

OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, April 5, 2002

OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

Study results no guarantee

The Georgia Tech Office of Institute Communications and Public Affairs announced that the results of a recent study that shows the rate of binge drinking at Tech has decreased since the last time such a study was conducted. However, this may not be the entire truth.

The Harvard group that produces this study warns that if the confidence intervals in the study overlap then the results must be deemed inconclusive. Since the confidence intervals in Tech's study did, in fact, overlap, the best that can be said about the rate of binge drinking at Tech is that the results are inconclusive.

With inconclusive results, it is inappropriate for ICPA to laud GT SMART for promoting an apparent decrease in binge drinking at Tech. Since there is no way of knowing that this is absolutely the case, it is deceptive to tell people that there has been an improvement in this area.

Aside from that is the fact that there is no way of knowing just how reliable the information is that was obtained from those who participated in this study.

Before jumping to any conclusions it is important to find where the problem in this situation lies. If ICPA was not shown the confidence intervals by GT SMART before it announced the results of this study, then there was no way of knowing that the information it was announcing was not credible. Whatever the cause, better precautions need to be taken in the future to ensure that Tech does not release information about itself that is not necessarily true.

Fresh start for Ferst

Jay Constantz, former Director of the Fox Theatre, has just been appointed Director of the Ferst Center. This, along with placing the Ferst Center under the direction of the Office of Student Affairs, should be very progressive and beneficial for the Ferst Center and the Tech community as a whole.

Hopefully Mr. Constantz, along with the other members of the Ferst Center community, will be able to bring the focus of the Center back to one of the original goals that was proposed when it was built over a decade ago: to make the Ferst Center available and affordable to Tech student groups that host events that will draw big crowds as well as be able to draw major international talent that will bring in audiences from all over Atlanta.

Ideally the Ferst Center will be able to accomplish both of these things at once. Ultimately student groups, such as the band, should be able to enjoy this sophisticated facility that exists right on campus on one night, and a world-famous performer, such as Jose Carreras, could draw people from different parts of Atlanta to the Ferst the next night.

Time to vote again

From April 17 to 19 the polls will open once again, and students will be asked to re-vote on some referendums proposed by SGA.

Although they may not seem as exciting as electing a student body president, these are important referendums that deserve consideration. Please take the time to research them, and cast your vote.

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



Quote of the week:

"What good is sitting alone in your room?
Come, hear the music play.
Life is a Cabaret, old chum.
Come to the Cabaret."
—from the musical "Cabaret"

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ROB HILL

Losing HOPE does not equal academic inferiority

As a HOPE Scholarship recipient, I take issue to a column published in the *Technique* two weeks ago by Jennifer Hinkel about how Georgia Tech unfairly caters to in-state students. This is a gross misrepresentation of the reality of in-state admissions to Georgia Tech, and it portrays in-state students as less qualified and less deserving of the education that is received by Tech students.

Ms. Hinkel makes the accusation that many of the students who graduated from Georgia high schools are not as well prepared for Tech based on the idea that "few students have held on" to HOPE by their

Junior year at Tech.

