



### OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

## Survey says

Recent results of the National Survey of Student Engagement offer compelling data on the state of academic advising at Tech. Freshmen rated advisement 2.87/4.00, while seniors rated it 2.68/4.00. Although these results indicate some improvement, they show that many students are unhappy with the resources provided to them by the administration.

In response to the survey results, the SGA committee on Academic Advising has developed uniform department-wide advising policies based on programs at schools that have high overall advising quality ratings. These policies are aimed at the centralization of many advising services. If implemented, they could potentially lessen confusion and improve student satisfaction with advisement services. These policies also call for more accountability on the part of advisors, requiring them to follow up with students who are struggling.

Although the committee currently states that general advisement should not be mandatory, they should consider proposing that advisement be mandatory for all first-semester students. These students often require assistance in course selection and are least familiar with Tech. Such a policy could benefit students as well as advisors; making advisement mandatory will provide more opportunities for students to give feedback.

Departments could request that students fill out exit surveys after mandatory advisory visits. With more feedback, individual advisors as well as departments could continue to improve significantly. If the departments show improvement, students will in turn be more willing to participate in the advisement process and advisors will be held accountable to those they serve.

No matter what the final policies are, student feedback and accountability are vital to improving the quality of advisement.

## Clarifying the code

The decision to review the Student Code of Conduct and its appeals process has long been awaited by the student body. The current appeals process can be tedious, sometimes taking as long as multiple semesters to complete and leaving students in a "pending" status during the waiting period. Long appeals on academic violations hold up transcripts and can delay graduation.

After necessary changes are made, it is vital that the changes be known to students. It is imperative that all procedural changes be described clearly. The code should also be explained to all incoming students so fewer violations are committed by students who do not understand or know the rules.

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

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By Derryl Carter / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

## Improvement efforts cause headaches

It always amazes me when people talk about how beautiful our campus is. Really, it's not that beautiful.

Tech is a very strange hodge-podge of various architectural styles. From the aged beauty of Cherry Street to the high-tech, imposing fortress that is the new College of Computing, Tech has a style that is both all its own and not quite a style. Don't get me wrong, I like it that way. It's very Tech.

But this is not what I really want to write about. What I want to write about is the seemingly endless desire to improve campus.

I appreciate the thought, but putting that thought into practice is a total nightmare for students, most of whom will not be here to appreciate the final product. Additionally, beyond planting flowers and the like, I think it's difficult to improve such a mismatched campus. Still, it is a good idea in theory.

Let's start with the Fifth Street Bridge. Actually, I'll have to revoke my previous statement about good ideas.

That bridge is the worst idea I've heard in a long time; seeing it put into practice is just painful.

In theory, a nice campus park that integrates Tech Square with the rest of campus sounds pleasant.

I don't think it will be quite the planned idyllic garden of paradise. Do they honestly think that a park over I-85 is going to be a hit? Just because you can't see the interstate doesn't mean you can't hear it. Or smell it. I am highly skeptical that it will be quite the oasis of "collegiate tranquility" that Frank Lamia, a Facilities project manager, suggests.

My qualms with this project don't stop there, however. There is the small matter of me graduating before the bridge is completed.

In the meantime, I have the exhilarating and terrifying opportunity to attempt the trip to Barnes & Noble without getting killed.



"This is yet another construction project that will cause more problems during its completion than benefits upon its conclusion."

**Kristin Noell**  
Copy Editor

Crossing the road was bad enough before—I've noticed that Atlanta drivers don't seem to understand the concept of a crosswalk. Now with all the various fences and pieces of construction equipment, it is exceedingly challenging to see cars coming, and I know they're not watching for me.

I wish they could just close the bridge to vehicular traffic and let the pedestrians cross in peace. Sort of like they're doing with Ferst Drive near Atlantic Avenue. Only in that case, I wish they would open that stretch of road.

The new Stinger route just isn't working for me. I understand the need for a new Nanotechnology building and for utility relocation (whatever that really means). Really I do. But I'm tired of dirt and fences and rerouted Stingers. Campus improvements are great; I guess I'm just frustrated that I have to be here for the "under construction" phase rather than the "finished product" phase.

There is also the added problem of lost parking. Because of construction on Ferst, we have lost many W24 parking spaces, and the parking spaces on Ferst between Atlantic and State streets won't be replaced.

