

OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

## Faculty Furloughs.

*Furloughs would hurt the quality of education.*

It is disappointing that faculty furloughs are to be the new measure taken by the Board of Regents to help with budget shortfall. While understandable that budget saving measures must be taken in the new fiscal year, compromising the quality of education by further taxing the professors is not the most logical course to take.

Our priority at Tech should be to provide the highest quality of instruction to students. If professors feel that their jobs are in jeopardy of furloughs, many professors will focus even more on publishing their research to ensure that they are recognized. While this promotes Tech, extra research by busy professors does not directly improve teaching.

A precarious job situation at Tech will also turn off possible new professors who might otherwise be recruited. Current professors who are furloughed will have less time in the classroom. It is not fair for already tenured professors to be subject

to the furlough clause. Although applying furloughs to tenured professors would save the most money, those professors have been tenured for being in the top of their field. Furloughing our best professors would severely diminish the quality of education here at Tech, but furloughing lesser-paid professors saves little money. This creates a paradox in the process.

We are also concerned with the possible legal issues of changing these professors' contracts after so many years. We hope that they were informed that their contracts were under review and that there is an appeals process for the changes. These important changes should be discussed.

We are glad that President Peterson has said that he does not plan to furlough any professors and hope that this stays true in the upcoming year. If there are furloughs, we expect the process to be conducted with total transparency and concern for the quality of education above budget concerns.

*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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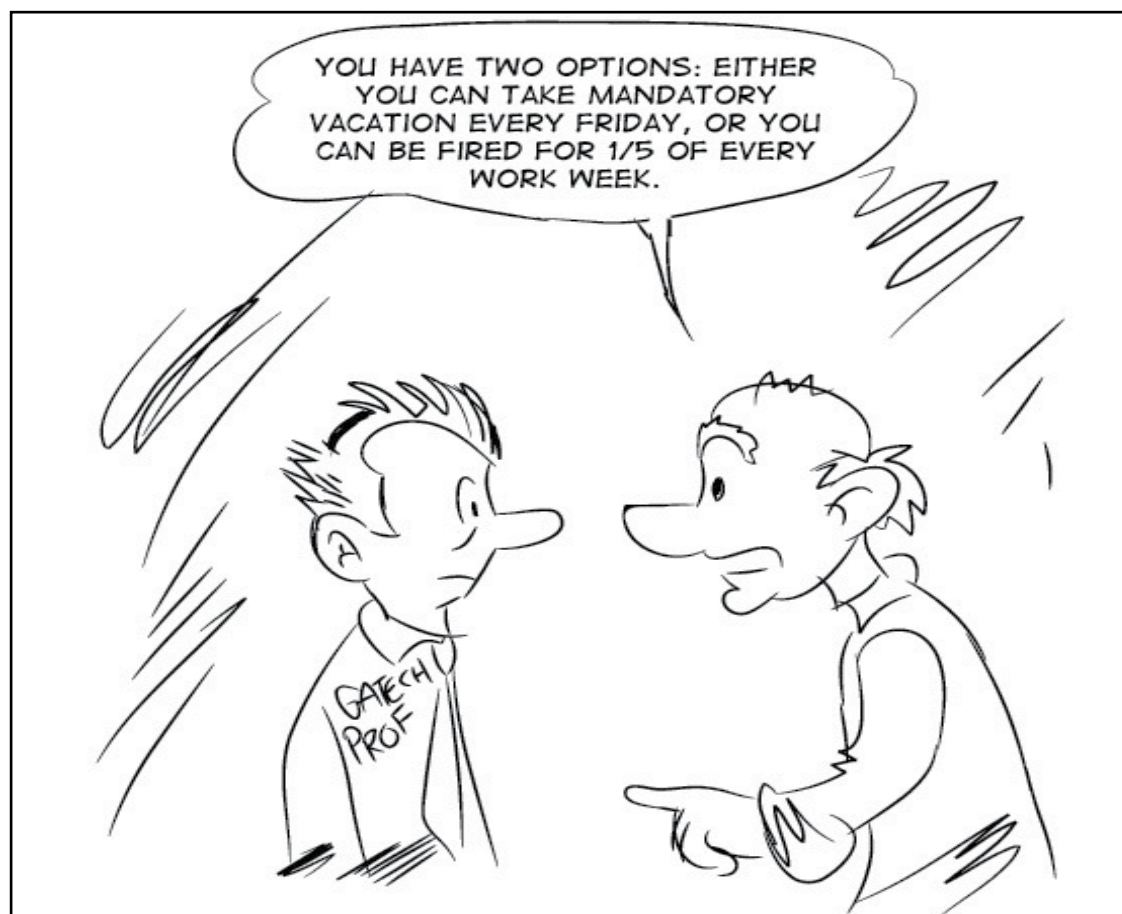
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### EDITORIAL CARTOON BY TIM VAN DE VALL



YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Technology doesn't always improve life

A few comments concerning A. Staskevicius' "Take a Lead in the Issues ..." (5/22, p. 6).

