OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, February 27, 2004

TECHNIQUE
"The South's Liveliest College Newspaper"
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Quote of the week:
"Some cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go."—Oscar Wilde

OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

Flood from above

The latest saga Facilities workers have had to contain occurred in Center Street Apartments last Thursday, when a high-pressure pipe rupture in the attic caused great quantities of water to leak through all three floors.

Not only was water found flowing out of electrical outlets and vents, but water in the smoke detectors caused them to ring an alarm, rousing residents out of their 3 a.m. slumber. Housing officials have estimated that an excess of $10,000 will be spent in order to fully repair the water damages. With all the complaining about increased tuition and fees, this incident, which might have been caused by rowdy students, points to a greater campus problem relating to the culture of vandalism.

Students who tear down parking gates, graffiti the walls of dorm elevators, steal letters off of campus buildings and throw food against walls are only hurting themselves. Part of the costs that cause student and housing fees to increase go towards fixing all the objects students break. Transportation fees rise to buy more parking deck gates. Housing costs rise to buy paint to free dorm walls of profanity.

Not only is this culture of vandalism—breaking things is cool!—hitting the average student's purse through increased fees, it's also frustrating for the people whose job it is to keep dorms clean and campus infrastructure intact. The time and effort Facilities and Housing employees are forced to spend in replacing objects that would otherwise not be broken would be much better spent fixing things that break on their own.

In addition to wasting time and money, vandalism also makes the campus environment look bad for the many visitors and potential students who tour the Institute on a daily basis. For example, while it might be funny to those who understand the tradition behind stealing the "T" off of Tech Tower, stealing tiny Ts off of academic buildings is not amusing anymore, and just makes our campus look like the school is too poor to afford appropriate signage.

Perhaps students would be deterred from intentionally destroying campus property if figures were released comparing the amount of money used each year to repair damages with the percentage of that money that comes from our fees. This information could be added into the muddle of policies freshmen are informed of in their beginning weeks.

Students should learn from events like the recent Center Street attic incident that vandalizing school property causes more far-reaching, detrimental and costly effects than immediately apparent. We all have a vested interest in keeping the area we inhabit in working order.

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

By Matt Norris / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Get your INTA degree, no writing needed

"This sad reality means we receive a weak foundation in the crucial skill of forming cogent written arguments."

Daniel Amick
News Editor

As an International Affairs major, I'm often asked by engineering-types whether I have to write a lot of essays in my classes.

You would think so. INTA is, after all, a liberal arts major. Many of my colleagues plan to go on to graduate school or law school. We seek jobs at major corporations and government agencies that place a premium on the ability to write well.

But I'm going to let you in on a little secret. As a third-year INTA, having traveled through virtually the entire core curriculum, I have had to write extensively in precisely two courses. Two. In every other class I've taken, professors have assigned multiple-choice tests. Ask any INTA how he or she feels about this form of testing and you will get the same response—it sucks.

It sucks not only as a means of assessing our understanding of the material, but also as a way of getting us to truly engage the subject matter. These blunt instruments test fact retention and recitation. Rarely can a multiple-choice question provoke the kind of analytical thought we so desperately need to develop.

Professors aren't stupid. They know how inadequate multiple-choice tests can be. And don't get me wrong; some INTA faculty members have moved away from them almost entirely, to their credit.

Others, however, continue to use these flawed tools because large class sizes make the prospect of reading and grading 50, 100 or even more essays seem daunting, if not physically impossible. As a result, the sole means of evaluation in some key 2000- and 3000-level courses continues to be multiple-choice testing.

This sad reality means we receive a weak foundation in the crucial skill of forming cogent written arguments. We don't learn how to write clearly and concisely. We don't learn how to pick apart an argument, look for its flaws or analyze its weaknesses. When we are faced finally with a formidable written assignment, these inadequacies manifest themselves. I believe this to be true of most majors here at Tech, but the problem seems particularly acute among INTAs.