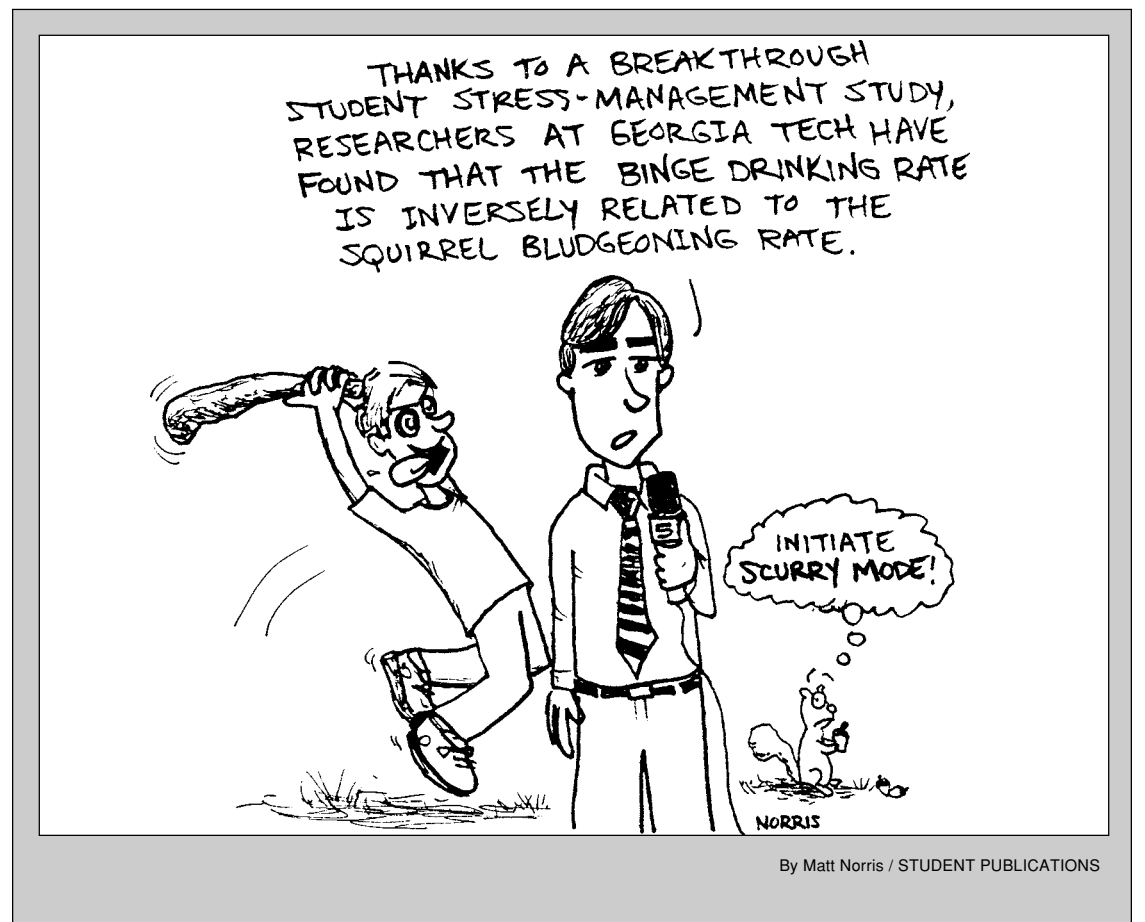
First, let's look at what it takes for a student to maintain the HOPE Scholarship. A 3.0 G.P.A. sounds easy, right? Well at this school a 3.0 G.P.A. is Dean's List; this is quite an accomplishment for anyone no matter whether they are an in-state or out-of-state student. The Dean's List is used to recognize students with outstanding academic achievements. This could account for what might seem as a high loss of the HOPE Scholarship among Tech students. All of this just goes to show how difficult it is for some students to maintain HOPE and that being able to keep HOPE is not a good

measure of success in college.

She goes on in her article to downplay the education of those who attended Georgia high schools based on the idea that because of the HOPE Scholarship teachers might be more inclined to "inflate grades." This seems logical, but the basis for the argument may be made for any school in the United States.

With the increase in standards of admittance at all prestigious schools throughout the country, would this not make a teacher in any state want to help their students go to a great school by inflat-

See HOPE, page 8.



By Matt Norris / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Health Center needs to improve policies toward patient care

Last week one of my roommates woke up in the middle of the night on Saturday with a horrible earache that manifested into a week-long battle to reclaim her health. While this unexpected illness was most unfortunate, what was even more disturbing about this incident was that it provided me with an eye opening experience about the current state of Georgia Tech's Student Health Center.

Her visit to the Health Center was on Sunday afternoon as soon as it opened, and she promptly returned with armloads of medication. Unfortunately, she had an allergic reaction to the medicine, which was no one's fault, but it left her in and out of the bathroom all night and throughout the next day with little sleep and no marked improvement.

In response to her continued ailing health, she called the Health Center first thing Monday morning, but unlike the prompt visit she experienced on Sunday afternoon, she was unable to get an appointment until 5 that evening. She was left helpless and suffering for the entire day.

Unfortunately, this is not the first scenario I've heard where extremely ill students are forced to wait hours or even days to see a doctor. While it is normal and even customary to wait for long periods of time at doctor's offices, this amount of wait time is ridiculous. If a student is extremely ill, he or she should not be forced to wait more than two or three hours to see a doctor.

I understand serving a student body of nearly 15,000 could be quite

"If a student is extremely ill, he or she should not be forced to wait more than two or three hours to see a doctor."

Jennifer LaHatte
Managing Editor



a challenge, but if managed care facilities serving similar amounts of patients around the nation produce better, or even more productive results, why can't the Student Health Center staff at Georgia Tech do the same?

