

OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

Fair, frivolous fees

Fee increases should be considered more carefully

The fee increases approved by the Mandatory Student Fee Advisory Committee add some necessary fund augmentations to departments in real need of the funds, but some increases seem frivolous in this time of austerity. As campus continues to grow, the need to have efficient transportation around Tech becomes even more necessary. The Transportation fee increase also seems reasonable considering the rising cost of fuel, which heavily affects the department's bottom line. The Health fee increase also has its merits since the money will be used for tangible goals that the Health Center has clearly laid out for the campus. SGA and the Office of Information Technology should also be applauded for their ability to make do with what they already receive from the student body.

The increase in the Athletic Fee, however, seems poorly timed and unnecessary. Given that the substantial increase in the student fee four years ago

has been followed by an added cost for block seating as well as several marginal increases, the Athletic Association must learn to balance its own budget and not try to dip into the pockets of students when the department's ticket sales fall short. While the AA is no doubt being affected by the stagnant economic conditions, they must not forget that students are as well.

But the underlying problem with the system is the lack of transparency of the whole process. The majority of the students voting on the fees will never pay the fees themselves, and the vast majority of student are completely unaware of the proposal before they go to vote. Instead of a secretive committee, the fee increases should be put to the vote in UHR and GSS. If Representatives and Senators were allowed to vote, fee increases would be considered more thoroughly and debating them in the legislative bodies would bring the situation to the forefront.

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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EDITORIAL CARTOON BY CASEY TISDEL



College Republicans funding improper



“JFC never considered the possibility that this bill violated the political activities clause of JFC policy.”

Mike Donohue
SGA Editor

This year, 21 months before the presidential elections, the Conservative Political Action Conference will feature keynotes by presidential contenders such as Newt Gingrich, Michelle Bachmann and Tim Pawlenty. Attending the event will be 13 members of the College Republicans. They will be doing so, supporting these political candidates, using Student Activity Fee (SAF).

Joint Finance Committee policy prohibits the use of the SAF for political activities. CPAC certainly qualifies as a political activity. While College Republicans may claim that CPAC is simply a networking opportunity for its members, the purpose of the Conference goes well beyond that. The conference attendees conduct a straw poll each year, naming their top picks for the Republican presidential nomination. Candidates use CPAC keynotes to push their campaigns, hoping to curry favor with the conservative wing of their party. These are the activities of an organization that supports a political agenda and can make or break the career of a budding Republican nominee.

JFC never considered the possibility that this bill violated the political activities clause of JFC policy. Any bill put forward by the College Republicans (or the College Democrats for that matter) ought to be scrutinized carefully to make sure it does not violate this rule. Although GSS did fail the bill, there was no debate at all, save for a single statement of opposition by AE Sen. Michael Ellis. No one mentioned the fact that CPAC is a partisan activity, and no one thought to fight for the failure or the passage of the bill based on what they thought SGA ought to finance with the SAF.

UHR, though it did debate the bill at length, got bogged down in details, distracted by miscommunications and errors among UHR, GSS, JFC and College Republicans. Based on this confusion alone, UHR should have failed or postponed the bill and asked College Republicans to come back the following week. Although this would have prevented College Republicans from using the funds since the event would have been completed by the time funds would have been available, it would have served as an apt warning to student organizations to be prepared before asking for a rushed decision from SGA.

Regardless of the procedural confusion that resulted from the debate, UHR completely failed to consider the wisdom of the bill. Not one representative asked

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his or her colleagues to pause and consider the ramifications of funding a political activity. No one brought up JFC policy. No one uttered even the weakest of opposition.

However, both student body presidents have the opportunity to correct this error. Undergraduate Corey T. Boone and Graduate President Anthony Baldrige can use their veto pens to make sure that the SAF is properly spent. They should do so quickly and with confidence.

Why did the bill get as far as it did? In part, the bill's success is due to the Chairman of College Republicans, Kristen Greig. Greig stood on the floor of UHR through the entirety of debate Tuesday evening, speaking up with commentary and support. This was in violation of House rules, but she was rarely reminded of that fact. Greig had also presented earlier that evening, leading the HOPE Open Forum. Perhaps this is why the Representatives were comfortable with her causally participating in debate. The fact that she could represent the student body in a political issue as important as HOPE and then turn around to represent the interests of College Republicans, a goal of which is to elect candidates who hold Republican ideals, is troubling.

Greig should remove this conflict of interest immediately by resigning as either Student Lobby Board Chair or as Chair of the College Republicans. The members of SGA who represent the student body should not split their loyalties.