I find this situation distressing and unacceptable. Steps must be taken to strengthen the writing education we receive.

Smaller class size would be one obvious solution. It would encourage more faculty-student interaction and make it easier for faculty to grade essays and offer constructive feedback. However, with budgets tightening, and the Sam Nunn School growing every year, that solution seems unlikely.

I have heard several professors note that the process of creating 50 or more multiple choice questions, along with all the possible answers, takes a heck of a lot of time. On the other hand, a good essay question might take ten minutes to develop. Take the time you would have spent developing multiple-choice questions and use it instead to grade our essays.

Additionally, if professors seem uncertain about their ability to grade dozens of essays, they should consider devolving more grading responsibility to their graduate student assistants. But simply introducing more essay-oriented evaluations is only part of the solution. We need more writing education from day one of our freshman year.

Some might point to freshman English courses as the time when we should be developing these skills. I agree, but too often, these courses are simply inadequate. We need more. We need a freshman proseminar. This freshman proseminar would be a class dedicated to close examination of texts and development of essay arguments.

Proseminars would be made up of no more than 20 students, along with an INTA faculty member. Each proseminar section would focus on a particular topic, depending on the interests of the particular professor guiding the section. A list of topics would be made available to entering freshmen beforehand so they could select a topic of interest to them.

The Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University employs such a system, and I think it would make a valuable addition to the INTA curriculum. Admittedly, this could not be implemented in the short-term. For now, the budget crunches that prevent smaller classes also preclude proseminars.

However, as a long-term goal, proseminars make sense. Freshmen would reap the benefits of up-close access to a professor. Professors would be able to teach eager young minds about subjects they are interested in. Above all, students would get the kind of writing practice they need to be successful.

Classic TV shows ending like losing a *Friend*

"I was invested in the characters and their lives as though they were part of my own circle of friends."

Kimberly Rieck
Sports Editor

At 9:45 p.m. eastern standard time last Sunday, an era ended as *Sex and the City* had its series finale on HBO. Several of my friends and I have watched the show religiously since its inception over six years ago. The life and adventures of fashion-icon Carrie Bradshaw, brilliantly played by Sarah Jessica Parker, and her three best friends, Samantha, Miranda and Charlotte, captivated me from day one.

No matter how busy a week I may have had or how many meetings I had Sunday night, I always tried to make time to watch the show. *Sex and the City* held my attention for so long because I was invested in the characters and their lives as though they were members of my own inner circle of friends. Several of my friends shared my obsession—I can't even remember how many conversations I've had about the latest episode, chatting on and on about Carrie as though she was a real person and not a fictional writer in TV land. According to *Reuters*, 10.6 million viewers tuned into the finale.

To make matters even worse, my beloved *Friends* ends May 6 after nine seasons on the air. That's right, only 68 days until the end of one of the greatest comedies in television history. It means that we only have 68 days to see if Rachel and Ross will finally get back together.

While there may be other quality shows on television, how many shows are as addictive and speak to my demographic group, ages 18-34, as well as *Friends* and *Sex and the City*?

Both shows have the amazing ability to suck you in for half an hour and make you forget about the rest of the outside world. Viewers can become so wrapped up in the lives of fictional characters that they completely forget their own trials and tribulations for a brief 30 minutes. The line between reality and fiction becomes blurred as you connect and bond with the characters. There are not many people that you see for half an hour every Thursday for nine years.

The two shows have provided a culture barometer. I remember bonding with new people the first week of college by finding out who shared my interest in *Friends*, *Dawson's Creek*, *Felicity* and *Sex and the City*. All of the aforementioned shows had characters people my age could identify with easily. *Felicity* was a glimpse at life and tribulations during the stressful time of college applications and SAT tests. *Dawson's Creek* was the depiction of high school and college melodrama that no normal group of friends ever faces, but at least it entertained easily. There were countless debates in campus circles (or at least mine) when *Felicity* and *Dawson's Creek* ended over why Joey should have chosen Dawson over Pacey or why Felicity was an idiot for choosing Ben over Noel.

