OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion

No green light for green fee

Green fee should be reconsidered, made voluntary

The student-proposed green fee, while noble in its intentions, lacks full thought in its current form. Increasing or creating new mandatory fees commits students to the payment of the fee permanently. There has been no recent precedent for fees being decreased or eliminated, and it is doubtful that the trend will change anytime soon.

All of the current mandatory fees are used to provide benefits directly to students. The green fee, in contrast, would promote sustainability initiatives with a less direct benefit to the student body. Funding for such initiatives should come from the Institute or alternative sources.

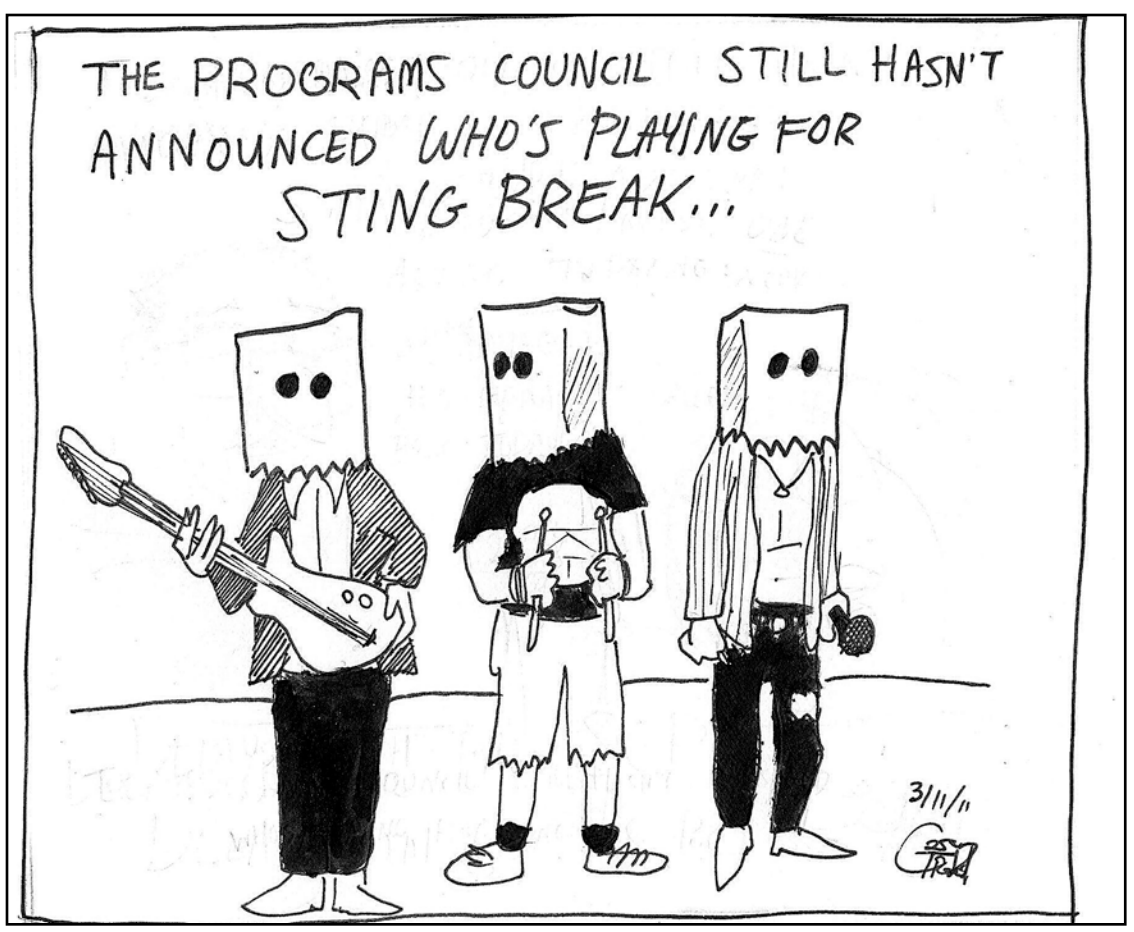
It should be noted that the Institute is currently doing an exceptional job promoting sustainable practices and green initiatives across campus. Setting aside funds for something that is already excelling on campus may seem ridiculous to much of the student body. Furthermore, mandating that every student pay to promote the green cause could poison the currently positive image sustainability efforts have on campus. As certain parts of the student body have already expressed reluctance at the idea of a green fee, it is unlikely that sentiment will shift in a different direction.

