OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, March 18, 2005

"The South's Liveliest College Newspaper"
TECHNIQUE
Serving Georgia Tech since 1911

Quote of the week:
"Time sneaks up on you like a windshield on a bug."
—John Lithgow

OUR VIEWS CONSENSUS OPINION

March Madness

A year ago at this time, the Jackets were beginning their incredible run that led to an appearance in the 2004 NCAA Championship game. This year, the Jackets have once again become the team that no one wants to face in the tournament. Tonight the Jackets will face George Washington University in a sold-out game in Nashville.

Coming off the heels of narrow loss to Duke in the ACC Championship game, the Jackets appear to be more than ready to take on the Colonials, and the fans will be behind them every step of the way, win or lose.

The fanbase for the basketball team has been incredible this year, unlike last year when fans didn't really seem to catch on until the tournament began. Long gone are the days when Head Coach Paul Hewitt had to create contests like the Greek Challenge to lure fairweather fans to basketball games. The student section was packed at all of the games this season. In addition, Hewitt and his players have maintained their celebrity status on campus all year that they had obtained from the Final Four last year.

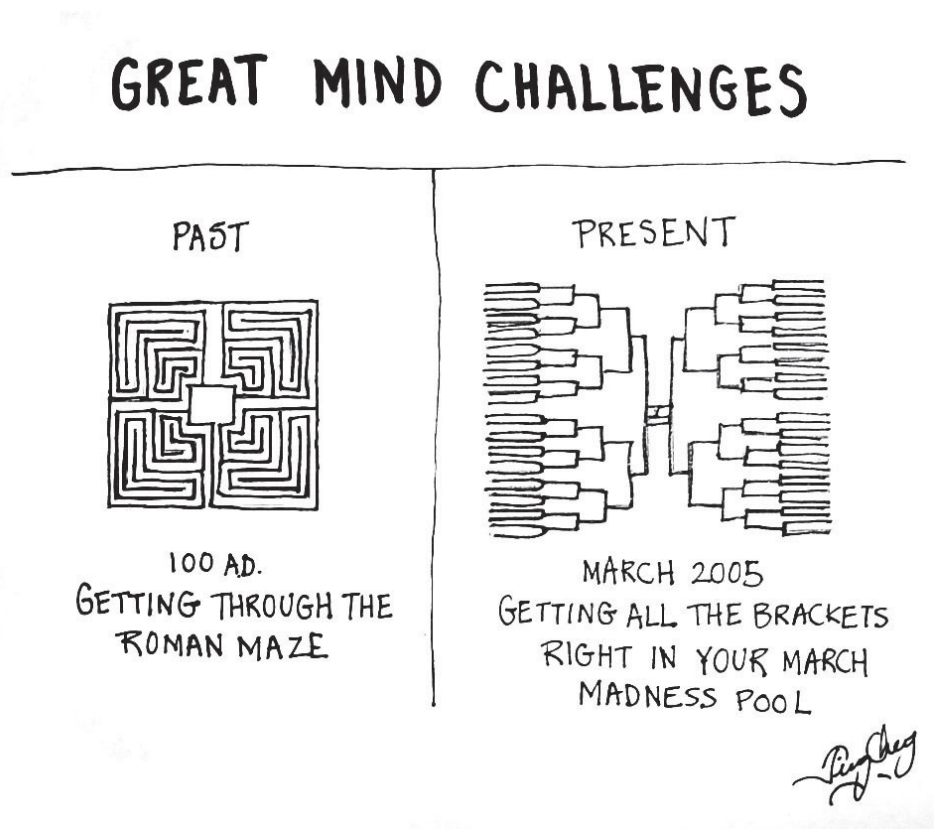
Now with March Madness upon us, it's time for students to step up their game as well and cheer the team on tonight, whether it be from Nashville or from a home couch. Based on the success of the "Paul Hewitt Nation" T-shirts and student tickets selling out for the GWU first-round game on the first day, it doesn't appear that the Jackets will have a problem firing up their fans this year.

Win or lose tonight, students, and the rest of the Tech community, will never forget the joy, excitement and pride that Hewitt, his class of five outstanding seniors, and the rest of the team have brought to us over the past two years.

