

OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

Time of contemplation

Tragic death illuminates serious campus problem

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of the graduate student who took his own life over the weekend. A loss of a life is always tragic, and this incident serves as a sobering reminder of the obligation we have as members of the Tech community to help one another handle problems regardless of the nature of them.

Mental health difficulties can be just as dangerous as any other issue. As students seek medical assistance when they feel ill, students should feel equally comfortable seeking help when the stresses and obligations of college life become overwhelming. Students, faculty and staff must understand the importance of being compassionate to people who are dealing with these issues and should be willing to listen and help. People who seek professional help should be applauded by fellow members of their community, not chastised.

While Tech currently offers on campus

resources, more can be done to help students. Knowledge of the counseling center is lacking, with many students being completely unaware that one exists. Unfortunately, in several situations, people who attempt to use the counseling service are told to attend group sessions, something that may be uncomfortable. Tech should also create an open dialogue about mental health issues similar to the Take Back the Night event, a gathering which has successfully increased awareness about violent crimes against women.

The Tech administration must also not shy away from this issue. While maintaining respect for the family should always be given primary consideration, the administration must reach out to students when unfortunate events like this occur and remind them that seeking help early can prevent a tragic incident. It is disrespectful to the victims of mental health to ignore the situation and to allow more students to be hurt.

The Consensus Opinion reflects the majority opinion of the Editorial Board of the Technique, but not necessarily the opinions of individual editors.

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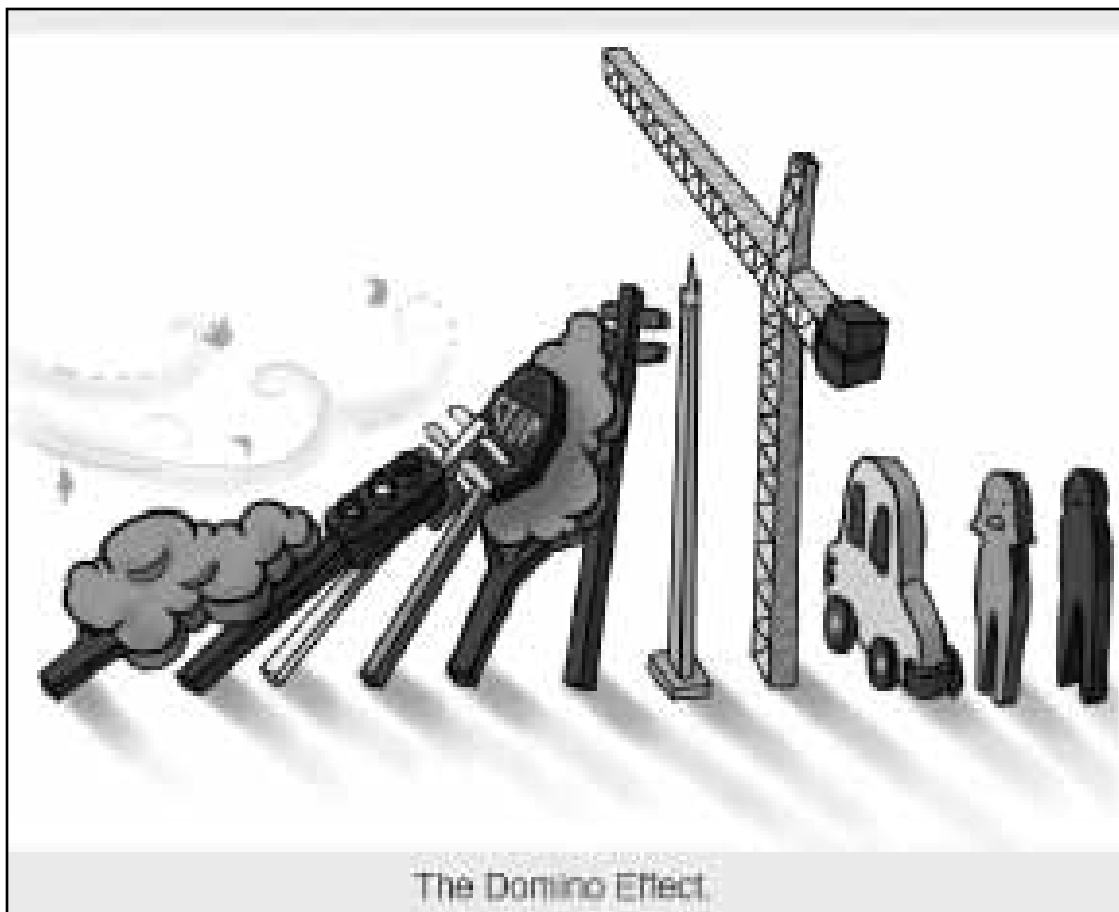
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The Domino Effect