A suitable alternative to a mandatory fee would be to give students the option of paying for a voluntary fee. Allowing students to tack on a few dollars to their mandatory costs would allow students who want to contribute to do so. The practice would generate momentum for sustainable practices and initiatives, and it would show how much students truly believe in these practices.

Current student groups, like Students Organizing for Sustainability, could promote the voluntary fee to the student body. Since some many students already believe in the sustainability movement, student contributions could be successful in the first year.

The Consensus Opinion reflects the majority opinion of the Editorial Board of the Technique*, but not necessarily the opinions of individual editors.*

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Casey Tisdel



Technique to continue in accomplished hands

By Hahnming Lee
Editor-in-Chief

One of the first things I was told when I came to Tech was to find something to do outside of class or else I would go crazy. I decided to try my hand at writing for the newspaper as I figured that doing something that at the time seemed to be the opposite of engineering would pay dividends. Five years later, I am thankful that I chose to stick with the *Technique* as it has taught me much more than how to piece together a 600-word article. While Tech has helped me become a different (and maybe better) person, I have grown to value this organization above all else at the Institute. It is an honor to be a part of this Tech tradition, and I hope that my work at the *Technique* has given back to campus as much as the *Technique* has given to me.

Obviously, and thankfully, I cannot stay here forever, and I had to help in the process of finding my replacement. It was important for me to find the best candidate that would have the same passion as me, but would also be able to imprint his or her own mark on the paper. With the election of current news editor Vijai Narayanan, I am confident this has happened.

Vijai has been involved with news for three years, quickly ascending from contributing writer to news editor. When I sat down with Vijai at the beginning of the year, we discussed the vision we had for the paper and how we would achieve all of our lofty goals. While it was very easy to throw a bunch of these ideas out there before we had to worry about actually producing a paper, reflecting back on the past two semesters, I am proud to say that we have achieved many of our goals, almost entirely due to his efforts. I cannot thank him enough for all that he has done for this paper. He will continue (or, depending on your view, start) to improve the *Technique* and adapt it to best serve the Tech community, especially the students.

When I first started the job, I was told something by last year's editor-in-chief that I feel is only appropriate to pass on: welcome to the best job on campus.

YOUR VIEWS Letters to the Editor

Bieber's fame not grounds for Grammy

On the topic of pop culture and the Grammy awards, I couldn't disagree more strongly with Entertainment Editor Patricia Uceda's editorial in the March 4 issue of the [*Technique*], ("Grammys need to reflect"). Ms. Uceda stated that Justin Bieber was the obvious choice for the Best New Artist award, and that the Grammys have shown themselves to be irrelevant through their slighting of him for the award. While I cannot disagree with her assertion that 2010 was his year, I think most unbiased individuals would agree that it was not a result of the strength of his music, but rather media oversaturation and curiosity about a 16-year-old pop star.

While I can appreciate Ms. Uceda's point that popularity should factor into the Academy's choice when presenting these awards, I would argue that it already does, perhaps too much. Hundreds, if not thousands, of deserving bands are not even considered for the award, not because of their (lack of) artistic merit, but simply because they are not popular enough. Even Arcade Fire, winners of this year's Album of the Year Grammy were dismissed for their relative obscurity, yet are far more popular than many bands producing quality music can dream.

What Ms. Uceda seems to imply in her editorial is not that popularity should be a factor, but rather that it should be the only factor in choosing the recipients of these awards. Or, to put it another way, that the cultural significance of the artist and his or her public persona should trump that of the music which is supposedly being celebrated by the Grammys. In choosing a Best New Artist, the academy should be looking to identify who shows the most promise to be significant to our culture over the next five, 10, or 50 years, not just provide an affirmation to the artist who was most able to promote themselves in a year. Given this as a goal, I would argue that Esperanza Spalding, or any of the other nominees for this year's Best New Artist, would be more deserving than Justin Bieber.