A speedy recovery

On Monday, Head Coach Chan Gailey suffered a heart attack, while playing racquetball at the Campus Recreation Center. We would like to extend our best wishes to Coach Gailey and his family. We hope he has a speedy recovery. Additionally, we would like to commend Gailey for his unselfishness and dedication to Tech during this difficult time—he called from the hospital to encourage his team to begin their spring practices as scheduled. The team could have delayed its practices due to a special waiver the NCAA had granted, but Gailey's phone call was motivation enough for the team to push onward with their training. Anyone wishing to send Gailey a get-well card can send it to the Georgia Tech Athletic Association at 150 Bobby Dodd Way, N.W., Atlanta, GA 30332. Get well soon, Chan!

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



By Ting Cheng / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Tech focuses on superficial issues

"Why does Tech spend so much money on superficial surface alterations without fixing any of the...problems?"

Amy Schmisseur
Copy Editor

My four years at Tech have been plagued with things that I personally abhor: apathy, bad grammar and a recent lack of Ben and Jerry's ice cream pints in the Student Center Food Court.

I can overlook the zealots on Skiles who never stop pushing the remains of needlessly slaughtered trees into my tightly clenched fists, and I can even enjoy all of the new "dining options" that abound on campus—although their hours are not sufficient. I must admit that they are better than the constant fare of Wingzone and Papa John's that I survived on freshman year.

However, I must strongly object to the blatant insincerity that screams to me from virtually every corner of campus.

While the Tech Tsunami Relief effort was fairly well conducted and generally a wonderful idea, why did its organizers choose that event? Was it the attention that the media lavished on it? The catastrophically high number of people who died? If TTR really cared so much about helping those affected, why did it wait until the end of its prolonged campaign to cut a check?

With the increased attention that Tech has placed on "internationalizing" our majors, students and campus, why not implement a simple "study abroad requirement" for our majors, as is required by schools in the University System of California? If we are really sincere about how wonderful of an effect this kind of experience will have on students, why not make it obligatory?

Why does Tech spend so much money on superficial surface alterations without fixing any of the fundamental problems?

Examples of this abound: from repainting the Student Center three times last summer to budgeting $125,000 for a single day of student appreciation.

I would assume that the Student Center painting was to improve the "look" of the campus—let me assure you that there are places that look much worse, try the bathrooms in Skiles or the lighting (or lack thereof) in the parking garages.

A free concert on campus provides for a fun night and potentially even a few later nights of reminiscing. However that does not improve student life. A concert with a really cool band is just that: a concert with a really cool band. Student life is comprised of the little things, the everyday things.

Don't even get me started on the idea of placing a coffee shop in the library. While I am forced to admit that I like the Student Center Commons (I was a huge skeptic), there is no way that a coffee shop in the library is a good idea. It's a library for heaven's sake!

Improve the bathrooms, the lighting, the A/C and all the little things that make us sigh when we realize that it's virtually the only place to study on campus. (The flag building is alright, but it's only open during the day, and the Student Center is really, really noisy.)

Not that I would object to having a coffee shop near the library, perhaps even in the little basement area. Hey, if they can put a coffee shop in what used to be a bathroom in the Student Center Commons, I think they could probably put one anywhere. As long as it had decent hours (hopefully the same as those of the library), it would be a great addition.

Administration: let's try to focus on something besides what makes you look good. Yes, the new management building is gorgeous, but the noise and smell created by the disrepair of the ESM building makes it more than a little hard to concentrate.

Why do some of your students receive LCD screens outside of every classroom when architecture students don't even have enough room to store a model while they are trying to draw sections of it? And don't try to feed me the line about "rich alumni."

Is Tech a corporate whore? It's beginning to look that way. We have a Ford ES&T building, a Barnes and Noble bookstore, an Einstein's coffee/bagel place and Coca-Cola everywhere. Do we really need to sell ourselves to get ahead? I know what the fountain of all wisdom (a.k.a. my dad) would have to say about that.

The recent swarm of soon-to-be high school graduates and their accompanying parents only serves to make campus that much more annoying. Their ridiculously sanitized version of how great Tech is makes me want to vomit.

Along a similar vein, FASET applications read that they only want "positive and enthusiastic" leaders. Why not try getting real people? People who actually know about the real Tech life, complain about it constantly and secretly love it in spite of all of its flaws.

Co-oping pays off for students in the end

"Co-oping gives students a chance to learn what the workplace is really like."