Student-faculty understanding needed



“Tech faces the cold, hard truth that this breakdown in student-faculty interaction is a shared venture and a shared failure.”

Austin Edwards

SGA Director of Academic Affairs

When the Princeton Review recently released its annual college rankings, most Tech students had a field day with UGA's new title as the top party school, but few took notice of our new ranking: fourth in the nation for “Least Accessible Professors.” This sign of a dichotomy on campus was certainly not the first and seems to only reinforce the results of the Student Experience Survey released last May, where students voiced similar concerns. One conclusion of this study that has particularly shocked and resonated across campus deals with the extent of students' pessimism on the weakness of student-faculty interaction and their low confidence that faculty want each student to succeed. In simple terms, students and professors are struggling to see eye-to-eye on the features of a Tech education.

In all fairness to the faculty, these convenient talking points serve more as an indicator of student opinion than as reference to empirical studies on the devotion of professors to the education of their students. We should also consider the massive demands on the faculty's time, from lectures to families, from grant proposals to paper publishing. Perhaps the situation is not perfect, but they work hard to keep everything in balance.

Now begins the blame game. Students will say that professors care more about their research than their lectures. Faculty will say that college students nowadays feel entitled to good grades without putting forth the work ethic to earn A's. In all honesty, both sides are correct in one aspect or another. Faculty members feel the pressure of competing in a globalized academic melee while students face equally stressful demands to fill their resumes with a solid GPA, leadership skills, work experience, volunteer hours, original research and study abroad.

Instead, Tech faces the cold, hard truth that this breakdown in student-faculty interaction is a shared venture and a shared failure. Only our mutual responsibility to define the classroom culture at Tech can be held liable for overcoming the growing divide we face.

Think back on the best academic experience you have had while at Tech. Perhaps, for a faculty member, it was a study abroad trip that you led through the streets of Taipei or for a student, the extra hours that a professor spent after class to explain the finer points of bioinformatic algorithms to you. These moments,

when students and professors can work together, help to develop the education experience we seek, and they will grow increasingly important as we set out on Dr. Peterson's quest to “define education in the 21st century.” In order to develop the service-learning, leadership development and international programs that our students seek, the Tech community must work together to address the student-faculty divide.

Ultimately, the question we are left with is, how can we as students improve this joint venture? Put simply, the answer is individual responsibility. Each student is not solely responsible for the student-faculty dynamic, but we are all personally responsible for our contribution.

As individuals and as a student body, we must work with professors to outline and live by the principles expected of us as equal partners in this struggle. We must be engaged in developing our larger education instead of trying to figure how to simply ‘Win at Tech.’ We must take every opportunity to correct many of the underlying points of contention, by enhancing the role of the Honor Code on campus and fully participating in the CIOS system. In essence, we must extend our campus' sense of community into the classroom.

Yet, this understanding certainly does not absolve the faculty of their fair share of the blame for the current situation. Professors can also help improve the situation significantly by building an open and supportive environment in their classes. Simple steps, such as providing a detailed syllabus on the first day of class, discussing their background and research interests, and repeatedly inviting students to visit during office hours, can make a substantial effect on the morale and enthusiasm of their students. As much as students need to recognize their responsibility in this struggle, the faculty must work to see students as partners both inside and outside the classroom.

While each of these suggestions has the potential to positively impact the educational experience at Tech, they can only hope to pick away at the larger challenge of a campus-wide shift in classroom culture. Student Government and the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning are working hard to facilitate many of these initiatives, but in the end, only individual members of the Tech community can choose to make it happen. Consider this the call to action, the thrown gauntlet.