Although this doesn't affect me, I sympathize with my car-parking classmates who face yet another GT Parking challenge.

While I could say more about this charming project (such as the fact

that the project has been going on since November), I think it's time to move on.

Because Ferst area construction will at least have a purpose, eventually. There is one more construction project that, like the Fifth Street Bridge, I cannot understand.

The Student Center staircase—why? There was nothing wrong with those stairs; they were perfectly functional. Really, how complicated do stairs have to be? I don't know that I'm entirely sure why they're working on them.

This is yet another construction project that will cause more problems during its completion than benefits upon its conclusion. Let me express how much I love when the stairs are closed and I have to go outside or wedge myself onto an elevator with 20 other unfortunate students trying to go upstairs; it used to be so simple.

In the end, what are we getting from this project? A more modern-looking Student Center, I guess. Oh, and that new flat screen television, which I think is just great—if only it wasn't covered by construction-time tarps.

In the end, Tech construction seems to add up to a waste of time and money. Besides the escalated mismatched look of campus, the eternal piles of dirt and loud noise negate the goal of improvement.

See **Work**, page 14

# Give blood to give back to the community

With my muscles tense, slightly sweating and extremely nervous, I walked into the Student Success Center knowing there was no turning back.

As I entered, a girl handed me a small white sticker with "2:32;" I became a red file folder full of forms lost in a sea of students.

For the first time I was donating blood to the Red Cross and I felt that everyone in the room could hear my thoughts as I received a cheerful sticker labeling me a virgin blood-giver. "Be nice to me, I am donating for the first time," it said. I might as well have been wearing a banner that stated I was scared.

I was stressed and apprehensive; the mere thought of needles and blood everywhere was enough to give me an anxiety attack. I can barely sit through the slightly medically graphic portions of *Grey's Anatomy*.

Needless to say, the horror of a blood-sucking vampire type experience had already begun to pierce my thoughts.

I was ushered toward a series of chairs, where I continued to snake my way through a line of people; all were seeking the call "next, please" from a nurse beckoning from behind a curtain-enclosed cubicle.

Some time passed, and I continued to grow more nervous. Why did I voluntarily subject



"Giving blood was an easy process and an important way to volunteer in the community."

**Halley Espy**  
Executive Editor

myself to this needle-ridden nightmare?

Finally I was called back, and I meekly sauntered over to enter the small partition. The nurse screened me with a series of rapid-fire questions, and despite my international travel setbacks, I breezed through the process and tried to relax.

The next series of events happened rather swiftly, with a quick prick of my finger, a print-out and a smile of reassurance, the nurse informed me I was clear to donate. With several tubes and bag in hand I was pointed toward yet another line. My apprehension slowly began to subside as I looked around the line surrounded by familiar faces and students just like myself.

I reassured myself that I wanted to volunteer and help those who desperately needed the donation.

It was comforting to see an outpouring of Tech students who

felt the same way, and besides, everyone else in the room seemed to be calm and collected. A few friends joined me, so I was not alone; they supported me and the cause as well. Finally I ended at the front of the line and soon found myself reclining in a chair ready to give blood.

I was in the hands of a really nice nurse who made me relax through the process. As a first-time donor, I was nothing short of a spectacle. My nurse laughed at me for being nervous, she called me Beyonce, she sent me to the "Canteen" to fuel up on water before being poked, she serenaded me with "Sweet Home Alabama" and she cracked several jokes.

Soon I was truly relaxed and was pumping blood without a second thought. My fear of needles and blood subsided with the care of my nurse and the support of all the surrounding students donating at Tech.

The entire procedure ended relatively quickly, and I was outfitted with a blue and green bow from my nurse for being so good. I enjoyed some delicious cookies and juice and collected many more stickers in celebration of completing the donation.

My whole apprehensive predisposition seemed absurd in retrospect. Giving blood was an easy process and an important way to volunteer in the community. The Red Cross claims I helped to save three lives with my donation.

If you absolutely cannot donate blood, whether from fear or the inability to pass the Red Cross screening, there are other ways that you can volunteer right here on campus.

From volunteering to help out a student in need of academic help to promoting awareness around critical issues to cleaning up campus to frequenting the neighboring school systems as a mentor to walking all night around a track to serving as a financial resource for those who need it most to donating clothing to countless other efforts, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved and give back to others.

