stood up for ourselves and asked for these benefits.

History has taught us that no rights have ever been extended to a populace that did not request them and was not willing to work toward their achievement, except in the case of Bob Cratchet, who had some ghostly assistance. Maybe

this column will get people talking about the value that graduate student assistants make to Tech. May it make us all wonder if graduate students are being compensated proportional to their contribution. Let us begin by requesting the right to pay for our parking passes monthly and on a pre-tax basis like other ‘regular’ employees. This would be a good first step in both more equitable compensation and in reducing the semester start-up burden.