Public transportation crucial for growth

It is no secret that Atlanta's infrastructure is falling apart. Look around at the crumbling bridges and roads, a sewer system that is falling in on its self and a transit system that is largely ineffective at transporting Atlantans to desirable locations. If Atlanta is going to continue to be a desirable point for people to live and the Southeast's largest city and a business hub then we need to make better infrastructure and public transportation a higher priority.

Atlanta can no longer be identified as a post-Olympic city. The city has outgrown that phase. In the past 14 years since the Olympics, the city has grown and changed in many ways but the infrastructure has remained largely unchanged. The longer that the transit system, sewers, roads and bridges remain stagnant, the bigger the problems are going to be for the City of Atlanta and the state to fix. The tremendous growth of Atlanta since the Olympics has taxed the infrastructure of the city in ways that it was never designed to be able to handle. Unfortunately, progress in these matters has been worsened by the recent downturn in tax revenue across the state.

While I know that efforts are underway to help mitigate many of these infrastructure problems, more attention and effort should be focused on creating a useful transit system that allows Atlantans to move



"The perception of Atlanta being an automobile-friendly city has to change...to grow the city at a sustainable rate."

Kate Comstock
Business Manager

about the city without having to use their cars as frequently. Not only is the current state of metro Atlanta's public transportation system disjointed, but it is also viewed as undesirable to use because the service does not expand to many areas of the metro Atlanta area.

The main problem that does not allow Atlanta pedestrians to be able to freely move about the city is the lack of a cohesive transit system. Currently there is no way for a person to move from many different areas of metro Atlanta without having to get on different lines of service. For example, if you work downtown but live in Cobb County, you could take MARTA out of the city to the nearest Cobb County Transit line that could take you to your destination. Processes like these are a hassle for metro commuters and they only contribute to the traffic problems in Atlanta because many people would understandably rather take their car than put up with inefficient transit systems.

The Transit Governance Study Commission was only

established this year by the state legislature to look into ways to improve metro Atlanta's public transit situation. They are basically tasked with finding the best solution to remedying the divided systems that exist and fixing the funding issues that many of the transit authorities have. It is amazing that it took this long for the legislature to establish a committee to look into how to integrate the transit systems that already exist in the state and work to develop ways to help make sure the existing systems stay afloat financially.

Because almost every metro Atlanta transit system is headed to financial ruins, there is no way that each little transit authority located within counties will be able to sustain themselves in the future without a significant pooling of resources and some sort of extra funding. The future of MARTA is also precarious because they have been running on their reserve funding for the last year, and they will likely run out of money next year.

It is clear that there will have to be many sacrifices

made across many different levels if lawmakers are serious about providing a system to taxpayers that actually provides consistent and convenient service, and they will have to be inventive and willing to compromise if they want to get such a system funded. The hodgepodge of public transit across the city is not a new problem, commuters willing to take public transit have had to deal with this for many years. What is astonishing is that it has taken the transit authorities across the metro area to become broke or shutdown for the legislature to take notice and work to try and resolve the transit issues.

The perception of Atlanta being an automobile-friendly city has to change if we ever want to be able to grow the city at a sustainable rate. The City of Atlanta and the state needs to work harder at implementing systems that allow pedestrians to feel that they can move about the city just as freely as someone with an automobile.

This will include a significant amount of compromise but if the state of Georgia, the City of Atlanta and surrounding metro counties really care about providing their citizens efficient and reliable public transit they will break through the boundaries of public transportation that have been absurdly established.

Leave a legacy through relationships

The alarm clock on my phone screams through the darkness of the early morning. My roommates sharing the hotel room groan from the clamor as I stumble across the room to silence the racket and check the time. I throw on my matching shirt and head to the pair of white vans parked outside the hotel. The cool blast from the AC fights off the stuffy heat from yesterday's sun as the engine springs to life. People filter out to the vans as the clock inches closer to 5:30. Camp runs on a tight schedule, and there is no room to be late. One person sprints to the door as the clock turns to 5:31. Someone is still not out of the room yet. We need to learn to be on time. It looks like we are leaving at 5:25 tomorrow.