Great shows come and go as evidenced by the rise and fall of *The Cosby Show*, *Cheers*, *Seinfeld*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and countless others. However, this year's series finales appear to be leaving a black hole in my television set. Perhaps the biggest reason is because there does not appear to be an heir apparent for the two shows on the current weekly TV schedule.

Original dramas on the WB network skew a bit younger than the college crowd for the most part. *One Tree Hill* is a promising possibility as a derivative of the *Dawson's Creek* formula and it stars Chad Michael Murray, a former *Creek* guest star, but it's about high school drama. Once you've been through high school and a year or two of college, it is hard to go back and watch impossible scenarios and people freak out over tests, especially once you've learned that high school doesn't matter after the four years are over. Although, to be fair, *One Tree Hill* and *The O.C.* provide gossip fodder as much as *Creek* or *Sex and the City* ever did.

As for original comedies, the only new ones I've noticed providing any laughter are actually reality TV shows. They do provide a lot of laughs, but it's becoming old. Even MTV's *Newlyweds* has stopped holding my attention—how many times can you laugh at Jessica Simpson?

Maybe the end of the quality programming is a blessing in disguise, because who really has a lot of free time to waste? Then again, we do have over 100 channels on campus, so we might as well try to find something to watch other than the unavailable Tech basketball games.

OUR VIEWS Hot or Not

HOT–or–NOT

Rock the vote

This Tuesday is not just any day of the week—it's Super Tuesday, with ten primary elections occuring around the country. Georgia will be hosting one such primary, offering registered voters the chance to choose who they would like to be the Democratic presidential nominee. If you aren't registered yet, rush to the SGA office and do so; if you are, then stop by the Student Center and have your voice heard.

Move over Clinton

John Edwards, a Democratic presidential candidate, had to get his exercise in Tuesday during a day of campaigning in Atlanta. He jogged around our very own indoor track at the CRC for half an hour! Why, though, was the time he decided to spend with us in purple booty shorts not spent in front of a crowd explaining his platform? Clark and Kucinich deemed us worthy of a talk; so should Edwards.

Blueprint is here!

The 2003 yearbook has arrived, providing the campus with a bound volume of a year's worth of memories for students to riffle through. Since student activity fees help pay for the book, it is "free" to any student enrolled during 2002-2003. So make the most of your fees and claim your copy in the Student Center.

Home disadvantage

With the loss N.C. State handed our Yellow Jacket cagers Wednesday, the Ramblin' Wreck racked up its second straight home loss. The boys looked so good at the beginning of their run, only to be defeated in several tough games. Luckily, there's still time left for the basketball team to keep its top 25 ranking.

YOUR VIEWS Letters to the Editor

Change in manager irrelevant

I found your "Bookstore gets new manager" article in the Feb. 13 edition of the *Technique* irrelevant, perhaps even negative, to the concerns and interests of Tech's students, faculty and staff. Why does it matter to the Tech community that the new bookstore and coffee house made more money than the old one? The real question is, is the new bookstore more convenient and functional to the thousands of us than the old one?

"Is the new bookstore more convenient and functional to the thousands of us than the old one?"

Everyone I spoke with DIDN'T think so. Why not discuss the issue and then conduct a poll? What happened to the idea of a "pedestrian friendly" campus?!

Why not have a second bookstore within walking distance from classrooms, like the old one? Then, and after including the trolley costs (paid from the students' fees), see which of the two does better money-wise! Why are the money interests of global corporations, like Barnes and Noble and Starbucks, more important than those of the Tech community?

Further, why did the old manager resign? Plus, how does delivering thousands of captive consumers to those global merchants square with free market/enterprise?