Each year, students pay the \$113 per semester health fee designed to cover the expense of supporting the Student Health Center, but the money does not seem to be adding up.

If the answer to meeting or even exceeding the health and wellness needs of Georgia Tech's student body could be solved by hiring more doctors and support staff, then actions should be taken to support this change. If increasing the student health fee is the response, then the Health Center should be held accountable for using the funds to help solve this appointment-scheduling nightmare.

Additionally, what if my roommate woke up Saturday instead of Sunday morning in excruciating pain? The Health Center is not open on Saturday and only sees emergencies from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sundays. She doesn't have a car; she's from New Jersey; she can't

exactly call home and get mom to take her to the doctor. The Student Health Center does not and should not operate on a 24 hour, seven day a week basis, but extending weekend and daily hours would be one way to allow more students access to the treatment and care they deserve.

Staff competency was another issue my roommate was plagued with in her recent illness. She visited the Health Center four times in that one week, and almost every time was forced to fill out a new chart because the personnel behind the main desk could not find the chart she had so carefully filled out just the day before. It's mistakes like these that cost both sick students and the Health Center valuable time and money. Just as any other doctor's office or healthcare facility is responsible for keeping records vital to patient care, so, too, should Tech's Health Center exhibit the same competency and seriousness needed to successfully achieve this task.

I am very thankful and appreciative of having a Health Center right here on campus, but one of the main reasons I am so apt to complain is

that I have seen and experienced better. During my one semester get-away to the University of Georgia, I only visited their Health Center once but was extremely impressed. I was able to schedule an appointment within one hour of the time I called and was blown away by the quality of service and outstanding facility.

Although I wouldn't normally recommend modeling anything after the Dawgs up in Athens, their Health Center is definitely an area that Tech could look to for improvement. UGA's Health Center is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and on the weekends from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Their larger student population does provide more funds and a greater need for these extended hours, but this should not serve as an excuse for Tech's healthcare facility to short change its own patient population.

I'm excited that changes to the Health Center are already underway with the development of the new Student Athletic Complex, which includes the move of the Health Center to a much needed updated facility, but the Health Center needs more than just a physical remodeling. A reevaluation of staff service and quality, as well as a commitment to lower the wait period for an appointment are two issues that must be resolved.

Physical health and well being are a vital part of student success at Georgia Tech. Without the adequate resources necessary for getting well and staying well, the student population and the Tech community as a whole suffers as a result.

Tax credit for obesity ineffective, smarter solution needed

Everyone's favorite government agency around this time of year, the Internal Revenue Service, is making headlines with a ruling handed down in favor of people with obesity. It is a resolution to give a tax break to those with obesity, to provide a credit for weight-loss programs ordered by a physician, stating that these are legitimate medical expenses that qualify as deductions.

I recognize obesity as a growing problem in this country, as we have grown increasingly sedentary watching TV, eating our Doritos and having the world at our fingertips, limiting our need for exercise. I recognize that for many people this is a difficult problem to solve and that it can possibly result in diabetes, heart attacks, and other serious conditions.

However, obesity is not a disease. Obesity is a lifestyle. For those who overeat their way into obesity, eating healthy is just as obvious a choice as following the fatty foods path. To opt for a tax break for this lifestyle would be discriminatory to those who are not obese.

The intentions of this ruling are nothing but good, to provide those people with this problem an incentive to seek treatment and stop later problems. Obesity is a serious problem that demands a simple solution. Making weight-loss plans a write-off is not a serious solution; it's a Washington-proposed quick fix that brings up greater issues.

One, if you're going to give a tax credit to people with obesity, where do you draw the line? Should those dealing with anorexia be able to deduct their doctor visits and their psychological treatments? If I visit

"Giving this type of aid can be construed as the government attempting to influence the lifestyle choices of its citizens."

Andrew Santelli
Entertainment Editor



my doctor and he tells me, "Andrew, you need to eat more fruits and vegetables," should I be able to get a tax write-off for my new eating strategy? Allowing a tax credit for treatment for something which is not a disease raises these sorts of questions and opens the door for activists of all sorts to demand equal treatment, which they now have a case to do.

This isn't the only can worms are jumping out of in this case. Giving this type of aid can be construed as the government attempting to influence the lifestyle choices of its citizens.

Surprisingly, both conservatives and liberals have jumped on this bandwagon, but what they need to realize is that treating Americans with this eating disorder (and others) is not as simple as throwing money at them and hoping it will go away and we will be a skinnier country.