This experience was one of many similar summer mornings as the day of camp began. My job as the director for this team of a travelling day camp was something I was very proud of and held in high regard. I was the youngest director they hired. I was placed in charge of a group of twenty other college students and made decisions about each detail of our work at camp and our free time outside. I determined when we woke up in the morning, what time we left, what we ate for dinner, when we would meet and when we had a day off. I evaluated people's performance and decided



"Through failure after failure, I learned that leadership isn't about achieving, it's about inspiring."

Jarrett Skov
Photo Editor

what was acceptable. Walking into that summer, I thought I had everything straight. It took just over two weeks to shatter that illusion.

By the end of the second week, things were rough. Our team morale was down, people were tense with each other, and I was struggling with keeping the team punctual. I set deadlines that people were missing. I held high expectations, yet hardly anyone was striving to reach them. In meetings I was always quick to figure out what our current problems were and do everything possible to fix those problems. The heart of the issue finally dawned on me halfway through the summer: in my head, my job was all about me.

So much about leadership is focused on leaving a legacy. Politicians want the best laws passed under their watch, business leaders want to see high growth during their time in charge. I wanted the summer to be a success because of how it would reflect on me. My own pride hindered me from leading the team.

This desire for accomplishment caused me to lead like someone I am not. I love building relationships and helping people grow, yet I led my team from a distance. I focused all my energy towards enforcing my team to obtain results when I should have spent time investing in relationships so I could effectively empower my team. My mindset was centered on tweaking every detail to make camp as smooth as it could be. Through all this, I neglected to build up my team and motivate them. Through failure after failure, I learned that leadership is not about achieving, it is about inspiring.

This is where my engineering background and leadership experience collided in a wreck that stained the first half of the summer. Engineering has taught me to look at everything as a problem to be solved. People are not just "problems" that you can "fix." As I realized this, I drastically changed my approach. First, I started to act more like myself instead of the big man in charge. I spent time getting to

know my team. I stopped simply fixing problems by telling people what to do and instead started to work with them individually on whatever they were struggling with. Slowly, things began to turn around. People took initiative and created incredible moments. Our staffer who was the least punctual person on the team had a complete about-face in his work ethic. He even inspired a movement during our recreation time that I can only describe as the most intense battle march that first and second graders have ever performed.

The summer of camp concluded as the most intense, stressful, enlightening, humbling and rewarding experience of my life. I walked in thinking I had it all and walked out with the realization that I still have so much to learn.

Memories of my personal achievements are hazy and unclear. However, I do remember how my team developed throughout our summer together. Learning and growing with them is the most gratifying takeaway I have. I was able to have an impact on my team by looking past myself as the leader and instead looking for ways to serve them.

I discovered that a legacy is much more than a list of accomplishments. A legacy is how you set up the people who follow you to succeed.

BUZZ Around Campus

What is your favorite homecoming tradition?



Shabnam Gupta
Third-year BMED

"The homecoming game is always much anticipated."



Sarah Vaden
Third-year AE

"The Mini 500, because I like the accidents."



Sean Bandzar
Third-year BMED

"The homecoming game because I like tailgating with alumni."



Michael Klooster
First-year ME

"Wreck parade."

OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT-or-NOT

**Home again**

The homecoming events around campus have been a pleasant reprieve from the standard week at Tech. It gives students a chance to appreciate the history and tradition of Tech. Granted, some freshmen are going to find it hard to justify the tradition of getting up at the break of dawn to run a race to get a cupcake, but remember: if you train and win, you also get a kiss.

**Pole problems**

While London Bridge might not be falling down, everything around Tech's campus seems to be. After a week that saw a tree fall on CCF, this week saw a telephone pole fall onto the traffic lights at Tenth Street and Hemphill. With this being midterms season, the next logical thing to come tumbling down is the morale of Tech students once grades come out.

**Great debate**

The gubernatorial debate, organized largely by SGA, was a rousing success. Giving students the opportunity to get their question answered by the candidates helps the younger generation engage in politics and gives a voice to the problems of students. SGA deserves kudos for organizing such an event and playing a leadership role amongst the student governments across the state.