John G. Papastavridis
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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 Tony Kluemper, 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 reserves 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 on 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 Marcus Kwok at (404) 894-9187, or RoseMary Wells at (404) 894-2830.

Coverage Requests

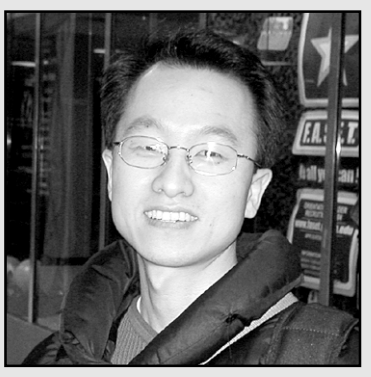
Press releases and requests for coverage may be made to the editor-in-chief or to individual section editors. For more information, visit **http://nique.net/stuorgguide.pdf**.

BUZZ
Around the Campus

What are your plans for spring break?

Bobby Ghazi
CompE/MGT Senior

"I'll be getting ahead on my finals!"

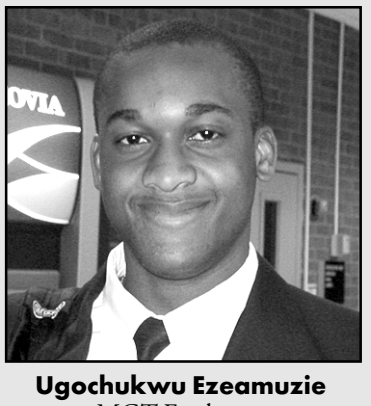


Hongseok "Moses" Noh
ME PhD

"I will write my dissertation during the spring break."

Ryan Taylor
IE Junior

"I'll be working because I'm broke."



Ugochukwu Ezeamuzie
MGT Freshman

"Hopefully go down to Texas and see a few friends...oh, and party of course."

Photos by Andrew Saulters

Through the looking glass

Cheating only cheats yourself of self respect and honor

After reading parts of David Callahan's *The Cheating Culture* and having multiple good-natured debates with friends, I have been forced to accept that cheating has increasingly become an option to the average college student. Callahan works his way from pre-schoolers desiring an extra gold star to scandalous tales of plagiarized work in the college classroom and workplace. Various studies show that 70-80 percent of college students admit to having cheated on some type of academic assignment, and with the real academic pressures of Georgia Tech, there is no reason to expect our campus be any different.

The issue of cheating is quite a bit deeper than just coursework and a classroom: we live under many laws as citizens of a college campus, a federal government system and (depending on your personal beliefs) a fundamental code of morality. Our legal system is largely predicated on the right to avoid self-incrimination ("nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself"), which translates into a common perception of "it's OK if you don't get caught." Most moral codes are a bit more restrictive when broken down into the golden rule: do unto others as you'd have them do unto you.

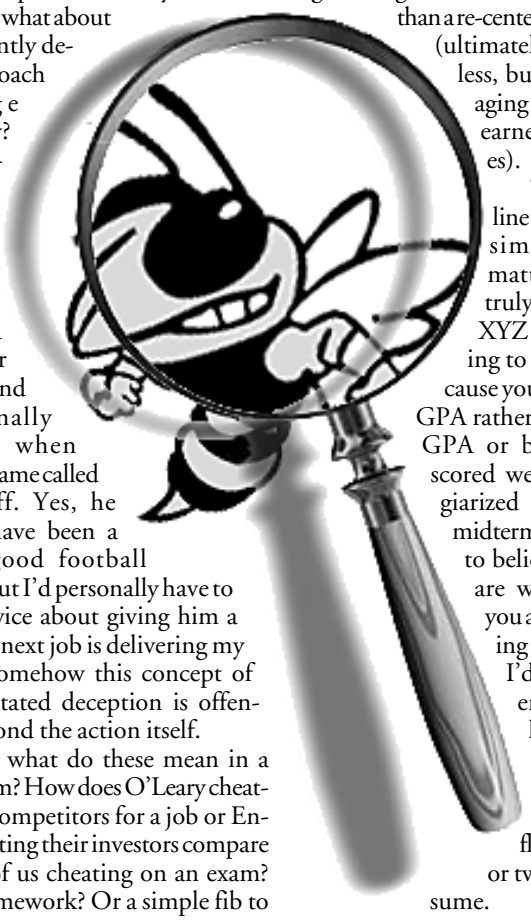
Many simple examples can be formalized independent of our classrooms. Choosing to park illegally when unloading groceries is equivalent to laying a negative bet on the roulette table; most likely you won't get caught, but if the wheel stops on your number, you're the lucky winner of booting, towing and a list of hassles. Another one is the bloody 45 mph speed limit on I-75/85 right around North Avenue; outside of the morning slow hour, the only vehicles moving slower than 45 mph are the radar jockeys making their quota. Then you have the Martha Stewarts and Enron execs whose purported crimes come from greed rather than impatience.