This week's SGA meetings revealed several troubling issues with the way SGA views its relationship with partisan political activities. With tough fights over the future of HOPE and the budget about to peak, it's important that the representatives of the student body rededicate themselves to the people who elected them: the student body.

Constitution degraded to political prop

The Constitution has made quite a comeback in the last year or so, becoming a symbol of good government to whom-ever is holding it up. When the Republicans took back the House in early Jan., some congressmen took turns reading the Constitution aloud, in nearly its entirety, as a show of their commitment to it.



“America has been reduced to thinking that a Spelling Bee relating to the Constitution is sufficient.”

Hahnming Lee
Editor-in-Chief

While the Constitution is undoubtedly one of the most important documents in American history, the scene was a completely unnecessary stunt and speaks volumes on the poor state of discourse about the document.

Nobody outside of courthouses and law schools actually discusses what is in it anymore. Most people just say that they know it better than some other people on the opposite end of the political spectrum. Still, with everyone claiming that some other group of people do not know it, I ask you this: have you actually read the Constitution? All 4400 or so words?

If you have and think you know it as well as those in Washington do, test yourself on it with this slightly modified question that used to appear in popular polling services: Which of these phrases appear in our Constitution? “The consent of the governed,” “Of the people, by the people, for the people,” and “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” The answer? None of them.

When the actual question (with five choices, none of which are in the Constitution) was asked in a poll, nearly nine-out-of-10 Americans got it wrong. How can people hold it up as sacred when they do not even know what is in it? But do not worry, it turns out some of the most prominent people in Washington know the exact words just as well as the average American.

In a debate with Tea Party darling Christine O’Donnell, Senator Chris Coons claimed that separation of church-and-state was in the Constitution, and O’Donnell said she did not realize it. Liberals everywhere rejoiced that the witch was proven to be an even bigger idiot, but guess what, Senator? It is not in the First Amendment as you claim, or really anywhere in the Constitution.

Earlier in the year, at a Tea Party rally, John Boehner, the new Speaker of the House, erroneously said he thought that “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” was a part of the preamble to the Constitution at a rally where he talked

about restoring its importance within government. Unfortunately Mr. Speaker, you are thinking of the Declaration of Independence.

Some reading may think that it is horrible that our politicians cannot even recite simple lines from the Constitution, but it is because the American people now expect politicians to engage in these “gotcha” and pop-quiz moments at any given moment on a public stage

While I do not find Boehner to be a particularly competent politician, it is not because he made a mistake relating to the Constitution at some rally. Honestly, I would not hold it against my politicians that they do not know the Constitution word-for-word. Sure, I would much prefer if they had a deep understanding of the document, and I think that this would stop a lot of the talk of “unconstitutional” every time someone does not like a law, but I do not think that knowing the document’s exact wordage at any given point equates to knowledge. As engineers who regularly take open-

notebook tests, I think that we would be holding them up to an unfair and hypocritical standard.

America has been reduced to thinking that a Spelling Bee relating to the Constitution is sufficient, and that it is often better just to claim that you know it better than some other people than to consider the idea that there are still legitimate and different ways to interpret it.

Instead of latching on to these phrases that really are just rhetoric, people should first read it, and then really think about how it applies to modern life.

If people continue to engage in these petty fights over exact wordings, they miss an opportunity to really think about its applications. I point to the second amendment, now widely believe to be about individuals owning guns. The phrase “the right to bear arms” actually may have had (arguably, of course) a military connotation and a focus on the militia at the time it was written, only really shifting in meaning in the last 30 years and with interest groups like the N.R.A. pushing for the now more commonly accepted meaning.

People will miss an opportunity to think about this and the meaning of it if the Constitution continues to act like a prop, proof of patriotism purely based on memorization.

Public-private co-op aids social change

Michelle Obama’s recent partnering with Wal-Mart in a campaign that aspires to offer more healthful options to shoppers highlights just how much power almighty corporations have in the world. In a worldwide economy where many of the top-50 organizations have larger budgets than some countries, these organizations have a frightening amount of authority of markets and thus, many consumers’ lifestyles. Wal-Mart, which garnered \$408.21 billion in sales in 2009, can be categorized as an organization that has almost unlimited power in the grocery market sector. It’s about time that we see this retailing giant conduct a campaign that really attempts to offer corporate responsibility in a form that will see some direct benefits to the markets it serves.



“Large corporations and the government can benefit from the positive public relations that can be generated.”

Kate Comstock
Business Manager

While Wal-Mart’s move to decide to participate with the initiatives that the First Lady’s “Let’s Move” campaign is fairly transparent in its positive public relations implications, it is still an admirable move. Wal-Mart is hoping to convince their suppliers to cut back sodium levels by 25 percent and sugar by 10 percent by the year 2015.