Lauren Griffin
Advertising Manager

Deciding to co-op is by far one of the best decisions I have made at Tech. Not only because it has "prepared me for the real world" and "given me invaluable work experience," but also because it gives me a nice cash flow and a break from school every other semester.

I don't know how some students go to school for 5 semesters in a row, because there is no way I would have survived.

At the end of each work term, I may look forward to going back to school, but I am even more excited when that school semester is over and I can start working again.

Besides providing students with a break from school, co-oping gives students a chance to learn what the working world is really like, because it's not what you expect.

There are several things that co-oping has taught me. One is that workplace etiquette is a myth. People aren't always nice, polite or well-mannered. I went into one manager's office during lunchtime to find him licking his fingers and talking with his mouth full. I have heard coworkers hang up on people and I was in the office when a recruiter described characteristics that upper management would and would not put up with in a new employee.

By far the worst display of inappropriateness was when I unexpectedly stopped by an administrative assistance's desk and she told me she had "passed gas." Pretty bad huh? And you didn't have to smell it.

Another lesson I've learned is that the dress code only applies to young employees. The 65 year old administrative assistant can wear her strappy sandals every day that the temperature breaks 90 degrees, but the second a co-op comes in with an open toed shoe the gossip mill starts. Comments such as "I didn't realize we were allowed to wears shoes like that" are said just loud enough so you can hear them.

That is not the only thing that gets gossip going. The office is worse than any group of sorority girls when it comes to spreading rumors.

Rest assured that if you are the last person to find something out, no one likes you, because it doesn't take much to get someone talking about somebody else's business.

I have also found that if you co-op in an office with older employees, the conversation usually will default to old war stories from when they were in college.

You will hear about crazy parties and school scandals that date back to before you were even born. Imagine your grandfather telling you about all the beer he drank and the various girls he dated and you will get a good idea of how uncomfortable these conversations can be.

Those girls who think the dating pool will improve when they graduate are setting themselves up for disappointment.

Just because some guy has a job and should be grown up does not mean that he is. They do not miraculously become suave.

I had one guy follow me into an elevator not to ask me out but to ask me my full name. Even though it was an odd question, I didn't really think about until two hours later when I got an email from him. He had looked me up in the company address book to email me and ask me if I would be interested in going to lunch with him. If he had only read my editorial from last semester, I may be dating him now...

Finally, I have learned that a Tech education will earn you instant respect. People's eyes widen when you tell them you are a student at Tech and your opinion suddenly has a little more merit.

They don't know that I've spent four years trying to get my GPA back up to a 3.0 or that I spent every waking minute of one summer in the computer lab to earn the best damn C I've ever made.

Although the majority of people at work couldn't ever comprehend how hard Tech is (about 75 percent of them are Georgia fans) they are still amazed that I am about to graduate from here.

You ever wonder why GT alums donate so much money and are so proud to be a Yellow Jacket? Now you know. For all the crap you have to put up with to get through this school, it will by far pay off when you graduate.

OUR VIEWS HOT OR NOT

HOT– or –NOT

Luda in 'da house

"Move b!@#$, get out the way" will be the first thing on Techies' minds when Ludacris plays at Sting Break. Yup that's right, Ludacris really is coming April 7. The planning committee has delivered on its promise to bring another huge act to campus after the success of last year's Fuel concert. The concert will be free to students, a bargain considering Ludacris' concert tickets sell for big bucks.

Cyberbuzz downtime

Sometime on Tuesday, Cyberbuzz went down, affecting many student organizations who were not able to access their websites. Normally Cyberbuzz is a trusty medium for organizations to use, and it is not yet known what may have caused the downtime. We can only hope that whatever the problem is, that all remnants are gone before we get back from Spring Break, and gets resolved permanently.

Baseball sets record

The No. 8 Jackets set a new ACC record for most consecutive wins Sunday with their win over Wake Forest. Head Coach Danny Hall also earned his 500th school victory. The record had been unbroken since 1988. With only five more wins, Hall will become the winningest coach in school history.

Lights off

Whenever a flashing blue light appears from one of the emergency phones on campus, it signals that someone needs help. However at the Woodruff Parking Lot, the light has been malfunctioning for weeks now, with the blue light continually blinking. Someone should fix this right away.