Grant Michalski
Grad CEE

Write to us:
letters@nique.net

We welcome your letters in response to Technique content as well as topics relevant to campus. We will print letters on a timely and space-available basis.

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

See **Letters**, page 10

Social media portal for communication

"SGA and other campus groups had the opportunity... to utilize social media in a more powerful fashion."

Vivian Fan
Managing Editor

In the last five years, social media has emerged as a powerful tool to connect, inform and mobilize people everywhere from a college campus to an entire nation. On a local scale, it is nearly impossible for the average Tech student to not see an organization's event on Facebook or a campus leader without a Twitter. However, with social media, there should be changes from the norm in how campus leaders represent themselves and their constituency through their messages.

Twitter and Facebook have allowed students greater exposure to how decisions that impact them are made. This has been especially true with the state Senate's recent decisions on the HOPE Scholarship. Over the last two weeks, as state representatives argued back and forth about the new HOPE Scholarship proposal, many of the messages between SGA representatives on Facebook could be described as a premature self-indulgent lovefest on issues that are far from being solved. While I applaud SGA leaders for creating informative white papers, pushing students to contact their representatives and lobbying for their students' interests, like keeping a grandfather clause for all current students, much of their work may come as too little too late, not strong enough or misinformed.

For example, on March 8, Undergraduate Student Body President Corey Boone mistakenly posted on his Twitter, "THANKS to the GA Senate for passing the new HOPE Bill with a Grandfather Clause for ALL current students (including highschool seniors)." In reality, the grandfather clause was only approved to reach current juniors and seniors in college who met the previous HOPE requirements. In other posts, Boone's messages have focused on small strides in the HOPE proposal, which elicited early praise in comments and "likes" from a number of SGA representatives. At this point in time, however, it seems that the conflict is far from over. There is more work to be done, and the only way to do so is to point out the negatives as well as the positives. Criticism would be the more effective route to take than to dole out blind praise.

Considering the current political climate of Tech's state funding and academic affairs, it feels as if there is more emphasis being placed on I <3 GT Week events than the fight for our student rights. How much can be accomplished when the environment for discussion is one filled with fancy matching profile pictures and Facebook status updates starting with "I <3 GT because…" followed by a meaningless blurb on the weather or a Charlie Sheen quote?

I, for one, propose a series of engaging events to discuss opinions as to what is wrong with Tech, the HOPE Scholarship and other issues plaguing the common student under the name of "I Criticize GT Week" or (for lack of a better term) "I H8 GT Week." The organizing parties can set up a comment jar in the Student Center and award each student a donut for submitting a thought-provoking criticism of their college experience or a free T-shirt for three!

As tongue-in-cheek as it may sound, the underlying sentiment rings true. Rather than focusing on the few positives of our current financial situation as an institute, SGA and other on campus leaders need to express clearly what is wrong to their constituents, discuss how to fix it and impart these sentiments to state elected representatives in order to create real change. Patting each other on the back and compliments can't accomplish that. With every good act done, a way to make the next act better should be said and considered.

SGA and other campus groups had the opportunity (and may still have the opportunity) to utilize social media in a powerful fashion to mobilize its students in the fight for HOPE. Rather than asking for students to merely write to their state representatives, SGA leaders should push for their student constituency to protest and provide the resources to do so. After all, it probably takes less than 10 minutes to start an online petition and less than five to create a Facebook event to start an open dialogue.

An open dialogue does not need to mean harsh action or statements, but it does mean discussing different aspects of an issue, no matter how unpleasant it may be. Compliments and high-fives on Facebook will not make any student more inclined to take a stance. After all, President James Madison once stated, "A popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both." We, the students at Tech, deserve more than to end up as a farce, especially when it comes to our ability to afford an education.

Interdisciplinary courses more practical

"Engineering and science students should be required to take more than the basic history and English courses."

Kamna Bohra
Focus Editor

In my early years, the book worms and history nerds of my classes would wonder what value or application math would ever have for them. The math whizzes would snobbily find novels useless and history lessons irrelevant. However, with the ever-changing faces of science and technology, the development of a collaborative understanding of the engineering, policy and media surrounding each new invention is increasingly pertinent.