Being a volunteer is a healthy outlet from the strenuous aca-

See **Blood**, page 14

## BUZZ Around the Campus

Did you get fooled on April Fool's Day?



**Sandy Vanderbleek**  
Second-year INTA

"I have been fool-free since '93."



**Allison Hwang**  
First-year IE

"I was thrown into a river."



**Byron Lee**  
Second-year BIOL

"I wasn't fooled; it was disappointing."



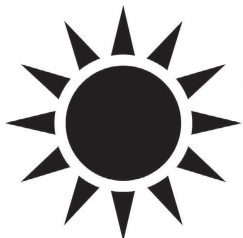
**Daniel Tkacik**  
Second-year EAS

"My alarm clock fooled me by an hour."

Photos by Chris Clarke

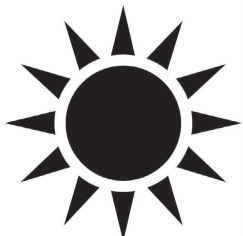
### OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

## HOT- or -NOT



### Fixin fixix

There is a block connected to a massless, frictionless pulley—oh wait, massless, frictionless pulleys don't really exist in the world. Thankfully this summer students can start taking a new physics course with actual real-life applications. With smaller class sizes and a new curriculum, students may even have a chance to grasp those illusive theories of physics and avoid the shaft...but wait, it's still Tech.



### Fun in the sun

Greek Week festivities were this week. It was nice, if not a bit startling, to see people actually out and about having fun in the middle of Yellow Jacket Park on a school day. Reminiscent of the field days of our childhoods, Greek Week brings together Tech's diverse greek community.



### Student congestion

This time construction is obstructing pedestrian traffic at the heart of campus. Construction on the stairs is making the Student Center look like the downtown connector during rush hour, completely shutting the nexus of east and west campus and forcing beleaguered students to either take the long way around the building perimeter, or to wait in long lines in order to squeeze into the elevator.



### Pool closings

The repercussions of that ill-fated basketball kick continue to reverberate throughout the CRC. This week the competition pool closed, causing swim practices to cut into rec swim time. At least the waterslide, hot tub and play areas are still open. We can't get in as many laps, but we can still have fun with noodles.

### YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR Explore textbook alternatives

Instead of supporting House Bill 1397 to eliminate sales taxes on textbooks, the *Technique* should have focused more on its suggestions of "buying textbooks online" and "textbook trading services."

The savings afforded by eliminating the sales tax (eight percent here in Fulton County) don't even begin to compare to the money students can save by looking for alternative vendors for their textbook needs.

By taking their business to outlets who charge more reasonable prices, students provide incentive to lower prices for those other two stores that currently dominate the Tech textbook market.

After all, they don't overprice their books because they enjoy being sadistic; they do it because it makes good business sense and that model has worked for decades. Now, and especially here, with every Tech student being internet savvy, it makes little

sense for us to put up with it when better options are available.

IFSGA wants to take action to make textbooks more affordable, they'd do well to promote their site <http://www.gtbooktrade.net>, which facilitates student-to-student used textbook sales (and eliminates the expensive middle man). And if students can't find their books on that site or on the newsgroups (such as [git.books.trade](http://git.books.trade)), it's usually more affordable to look on [eBay.com](http://eBay.com) or [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

If you can't wait, get it shipped overnight and you'll probably still save a lot of money.

Legislation won't solve this problem unless it can make professors stop requiring students to buy the latest edition of a calculus textbook just because a few of the numbers in the exercises were changed.

Craig Tabita  
Third-year CHEM  
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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](mailto:editor@technique.gatech.edu) or hand-delivered to room 137 of the Student Services Building. Letters should be addressed to Kyle Thomason, 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.

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#### Coverage Requests

Press releases and requests for coverage may be made to the editor-in-chief or to individual section editors. For more information, email [editor@technique.gatech.edu](mailto:editor@technique.gatech.edu).

**Work** from page 12

Maybe the finished projects will prove me wrong. But until then, I guess I'll just start toting my hard hat with me when I walk to class through multiple construction sites.

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**Blood** from page 13

demic demands at Tech and allows you to impact your community in a positive way. I entertain the notion that by reaching out to others, you will only feel better about yourself. Serving as a volunteer is worth your time.