**Phishing trip**

The recent trend of phishing from the Tech server has many on campus a little on the paranoid side when dealing with their email accounts. Remember, if an email asks for your social security and a bank account to transfer funds from Nigeria, don't do it. Still, the joke is on the hackers: the chance of finding money in a college student's bank account is pretty slim.

Changes warranted to SGA policy to clearly define funding criteria

The Skydiving Bill debated this week in UHR is the latest in several bills illustrating the weaknesses in the organization's ability to efficiently allocate the Student Activity Fee (SAF). Representatives were without guidance in debate, did not give the bill the time and attention it deserved and failed to find an adequate advocate for the organization. Such conduct is not unique to this bill. Indeed, the UHR acts in this manner whenever it discusses a large bill. This is not an effective way to spend the \$5 million that comes from the SAF each year nor is this representative of the student body's wishes.

Representatives were unable to adequately frame the debate over each of the cuts. Each representative only had his or her biases to look to for guidance. The fact that UHR has no mission and no guiding principles to shape its allocation of the SAF causes this confusion. No one, no leader or collective voice, has charged the representatives with any duty outside of the vague instruction to "serve their constituents."

Also, representatives could not effectively decide on which items were and were not necessary for the functioning of the club. I spoke with all three officers of Skydiving Club at the meeting, and each told me of the complexity of the group. This rings true for all organizations—no one knows what is necessary better for the group than the members. The most distressing problem with the discussion of this particular bill, and others like it, was summed up by John Nahabedian, Skydiving Club's Treasurer, "I felt completely unheard."



"SGA should conduct a thorough examination of the best way to represent the differing interest in the student body."

Mike Donohue

SGA Editor

The fact that Skydiving Club felt that it had no advocate is unacceptable from a body which purports to represent the will of the students. This bill had a sponsor, someone who threw his weight behind the action and pledged to advocate for the club by signing the bill. Yet he had no incentive to actually spend the time necessary to fight for what was in the best interest of the club. In fact, no representative has any real incentive beyond his or her own convictions to fight for a bill.

UHR, as well as the GSS, must rectify these problems by creating incentives and guidelines that encourage SGA members to allocate funds in a way that reflects the wishes of the student body.

First, both bodies should pass resolutions clearly laying out the principles that will inform their decisions on which organizations to fund. While Joint Finance Committee policy lays out rules for what SGA is allowed to fund, this resolution would say what SGA should fund. Such a resolution could be passed as each new House and Senate is elected, allowing for the criteria to change with the opinions of the representatives and senators.

Second, UHR and GSS should cease meeting as a plenary body each week. Instead, they should designate committees of legisla-

tors to scrutinize large bills and meet with organizational representatives to discuss concerns and ways to effectively implement cuts. Only after bills are discussed in this way should the bodies meet as a whole. Such a system would foster actual conversations between small groups of legislators and the organizational representatives. The extra time and focus such committees would create would allow for the least important parts of bills to be cut and the most important parts to remain.

Finally, and perhaps most controversially, the constituencies of representatives and senators should be reexamined. Defining legislators by their major or class does not mean anything. The computer science majors do not have a substantially different opinion of whether to fund Skydiving Club than do mechanical engineers by virtue of their major. Similarly, freshmen and seniors do not have differing interests in funding the club.

There is no easy solution, but SGA should conduct a thorough examination of the best way to represent the differing interests in the student body over the allocation of the SAF. Only by endeavoring to create a system that truly represents and advocates for students can SGA truthfully claim to represent its constituents.

BAD DESIGN ON CAMPUS CONTEST

Frustrated by something on-campus?

Here's your chance to win a *cash prize* and possibly help *fix the problem!*

The two highest scored submissions will receive \$50 each!

Your design might actually be implemented! The Chapter will try to implement some of the best entries, if feasible.

Submit before October 31st!

Visit: www.psychology.gatech.edu/hfes/baddesign.htm

Email: hfes@gatech.edu



The Georgia Tech Chapter of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society is holding this contest as part of National Ergonomics Month.

CLASSIFIEDS

REAL ESTATE

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MISCELLANEOUS

WANTED Vuvuzela players and instruments for acoustics study. Contact: Dr. Cunefare at ken.cunefare@me.gatech.edu

Know of something (or somebody) interesting on campus?

Tell us at focus@nique.net