For Tech engineers, the need to understand the engineering behind any technology is already obvious. For policymakers and members of the media, on the other hand, this need may not seem as pressing. Without even a basic knowledge of a technology's functions, effective policy cannot be made, and press releases should not be reported. For example, during the BP oil spill of 2010, the accident was not the result of a CEO waking up one morning and deciding to spill a few hundred thousand barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico just for kicks and grins. This oil spill was, rather, the result of errors in engineering, as many sources of outcry seemed to disregard.

Just as understanding engineering should be important to policy makers and media representatives, comprehending policy should be vital to engineers and scientists. When developing a new technology, the inventor must know all of his or her restrictions and the potential legal implications of the technology. Policy is largely built off of human values and environmental interests, two aspects that scientists and engineers often fail to evaluate. Engineers should recognize other broad implications of their inventions, such as cost effectiveness, impacts on the global economy and political outcries from both vocal minorities and majorities.

Again, with respect to the Gulf of Mexico oil spill, BP's response was delayed, becoming progressively slower by the day. While the difficulty of engineering did play a role in this sluggish response system, perhaps the time frame was the reflection of a poor understanding of the long-term environmental implications of BP's activity and the requirements of sustainable living in the Gulf region. Although the ecosystem began to essentially clean itself and restore its initial state, local economies along the coast were destroyed, creating long-term effects for both BP, who paid out billions of dollars in correction, and coastal citizens, who now have to re-establish their economies and livelihoods.

To assist in the development of effective and all-inclusive policy, constructing collaborative groups of policy makers, engineers, scientists and members of the general public is important for decision-making. Bringing this need for collaboration to a very local level, Tech should encourage more flexible, interdisciplinary education. While many research projects at Tech reflect the presence of interdisciplinary work, the coursework and lack of flexibility in engineering class selection do not emphasize the need for a broader education.

Engineering and science students should be required to take more than the basic history and English courses, and perhaps with a little less disgruntlement. Liberal arts courses built in analytical thinking, as opposed to rote memorization of some dates and facts, would be more beneficial to engineering students. Even at the most basic level, stopping after two courses of English is absurd. If engineers cannot effectively communicate their ideas, how will non-engineers ever understand the work of them?

On that same train of thought, liberal arts and management majors should be required to take more than just basic lab sciences and CS courses. They should complete some coursework in more in-depth engineering classes to get a flavor of the kinds of science and technology they will deal with in their future careers, whether it is policy making, analyzing the impacts of a technology on a region or managing a company that has produced a major technology.

In addition to this varied course selection, discussion within classes should not be limited to what the course title suggests. True interdisciplinary education uses methods from multiple areas of studies to analyze a particular issue or problem. For example, some engineering courses discuss creating systems that are energy-efficient, noting the need for alternative energy to pursue sustainable living. In this class structure, students get education in engineering that is rooted in mathematical concepts, societal values and ideas of sustainability.

BUZZ
Around Campus

Did you drop any classes before drop day?

Brian Palmer
Third-year ECE

"I dropped Thermo because it was my only morning class."

Shelby Long
Second-year BMED

"No, I didn't because I made sure that this semester's workload was lighter."

Stephen Kennedy
Fifth-year CM

"Philosophy of science because I wasn't going to graduate until the summer."

Mike Hirth
Fourth-year CS

"I never drop classes. Put your faith into the curve."

Photos by Virginia Lin

OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT or NOT

Going out on top

While victories were far-and-few-between during this season, the men's basketball team was able to deliver one last victory at AMC on Sunday. The win allowed fans to remember all the great memories the program has had in its home of over 50 years. Let us hope that Tech fans will have just as many great memories in years to come at McCamish Pavilion.

HOPEless

The State Senate passed a slightly different version of the HOPE reform bill, and the House and the Governor are all on-board with the changes made. What was once a hallmark of the state to promote higher education has become a caveat riddled version of its original form. This bill is just another sign of the state's lack of concern for higher education.

Awareness warranted

The annual Take Back the Night Ceremony was held on the IC Lawn this year. This powerful event is an invaluable asset to campus and brings to light the problem of sexual assault. This generally taboo discussion was articulated passionately by speakers who are survivors of sexual assault themselves. All students should take time to attend this event while at Tech.