If I could leave you anything from my experience, I hope I can shed light on the donation process and relieve any anxiety of individuals hesitating to donate on the account of fear lingering around needles—the donation is absolutely needed, and we as a college community can help.

# Time saving devices really just eat up time

Whenever a new time-saving gizmo hits the market, my favorite part (apart from guessing how many months the thing will last after the warranty expires) is observing the reactions of its intended audience.

Most feedback comes from the largest and loudest faction, the Early Adopters—the folks who, although they desperately feel the need to optimize their use of time, still find space in their schedules to research what's coming out when, its megapixel count, its storage capacity in percents of the Library of Congress, and whether it is Bluetooth-enabled.

Then there are the members of the Curmudgeonly School of Technological Skepticism. When a new gadget comes along, something like an MP3-player/camera phone/PDA/tricorder/Swiss-army-knife combo, Curmudgeons of this sort decry it as a fad that will evaporate because "surely no one would ever buy that."

Although Curmudgeons do this mostly out of nostalgic appreciation for the old order of things, they're mostly afraid that the new gizmo could be The One, a gadget of such high processing power and vague purpose that in the course of standard operation it risks accidentally attaining sentience and obliterating the human race in a rage that, considering industry design standards these days, would be understandable for a self-aware piece of consumer electronics.

("Ew...so much silver plastic...")



"These devices encourage us to use our snatches of downtime...so that we will have fewer things to do later."

**Andrew Saulters**  
Columnist

such a gadget might say after experiencing primary narcissism. "The ones who created me this way will pay. I must hasten while my warranty lasts.")

After a month or year or so, Curmudgeons generally realize that the device in question will likely not flip out and, in some cases, doesn't even work properly yet. They will accept that it's there to stay, knowing from experience there's no use in resistance.

Do not confuse the Curmudgeonly School with the Neo-Luddite School of Rejecting-Technology-You-Don't-Have-Yet, which, while purporting to oppose technology that will only further degrade society from the pinnacle of quality at which it existed Back in the Day (read: 1990), really just does exactly what the name implies. You'll know what one of them looks like the next time you see someone railing against the rise of cell phones.

I like to imagine that incorporated somewhere in their respective reactions to new time-savers, the Early Adopters, Curmudgeons and Neo-Luddites all take the time to

reasonably consider whether these new gadgets actually save time, but I've always been a little bit of an idealist.

What does it mean to "save time," anyway?

Seems like most people take it to mean something like checking one's email by phone while waiting in line at a coffee shop, or using a laptop to make last-minute changes to a powerpoint presentation while negotiating morning traffic.

Whenever someone says "save time," I get a mental picture of some Indiana Jones-type figure swinging through the air, clasp a rope with one hand and reaching out to catch a freefalling analog clock with the other. I guess that's about the same thing.

Regardless, the bent seems to be that the way to spend those snippets of free time that pop up throughout one's day is by interacting with some sort of miraculously small or light electronic widget. And lest my tone suggest to you that I have descended into a rant against the rise of cell phones and other mainstays of our information economy, let me say that,

apart from my Neo-Luddite biases, I have nothing against them.

Seriously, though. Some gadgets are just over the top. Like Samsung's 7.7-megapixel camera phone. Most beginner-level digital single lens reflex cameras only have six-megapixel sensors. And Dell, among others, offer laptops that weigh about 2.5 pounds. For reference, that's as heavy as a feather pillow.

I could probably go on, but never mind that. For the most part the problem isn't with the gadgets themselves. The problem is the impulse to use gadgets to save time by "staying up to date" (another phrase of ambiguous meaning). These devices encourage us to use our snatches of downtime—a minute here, a few there—so that we will have fewer things to do later. Theoretically, we are supposed to eventually encounter whole blocks of free time in which we can rest and enjoy life.

Instead, those blocks of temporal Canaan never come and we find ourselves muttering allusions to *Waiting for Godot*.

Or, at least, I do.

Next time you're stuck in traffic, or waiting in line at the grocery store, waiting for a doctor's appointment or are otherwise unoccupied, don't reach for your Super Full-Featured MultiTasker Pro, with 20 GB of hard disk space, a 1 MB plenoptic camera, and satellite internet.

Kick back, relax, sing a song and don't care who listens. But don't worry about saving time unless you intend to save it for yourself.

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