First, the image & conclusions associated with the following statements do not square with the facts:

"As technology makes our lives easier, it seems as if our society is growing more and more complacent, and less active in change. But is this laziness due to the technology being developed?"

To begin with, according to reliable studies, today most people in the US (and elsewhere in the "developed" world) work harder and longer than, say, fifty years ago.

Plus USAns have less (paid) vacation time than many of their W. European counterparts.

Add to that the all time high job stress & alienation, job insecurity (brought about by globalization, which was made possible by some key new technologies), and longer commute time (e.g. daily horrors of rush hour traffic).

You understand why so many people are drained of energy.

National laziness (apathy) has NOT increased, life has gotten a lot harder, in spite of all those high tech gadgets ("time & labor saving devices") surrounding us, and sometimes because of them, we are so hard pressed for time!

I forgot to even mention the decreasing affordability of college for most American families!

So, while I fully agree with the authors plea for social activism, I think we must realize the steady worsening conditions in the daily life of most of our fellow Americans.

There are a lot of good, decent, people around, but the cost of nontrivial activism, such as ending the expanding wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the permanent occupation of Iraq, has gotten a lot higher.

The Internet (youtube etc.) is full of mistreated and abused (e.g. tasered) social activists.

Second, technology is not neutral.

As the article correctly states "technology is the fruit of ideas"; but then it adds "ideas are a symbol of progress."

All ideas? Are technologies ethically or morally or politically neutral?

Are they really "only a tool?" If so, would you give a loaded gun to a five-year-old?

Or nuclear weapons to a Hitler? Or keep building SUVs while ignoring and marginalizing public transportation? And what is progress?

I can cite several areas of modern life where things have

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Letters should not exceed 400 words and should be submitted by Tuesday at 7 p.m. in order to be printed in the following Friday's issue. Include your full name, year (1st, 2nd, etc.) and major. We reserve the right to edit for style and length. Only one submission per person will be printed per term.

measurably gotten worse, with the help of modern technology (intentionally or not with "laws of unintended consequences")

For example, air travel with bad service, no dignity, no comfort, or loss of privacy to big business and big government. Not to mention, the skyrocketing of ratio of civilian to military casualties ("collateral damage") in modern warfare.

Modern technology (and the politics that go with it) induces passivity, atomization, isolation, alienation, consumption (mental and physical obesity).

Third, a remark on progress etc.

Technological progress may be absolute, but outside of extreme situations, like being hungry or on fire most of what matters in life. This means human happiness or satisfaction or contentedness, are all relative.

In other words, does anyone think that my parents' generation was unhappy because they didn't have computers and microwave ovens?

And my generation (post WWII boomers) did not have laptops in college, but we also didn't worry about ecological or environmental catastrophe (or AIDS).

Of course, let's not forget overpopulation or all the other issues that affect your generation. These are inextricably connected with certain modern technologies (policies).

These are big issues with no quick answers; I could go on and on, but I must stop here.

I'll keep my fingers crossed for your generation.

This is going to be a perilous century, perhaps more barbaric than the 20th.

John G. Papastavridis  
ME Professor



# Give reading a chance this summer

Though riddled with final exams, final papers and an inability to explain to my mother why I had ten times as much stuff in my room as I did at the beginning of the year, I could only think of one thing as April came to an end: summer vacation.



**“Each year I excitedly awaited the new list of books I would be required to read, ... and read them in the first month.”**

**Reem Mansoura**  
Focus Editor

I was so excited to get away from Tech classes and the ever-growing tumor that is Tech construction. I was ready to sleep in, catch up with old high school friends, take road trips and partake in ordinary summer sins and debauchery.

Unfortunately I only had a week to complete my summer to-do list since I, like so many others, had decided to take summer classes because I wanted to do the unheard of and “graduate on time.”

While summer is supposed to be a time of fun and relaxation, it seems as though I will no longer have the pleasure of just sitting around for three entire months doing nothing.

And although I will be studying physics and writing editorials all summer long, I was determined to find something to do that made me happy.

That something came in the form of a friend who started reading *Harry Potter* for the first time.

Now before you decide to put the paper down or skip to another article, let me assure you that I am not going to go

over the summer but as a chance to expand my reading horizon. Reading allowed me to “broaden my mind” in the words of Professor Trelawney.