Trying to get people to shed those pounds is a noble pursuit, but should the government be telling people they need to lose weight? Freedom in this country definitely should include freedom to eat freely and have a certain lifestyle, which people with obesity have chosen.

Yes, I'm aware that there are peo-

ple out there who have pre-existing conditions that result in obesity, like high blood pressure, slow metabolism, and the like. It still doesn't change the fact that the government is ruling in favor of those with this condition and not other eating problems of similar magnitude.

If we're going to be the healthier nation our legislators want us to be, they had better start putting our money into programs that will actually work. Increasing emphasis on proper health and wellness in the early school years would help tremendously. Studies are flowing in that talk of the distress our nation's children are in.

While their parents become overweight and underactive by sitting in front of a computer all day only to come home and sit back in an easy chair, the children are no better off. Kids are following in the path of their parents, spending more energy consuming junk food and playing video games than playing outside or staying active.

What the legislators and bureaucrats who supported this idea and pushed it through need to realize is that there's a better way. Just throwing money at the problem shows that the cares of these administrators for this problem is fleeting, that they

have bigger fish to fry. In fact, fried fish and other greasy fried foods is one of the reasons this debate is going on anyway.

America needs stronger emphasis on nutrition, a more effective way to get people active, and an entirely new way of looking at things if we're going to stop this problem which indeed threatens our country to become one filled with people who never leave their houses except to sit in their cars or sit at their desks.

Obesity can be beaten. You can see it almost anywhere, as those whose weights previously ballooned are now getting smaller and smaller, though with much more work than it took to increase their weight. You don't need to be paid by the government to figure out that if you burn more calories than you consume, you're going to lose weight.

The government officials behind the ruling will tell you that this credit can serve as an effective incentive for those with obesity to work towards beating their problem. They will make it seem like there's millions of overweight Americans who are saying, "if I only had a little money, then I'd want to lose weight." If you're going to make a change in your lifestyle, most likely it will be because you want to, not because you're being paid to.

A tax break? What the legislators need is a break for themselves, so they can step back, take a good look at the bigger picture surrounding this decision, and see that the obesity they think can be solved overnight with a little bit of tax credit needs a smarter solution that won't be a quick fix.

TECHNIQUE

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HOPE

from page 6

ing the grades slightly? It would be wrong to apply this line of reasoning only to teachers in the state of Georgia.

There are also many other indicators used to determine if a student is Georgia Tech material. Standardized tests like the SAT and ACT are great mechanisms that are currently in place to help Tech objectively see the difference between what might be a "B" average at one school compared to an "A" at another.

This school also looks at extracurricular activities, leadership records and requires an essay while determining the possible acceptance of students. These are all apparatus used by Georgia Tech in order to choose the most promising students, and, as many students who were not admitted found out, it takes more than a high GPA in high school to get into Georgia Tech.

I would just like to say that all who have passed the rigorous admissions standards set forth by this excellent school belong here. All of us have spent thousands of hours studying and working so that we will have the chance to reach our full potential based the quality education we are receiving. Yes, many might not make it the whole way; things happen, but to use HOPE as a cop-out and to say that those students who received an in-state high school education are not equally prepared for college would be presumptuous and incorrect.

Adam Hedstrom
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Techs and the City: Hoping new Ferst leadership comes through

By Jennifer Hinkel
Focus Editor

Only on occasion do students see people from the "outside world" of Atlanta around campus. Touring high school students or job interviewers appear from time to time, but we rarely see more.

The only time I truly see hundreds of regular old Atlantans on Tech's campus is when the Ferst Center offers a show (that I probably didn't even realize was happening) and I have to pick through a crowd on the way to the *Technique* office. Whether we notice or not, the Ferst Center is one of the few things on campus that has the potential to truly connect Tech with people from the greater Metro Atlanta area; however, it can only fulfill that role if its new leadership carefully considers what students need and what the community needs.

The Ferst has great potential to help Tech improve its programs and enrich campus, but these ends can only be achieved if student performance groups can use the facility with no—or minimal—charge. Why should students who already pay band dues and instrument rental fees (not to mention tuition for a band or orchestra class) also have to fork over cash to help rent a performance venue? Why should a department already strapped for cash, such as the music department, have to pay a rental fee for the only possible band, orchestra, or choir performance

"Hopefully, with the experience of Jay Constantz, goals can be established and quickly reached."