Scavenging screw-up

While most people on campus were probably unaware that RHA was holding a scavenger hunt on Friday, those in the *Technique* office were not so lucky. Even though some on staff would beg to differ, the *Technique* office is officially a place of work. If RHA would like to include our office in a scavenger hunt in the future, we recommend they ask first so we can say "No."

Letters from page 8

Ramblin' Reck Club preserves tradition

As an organization strongly devoted to fostering a sense of pride and tradition within Tech's student body, the re-institution of T-Night over the last two years has allowed Ramblin' Reck Club (RRC) to share our passion for tradition with all of Tech's students, not just members of our organization.

In order to offer students a well-rounded glimpse at the past, RRC contacted several organizations who also take much pride in Tech traditions and spirit including SGA, GT Band and the Student Alumni Association. RRC worked closely with Marilyn Somers, director of the Georgia Tech Living History Program of the Alumni Association, to obtain copies of photos, videos and archives dating back to the 1930's in order to get the most accurate depictions of each tradition. Our organization also pulled past T-Books from the library archives dating back to the early 1900s. Moreover, the script used for the presentation was made available to all organizations involved in planning T-Night and suggestions were encouraged.

One thing we have learned from such extensive research is that differing perspectives and the passage of time will cause traditions to evolve, a process that is both natural and beautiful. Take, for example, the traditional name for a first year Tech student: a RAT. When the RAT cap first appeared on campus in 1915, this acronym stood for Recruit At Tech originating from the then recent establishment of campus' military program. However, as a result of anti-hazing rules and the extension of this term to all students, this name was no longer relevant. Instead of a definitive change in the meaning of the acronym, it has simply evolved to Recently Acquired Tech student. If you are interested in learning more about this please refer to page 11 in this year's T-Book, an annual RRC publication.

Lastly, we would like to emphasize the fact that the T-Book article published a few weeks ago in the *Technique* ("Tech History," printed on Feb. 18) was not associated with RRC in any way. Our organization was unaware such an article was being published, and no one was contacted in regards to the article before it's publication.

Because we are extremely excited about the recent interest students have exhibited in regards to Tech tradition, however, we are currently working on a new initiative through which to better showcase the Institute's wonderful history through a collaborative effort.

Ethan Speir & Natalia Cuenca
Co-Tradition Chairs, RRC

Editor's Note: Both the Technique *and the* T-Book *are official publications of the Board of Student Publications.*

Spalding's Grammy for art achievement

A Grammy is one of music's most revered awards and recognizes exceptional achievement in the music industry. Members of the entertainment industry vote on these awards, and in the past they have received (often fair) criticism for being simply a popularity contest for the music industry. To have someone as talented as jazz musician and singer Esperanza Spalding win the "Best New Artist" award should be celebrated as a great underdog story. I like Justin Beiber. He has incredible musical talent and many guys are jealous of the way he makes girls go crazy for him. His movie *Never Say Never* was excellent and has already grossed over $74 million. Musically his records have sold in the millions, and despite this, he just celebrated his 17th birthday. With all of these achievements, Justin Beiber would have deserved a Grammy if it was a popularity contest. (Though he did win Breakthrough Artist of the Year at the American Music Awards, which is simply a popularity contest voted on by the general public.)

Fortunately, the Grammys aren't, and should never be, a popularity contest. Judging music is an incredibly subjective task with the myriad of genres to consider. However, listening to a new genre not only amplifies creativity, but also stretches the brain in new directions. In this sense jazz is no exception. The chords are complex, and the songs are packed with subtle nuances. Listening to her work, Esperanza Spalding has embodied the jazz genre and expanded my listening from just the mainstream pop/rock/country and the trendy indie/alt-country/singer-songwriter genres. While she's not one of my "go-to" artists, her music is rich with talent and pleasant to listen to. Jazz is decidedly not cool with 18-24 year olds, but that doesn't mean it should be ignored. She brings a fresh and vibrant face to a genre stereotyped by aging or deceased performers. In this way, she is helping shape and revitalize the jazz culture in America today.

Both of these artists are worthy of winning a Grammy, but it's a pleasant surprise for the underdog Esperanza Spalding to get the recognition she deserves. I hope this will encourage everyone to explore other genres in the hope of uncovering all of the musical talent this great country and world has to offer.

Mac Clayton
Third-year ECE