These goals directly align with the First Lady’s “Let’s Move” campaign which aims to decrease childhood obesity by educating children at an early age about healthy eat-

ing habits and physical activity. The campaign has also pushed for better food options in schools and improved food labeling. It is estimated that about 32 percent of children are considered overweight or obese. Children that grow up overweight or obese have a higher chance of becoming overweight and obese adults, which could lead to a plethora of medical problems associated with obesity.

In addition to working with suppliers to offer healthier food options, Wal-Mart also hopes to help address “food deserts,” a problem that has historically plagued low-income neighborhoods. The organization is well poised to utilize its economies of scale to offer healthier food options to low-income areas at prices that are still competitive with cheap and unhealthy food. The result could lead to better nutrition for children and families that live in areas that don’t traditionally have access to better food options.

The task will still be no small feat, but considering

the control that Wal-Mart has over many of its suppliers, it is an attainable goal. Wal-Mart has the potential to be more successful in its endeavors to promote a healthy lifestyle to its shoppers than the U.S. government has in attempts to promote regulations that promote health. We as a society are heavily relying on corporate social responsibility to steer our buying patterns, and, by extension, our health as a society.

It is no secret that Wal-Mart is perceived as less-than-favorable by many that feel the organization utilizes unfair labor practices and the presence of the stores in small communities often drives small town competitors out of business. Indeed, it is somewhat difficult to accept the news of their partnership with the First Lady as something other than a public relations stunt. Although, if more relationships like the one that Wal-Mart and the First Lady recently created existed there could be more situations where change

could be realized much sooner through collaborative initiatives. These are the kinds of relationships that should be further explored by the current administration in order to leverage the power that these large corporations possess.

While some might bristle at the idea of the government working in cahoots with large corporations, it makes sense from a perspective that there is a mutual relationship that can be exploited by both sides. Both large corporations and the government can benefit from the positive public relations that can be generated from these kinds of campaigns, corporations can reap benefits from greater sales and the government has accomplished their goal of adding to the welfare of society.

However, the future of these kinds of endeavors with large corporations should not rely solely on initiatives coming out of Washington. Because of the growing influence that the modern business organization has on society, they should strive to introduce initiatives that will also add to their bottom line and contribute to the welfare of society.

These mega-corporations, like Wal-Mart, have potential to create real changes through corporate responsibility initiatives, but if they fail to act on their own accord, other corporations could fail to capitalize on this unique opportunity.

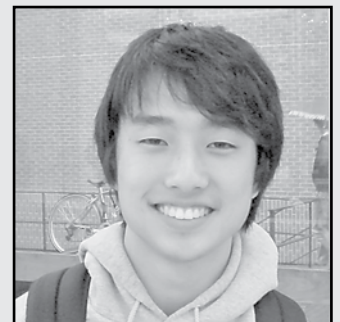
BUZZ Around Campus

Who do you think will win the Superbowl?



Amrinder Chawla
Fourth-year ECE

“Steelers, because they are better overall.”



Sam Pak
First-year BMED

“I’m really not paying attention to it.”



Zachary Churney
Second-year ME

“I’d say the Packers because I hate the Steelers.”



Michael Polson
Third-year CS

“I’ve never really followed football.”

OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT-or-NOT



Stairway to Purgatory

While few people who live in NAA would categorize it as 'heavenly,' it certainly got much less hellish late last week when the stairway to the complex at Techwood and North Ave. reopened. Now residents have to brace for the next inconvenience that Housing will no doubt dump on the students who live in the facility that seems to be perpetually under construction.



Frightening turtle

The men's basketball team regrettably was not able to keep its home-court streak going in its loss to Maryland on Sunday night. Hopefully the flu and other medical reasons won't continue to hinder the team as the Jackets begin their final stretch of the regular season. They are going to need a lot of momentum going into the ACC Tournament in March and maybe beyond.



Fishy evening

While some students take to drinking like fish on Thursday nights, this upcoming Thursday they can just go hang out with them instead. The annual GT Night at the Aquarium has become a treat for students in need of an early semester break, albeit a very short break. Such activities help to build a sense of campus community and provides access to Atlanta hot spots.



Fed up

While some people believe that all publicity is good publicity, last week, the theory was proven incorrect. The F.B.I raiding of Tower Resident Hall brought a load of negative attention to Tech. Though nothing has been settled yet, ideally, the Tech student in question will be cleared of all wrong doing, and the situation will quickly blow over and cleared up.

Fiscal restraint, understanding needed during budget season



"Given the poor state of the economy, many organizations depend on the SAF funding to maintain normal operations."