Each year I excitedly awaited the new list of books I would be required to read, and each year I read them all within the first month of summer. Sometimes I would read more books than I had to, just because I couldn’t decide which to choose.

Sure, I was ticked off when they took *Pride and Prejudice* off the summer reading list my senior year, but seeing as how I had already the book I was later content when I instead followed the tale of Tess in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*.

Call me crazy, nerd, bookworm or whatever you like, but I absolutely adore reading and feel as if Tech students especially find reading for leisure unthinkable.

With all the classes and assignments that are currently piled on our workload, who would think to waste their

precious free time doing more reading? I know what you’re thinking. “I’d rather be drinking.”

But there may be a few lost souls at Tech, as I once was, who need to be reminded of how much they enjoyed curling up with a book in their hands, and I hope this reaches you.

I hope you find that good book with the unpredictable, character-driven plot, filled with the various motifs and literary devices we so painstakingly searched for in AP Literature.

For those of you who are rolling your eyes at the moment, know that it doesn’t necessarily have to be raining outside, and you don’t need to be next to a warm fire wrapped in a blanket with hot chocolate in your hand to have the right reading atmosphere.

And the benefit of reading for pleasure is that you don’t have to analyze the book once you’re done. You can just pick up another and the cycle continues, this time in a completely different world with new characters and conflicts.

So take advantage of the nicer days of summer in Atlanta and curl up with a book. Find a good tree, if you want to keep out of the sun, or work on your tan while you read. Meet me with a book in your hand. I’ll be wearing my “reading is sexy” shirt.

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## BUZZ Around Campus

**Do you feel safe around campus?**



**Sydney Schaffer**  
Fourth-year CHBE

**“Yes, the ES&T dungeon is the safest place on campus!”**



**Jeremy Huowitz**  
Fifth-year BME

**“My helmet is the only thing keeping me safe around here.”**



**Jamie Hetfield**  
BioE grad student

**“No, I’m concerned that my entire Metallica discography would be stolen.”**



**Santiago Amos**  
Second-year BME

**“The buddy system has never failed me yet.”**

Photos by Adebola Adedire

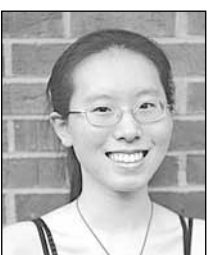
# National debt needs to be re-evaluated

With the recession in America obstinately digging its heels in, other countries are continuing to buy up U.S. debt. Money is just pouring down Capitol Hill – the Obama administration is planning on spending more than \$2 trillion in the next couple of years, \$787 billion in the economic stimulus package, \$634 billion for the new health care reform plan, \$5 billion to turn around failing schools, and that is just the tip of the spending iceberg as Obama seeks to fulfill his campaign promises.

How is the government planning on obtaining all that money? Part of it, as Republican wailers accurately indicate, will come from taxes; there’s no escaping that yoke. But another huge part of the money will have to come from overseas – in other words, more and more borrowing, which translates to more and more national debt.

While I have no issue with the government’s policy of spending to stimulate the economy (because economics professors have taught me the theory behind the high-flown rhetoric), I am very skeptical when it comes to international financing of U.S. deficit spending.

Currently, the national debt is at over \$11 trillion and there is no indication that it won’t continue to grow at roughly the same pace as during the Bush administration.



**“Money will have to come from overseas—in other words more borrowing...which translates to more and more national debt.”**

**Sijia Cai**  
News Editor

Who is financing the bulk of this debt? China and Japan, who together hold more than a quarter of outstanding U.S. government debt. But in these two countries, opinion is now sharply divided over whether governments that are dealing with the effects of global recession on their own soil should continue to bail out a not-so-remote country across the Pacific.

I have had an opportunity to see this debate firsthand in a recent visit to China. People of all ages and from all walks of life are discussing the prudence of buying more U.S. bonds; with the shaky consensus being that although alternatives look even worse, something has to be done, there has to be some reassurance that China’s enormous holdings of U.S. assets are secure.

Last week, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner traveled to Beijing expressly to provide this reassurance, saying that the U.S. government is committed to maintaining a strong dollar and that future

spending by Washington will be heavily regulated and disciplined. Chinese concerns (with regard to more than \$750 billion in Treasury securities) are very natural; no creditor wants to see its debtor borrow enough money to climb out of the crisis and then devalue its currency so that the true value of the debt is minimized. Not to say that Washington would do this deliberately, but if inflation takes off or the dollar weakens even more as a result of the floating currency market, the value of the bonds would be cut dramatically.