ALAN MICHAELS
COLUMNIST

As I digress into the realm of examples, I'd also point out that some laws and rules are clearly not considered as important as others. Foregoing truly evil actions (murder, rape, etc.), we can build a hierarchy of cheats. Something like exceeding a speed limit is so accepted (and on my drive home, quite possibly encouraged) that we do not bother to recognize it as improper. Further, anybody stupid (or possibly just proper) enough to obey this "limit" on the interstate will be putting both your and my life in immediate peril by creating a slowly moving obstacle. Just as simply, students will actually complain if the parking office catches them legitimately out of line (citing valid extenuating circumstances, I might agree).

So those are the ways to cheat that are often perceived as okay. Moving up the hierarchy of lowness, what about our recently departed coach George O'Leary? He blatantly lied on his vita in applying to a number of jobs and was finally caught when Notre Dame called his bluff. Yes, he might have been a fairly good football coach, but I'd personally have to think twice about giving him a tip if his next job is delivering my pizza. Somehow this concept of premeditated deception is offensive beyond the action itself.

Now what do these mean in a classroom? How does O'Leary cheating his competitors for a job or Enron cheating their investors compare to one of us cheating on an exam? Or a homework? Or a simple fib to the prof as to why your homework's late? By cheating on any assignment, students not only artificially raise their own grades, but they diminish other student's work and, ultimately, the prestige of their own degrees. This same reasoning might make you think twice about supporting "grade forgiveness," which is no more than a re-centering of GPAs (ultimately meaningless, but fully damaging to those who earned their places).



The bottom line is that grades simply don't matter; do you truly believe that XYZ Corp. is going to hire you because you have a 3.12 GPA rather than a 3.10 GPA or because you scored well on a plagiarized Shakespeare midterm? They want to believe that you are who you say you are and nothing more or less. I'd much rather be able to look myself in the mirror than to have an inflated number or two on my resume.

Duke SGA cuts funds

Staff Editorial
The Chronicle

(U-WIRE) Duke University—Duke Student Government (DSG) will vote Wednesday on an amendment that would eliminate the bylaw requiring the Student Organization Funding Committee (SOFC) to fund 100 percent of the Chanticleer's budget (Duke's yearbook). Such an amendment will put the funding of all student groups on a more level playing field and may actually benefit the Chanticleer in the long-run.

The Chanticleer claims that cutting its funding—requiring the organization to fund 25 percent of its budget, the way all other student groups' budgets are funded—would severely limit its ability to produce the annual yearbook.

However, by funding 100 percent of the Chanticleer's budget DSG is giving the Chanticleer an unfair advantage over other student organizations that must fundraise to cover a percentage of their costs.

The Chanticleer is the only organization with an exception to this rule, and it is unfair and unnecessary.

Eliminating the bylaw would encourage fiscal responsibility on the Chanticleer's part, it would give SOFC more money to allocate to other organizations and encourage an improvement in the quality of the publication.