Brad Bauerkemper
JFC Chairman

Every semester you're charged a Student Activity Fee. Your SGA is charged with being a steward of that fee with the purpose of filling the gap in areas of student life that the Institute cannot fill. The story all told, SAF revenues amount to nearly \$4.8 million dollars (\$4,753,968 to be exact). If you weren't aware of this fee or that it added up to a few million dollars, I'll let that sink in for a moment. If you were aware of these numbers, we'll keep moving.

While a great deal of money is collected each year in SAF revenue, the number of requests by student organizations consistently outpaces the money that we oversee. Hence we reach the inherent problem that has surrounded the SAF since its inception. There is a great disparity between collected revenues and yearly requests. Historically, both revenue and requests trend upward at a fairly steady rate, but what is driving this trend? The poor state of the economy? Increased enrollment? Sheer necessity for more funds? It is likely a combination of all of these factors driving the need for greater SAF revenue.

The question then seems to be: who is making these requests? Requiring just under one third of its total operating budget from SAF funds, the CRC accounts for nearly 40 percent of the total budget requests. While the Student Center requests significantly less (\$1.25 million), it still comes to some 25 percent of overall requests. Combined, these two campus staples garner nearly two thirds of collected SAF revenue. With such widespread student use, many might be asking themselves: why shouldn't they? Any

one of the 109 student organizations requesting budgets can probably give a few reasons why.

Given the poor state of the economy, many of these organizations depend on SAF funding to maintain normal operations. For some this means travel to a tournament, to others it means hosting a yearly event. Regardless of the occasion, organizations are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain outside funding, and it seems a Skiles walkway bake sale doesn't go as far as it used to. Unfortunately, a bad economy doesn't increase the amount of SAF revenue. Equally unfortunate is that UHR and GSS still expect organizations requesting funds to use SGA as a last resort. This expectation may seem an impossibility to some, but as long as the voting bodies continue to see groups that do raise their own funds and pay higher dues, the expectation will remain. Still, a problem remains.


While the number of student organizations that submit budgets each year has remained fairly consistent, the number of newly chartered organizations on campus, and the amount of each budget request continues to climb. Thus, the solution to the current fiscal issue is both a commitment to fiscal responsibility on behalf of SGA and a great deal of under-

standing from the students.

As Chairman of the JFC, I am responsible for ensuring that each submitted budget is checked, combed and considered with the utmost scrutiny. The idea is not to deter organizations from requesting funds, it is simply a process by which we ensure that the student's money is being allocated properly and that fiscal responsibility is being practiced.

In furtherance of this idea, UHR and GSS passed a bill earlier last Fall that effectively tightened the requirements on budgets. These new restrictions now require each organization requesting a budget to attend a budget information session, update contact information regularly and attend a budget hearing. Although these requirements have been enforced in the past to some extent, failure to complete them is now accompanied with the possible budget denial or reduction.

Although I do believe SGA has taken positive steps towards fiscal responsibility with these policy changes as well as some other initiatives, I still foresee an increase in the SAF coming down the pike in the coming years. That is why I believe that the relationship between the student body and SGA will only succeed if the students are understanding of that fact.



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Alex, I'm a vegetarian.
To the weird girl in my CS class who always wants to sit with me. You're weird.
the odds are good but the goods are gay...
you know when there's a turbo on the front of your book the class is going to blow
you were doing 55 in a 54
is it sad that I only read the technique for the slivers?
My sociology homework this weekend was to be a troll. Problem, society? U mad?
to the drunk girl singing justin beiber at 2am with a megaphone: no one loves you
The girl with Hebrew tattoo behind her ear is gorgeous
High 37 degrees.... well, i guess time to move further south
To the pretty VSA secretary, I will miss your spams next year i don't even know what my hobbies are anymore.
My machine design teacher def looks like the Asian guy from mythbusters. Busted!!!
The world don't move to the beat of just one class...
Yes, I have in fact played 6 hours of video games. You would if you saw Incursion, too.
If they truly anticipated such drastic budget cuts, why are we continuing to begin new construction projects??
It ain't test time professor. It's T-SHIRT Tiiiiime
You figure there's a lot of tiger mom kids at tech?
What's a tech exam like? Well it's kinda like a wombo combo... on you
leggings and tights arent pants. thats why they're AWESOME
Time definitely flows slower in most of my lectures
Juggling 3 different girls is a lot of work. I don't know how the mormons could do this.
Is it appropriate to hit on girl's at the gym?
Hahah, the first thing the raided kid did was broadcast everything he knows/did to the world on reddit. Ahhahahaha great job.
I love Cabbage like ze diabetics like ze candy