As I see it, the general financial relationship between the U.S. and China is this: Chinese exporters provide an enormous number of cheap consumer goods to the wealthy U.S. market, which boosts China’s economy and helps the government shore up huge currency reserves. Then, China invests these trade surpluses into U.S. Treasury bonds and other U.S. assets without the hassle of having to convert currencies.



OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

# HOT-or-NOT



## Flicks on Fifth

The yearly showings of Flicks on Fifth have started for the summer. Even though a free movie outside is always fun, this year's selection looks to be better than ever. With showings of Quantum of Solace and Slumdog Millionaire, Flicks on Fifth is sure to draw a crowd. As an extra plus, there is going to be free popcorn and specials from surrounding restaurants.



## Terrorism Trial

Former Tech student Syed Haris Ahmed was found guilty of conspiring to provide material to support terrorism. Not only is it unfortunate to hear about someone found guilty of supporting terrorism here in Atlanta, it is even worse to hear Tech's name constantly dragged in the mud in association with it. We wish that the media would stop associating his actions with our university.



## Golf Fame

Four Tech ME graduate students recently placed first in the 2009 Design for Direct Digital Manufacturing Student Competition. Their customized golf clubs with integrated sensors not only grabbed the attention of the judges, but business people. The award-winning four hope to commercially manufacture the clubs and ensure better golfing experiences.



## Baseball Loses

A poor showing in the regionals was disappointing for all fans who were watching baseball this season. In particular, the five errors against Southern Mississippi that caused us to lose 10 to 7 and the final loss 12 to 8 that clinched the season's disappointments. We hope that next season will have a brighter showing so that Tech fans will have better games to watch.

# Good communication is an art

Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, SecondLife, YouTube, Skype, iPhone, Kindle, TSquare, BuzzPort, Laptops, Remote Controls, blogs, texting, email... In today's age of technological advancements our generation has grown accustomed to instant information. You can instantly talk to family halfway around the world for free through Skype.



"Talking with your friends and listening to what they have to say can never be replaced by technology."

**Linda Harley**  
Graduate Student Body President

You can instantly see baby pictures of your best friend's 3 year-old on Facebook. You can follow the stock market and check tomorrow's weather, while making a call on your iPhone. With all of this access to information at the tip of our fingers, have we lost the art of communication?

These tools are so alluring and popular because they provide immediate gratification and access to information about anything you can imagine. However, they are only tools and unless treated with care can be problematic and even dangerous.

For example, the person who was twittering while someone was breaking into their house instead of calling the police may have lost a sense of what communication should be for. A little common sense will keep you out of this extreme situation, but do not be lulled into believing that you can share everything with the world and then expect to be safe.

With all of this technology at our disposal, why then is it still necessary to go into a classroom and listen to a professor lecture?

This form of communication is vital to learning as it involves all of the senses. You hear the information, see the solutions, write down the notes and even smell the marker as the professor solves the differential equation on the white board.

Your senses help you to form memories and impressions of

events that last longer than what can be screened in a steady flow of information to you over the Internet. Personal interaction is crucial to forming relationships and good communication skills.

When was the last time you had supper with your family without the television on? When was the last time you were in a meeting and there wasn't someone with a laptop checking email? When was the last time you had the complete attention of a friend that had all the time in the world to sit and listen to you?

Have we grown so immune to hearing that we have forgotten what it means to listen? Talking with your friends and listening to what they have to say can never be replaced by technology, as one of the deepest desires that we all share is the need for someone to care enough to stop and honestly listen what we have to say.

As kids we would always hear "think before you speak" or "you have two ears and one mouth, so you should listen twice as much as you speak".

Good communication comes with practice. You need to learn how to listen and that you need time to understand the heart of the matter before drawing conclusions and speaking. This is not an instant process nor is there a formula you can apply to optimize the outcome.

No, it comes from stumbling

over your lips, sticking your foot in your mouth, taking a deep breath, apologizing and starting over in the hopes to do better. This is something that technology cannot teach you.

As students we can get so wrapped up in running laboratory experiments, reading textbooks, solving problems, writing papers and research that we do not take our noses out of the computer long enough to smell the roses. Tech has so much more to offer than just an amazing education.

Go sailing with your friends, join the bowling team, play flag-football with your roommates, help with a community service projects, cheer at the football game against Georgia, try out the food at Culture Fest and get out there and enjoy what the activity fee that you pay every semester goes towards making these events possible, and therefore it is up to you to get the most out of it. Funding is available to you through the SGA.

My challenge to you is to join at least one organization on campus and participate in the amazing events that are offered, so that next time someone checks your facebook, they will see photos of you having a fantastic time with your friends.

Communication is an art that is mastered over time, so be patient and take every opportunity to learn.



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