Jennifer Hinkel
Focus Editor



venue on campus? Obviously, a music performance class holds no meaning without a performance venue. These student groups, and arguably the entire academic department comprised of the music program, need a place to perform where students and Atlanta residents alike can attend.

As for catering to the students, I rarely hear about a Ferst Center performance until I stumble upon the middle-aged crowd on my way to a newspaper deadline. I am sure that the Ferst advertised in the Student Center to some degree, but when I have noticed a show, it has sold out before I've realized I actually want to buy tickets.

One problem arts centers often encounter (or actually, always encounter) is a continuous lack of revenue. Performing arts may never profit in the same way that pop music does, but structures can be put in place to ensure the Ferst's continuation and growth as a very unique Atlanta venue. I see no problem with the Ferst offering student-friendly small-scale and cheap-ticketed plays and concerts a few nights a week and operas

that run in the \$150 ticket range on weekends. Moreover, the Center needs to develop a more comprehensive giving program that allows subscribers to have preferred seating and admission to special events and fundraisers. The program that exists obviously has not brought sufficient funds, and so time should be spent analyzing what else might be more successful. Close to campus, plenty of Atlantans are willing to become patrons of the arts—the Ferst Center needs to find these people and figure out how to steer their generosity towards the Ferst. We should also look at performance venues at other universities and find out how they support their programs.

Hopefully, with the experience of Jay Constantz, these kinds of goals can be established and quickly reached.

Although the mid-sized auditorium of the Ferst Center (it seats roughly 1,200) has been used as an excuse for its inability to financially support itself, such an excuse should be thrown out by the new leadership. They say it's not big enough for the really big acts,

but it can't be filled by smaller performances. But the building has been built, and no one can change the seating capacity now. We have to work with what we have.

I can think of several mid-sized acts that, if advertised properly, might be able to fill the Ferst Center without incurring huge fees. What about musicians that come to the Variety Playhouse, the Tabernacle and the Roxy, such as John Mayer, Angie Aparo, and the Dave Matthews Cover Band? Although they aren't currently the biggest names in pop music, they have become immensely popular among college students. The Ferst Center could draw audiences from Athens and Emory as well as Tech if such performers came to campus.

The size of the Ferst Center might actually be an advantage—I would pay more to see a performer in a closer, smaller setting than in a huge auditorium where binoculars are necessary. The Center should capitalize on its intimate size and its amenities such as the galleries (perfect for hosting a pre-event cocktail party for patrons or a post-concert CD signing for those who pay for backstage passes).

I wish the new Ferst leadership the best in achieving for the what the Ferst's potential belies. The Center could become a vibrant venue and successful interface for campus and the city, or it could remain in its present state. I hope the former comes true.

Help fix disciplinary system

This year has seen a dramatic increase in the number of disciplinary cases that has come to the Dean of Students' Office for adjudication. The extraordinary number of academic misconduct cases in Computer Science has received the most press, but non-academic misconduct cases have also increased.

One of the results of this growing work load is that the length of time necessary to complete the adjudication of cases has increased. This has had a negative impact on a number of individual students. With respect to academic misconduct, Provost Chameau has appointed a committee to review the process and procedures we have been using. Dean Boyd and our legal staff have also reviewed our entire conduct code and processes for both academic and non-academic misconduct.

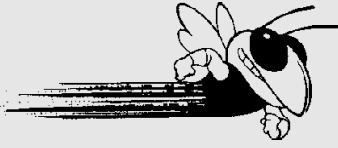
This is an invitation to students to offer suggestions for improving the way our disciplinary system works. The current rules and procedures are in Sections XVII-XX of the Rules and Regulations. Please e-mail me with your suggestions.

Dr. Lee Wilcox
Vice President of Student Affairs
lee.wilcox@vpss.gatech.edu

Email us with your views. Send mail to opinons@technique.gatech.edu or editor@technique.gatech.edu

Question of the week

“What did you do for April Fool’s?”



Buzz Around Campus



Feature and photos by Kimberly Hinckley



Jorg Stromberger
ME Grad

“Nothing. This is a big custom in Germany, but here they are really lame.”



Jeremy Varner
CE Freshman

“I passed around a website about Bill Gates’ death.”



Cori Gilman/Danielle Dees
IE Senior/CS Junior

“Studied and played.”



Benoit Goyens
MGT Junior

“My girlfriend made me think she broke up with me.”



Christopher Williams
ME Grad

“My legal counsel has advised me not to disclose anything.”



Bonnie Vaughan
BC Senior

“I didn’t think about it. I was at work all day.”