YOUR VIEWS LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Survey helps students

The recent Parking and Transportation survey serviced by the SGA Parking, Transportation and Facilities Committee encompassed campus issues such as safety, parking and transportation. The committee was pleased to find that 887 people in total took the survey, and would like to thank everyone for their participation. The results, in full, can be found on the SGA homepage.

With regards to campus safety, 2.7 percent of students who took the survey feel very safe parking on campus, 46.5 percent feel safe, 38 percent feel unsafe and 12.8 percent feel very unsafe. The majority of responses indicated that supplemental policing and patrolling of lots and decks would increase safety levels. Other common remarks indicated that installing security cameras and lighting shadowed areas would make people feel more safe and reduce crime to a greater extent.

Your suggestions have been relayed to GTPD and Facilities, and actions have already been planned to make Tech a safer place. For instance, there will be a campus safety walk on April 18 at 7 p.m. to identify all shadowed, dark areas in need of more lighting.

One of the questions on the survey asked about the number of citations one receives per semester, and if the citations were paid. Many of the students who received five or more tickets per semester never paid their tickets and didn't own a permit. Parking is currently negotiating with the Georgia DMV for license plate identification. This service will provide the means to identify violators who do not own permits and enforce payment of citations. Of those surveyed, 64.2 percent have submitted an appeal for a ticket and 35.8 percent have not.

See **Survey**, page 10

Letter Submission Policy

The *Technique* welcomes all letters to the editor and will print letters on a timely and space-available basis. Letters may be mailed to Georgia Tech Campus Mail Code 0290, emailed to **editor@technique.gatech.edu** or hand-delivered to room 137 of the Student Services Building. Letters should be addressed to Daniel Amick, 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 reserve the right to edit for style, content and length. Only one submission per person will be printed each term.

Advertising Information

Information and rate cards can be found online at **www.nique.net**. The deadline for reserving ad space and submitting ad copy is noon on Friday, one week prior to publication. For rate information, call our offices at (404) 894-2830, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Advertising space cannot be reserved over the phone. The *Technique* office is located in room 137 of the Student Services Building, 353 Ferst Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30332-0290. Questions regarding advertising billing should be directed to Corey Jones at (404) 894-9187, or Rose Mary Wells at (404) 894-2830.

Coverage Requests

Press releases and requests for coverage may be made to the Editor-in-Chief or to individual section editors. For more information, email **editor@technique.gatech.edu**.

BUZZ

Around the Campus

What are your plans for Spring Break?

Changmo Park
ME Graduate Student

"Sleep."

Courtney Buckner
MGT Sophomore

"Driving down to Ft. Lauderdale and Orlando."

James Lai
ISyE Junior

"Getting drunk in the woods."

Tony Sokan
ISyE Senior

"Getting wild at the beach."

Photos by Michael Skinner

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Ombudsman needed to fight for graduates' rights

"The longer you hang around the fourth group of graduate students, the more you hear scary stories."

Karen Feigh
Columnist

Those of us in the "graduate" zone understand that graduate students can be grouped into one of four general categories.

1. There are the newbies, those who are still fresh with the zeal of the idea of graduate school and graduate studies. They are out to change the world and nothing can stop them.

2. There are those who are in the middle stages—still taking classes but concerned about their proposal—who are just muddling along.

3. There are those in the final stages, who only have "six more months" to go.

4. And then there is the group of old wizened grad students. They've been here longer than anyone can remember, and for all anyone knows will likely be here for years to come.

It is these "old-timers" that I wish to address in this column.

There are a variety of reasons why these old timers are still here.

Some simply get caught up with all that there is to do in graduate school, they simply enjoy learning.

Some just cannot seem to come up with a thesis topic that they are happy with.

Others get stuck in the middle of thesis work, continually over and over again.

And still others are simply content to drag the process out "a few more years."

There are, however, a variety of other reasons that have some students still here five, six and seven years after they began.

These reasons have nothing to do with personal preference of motivation.

The longer you hang around the fourth group of graduate students, the more you hear scary stories. These stories include: stories of students having to barter to be allowed to graduate; stories of students being forced to change thesis topics because a professor has decided to claim their previous work; stories of students who do not have the appropriate equipment to conduct their research, and more.

How true are these stories?

How prevalent is this behavior? I'm honestly not sure, but each of the stories mentioned above was told to me personally by the students involved.

So I'd have to say that at the very least these stories are more prevalent than they should be.

There was a recent article in the Nov. 2004 issue of *Physics Today* summarizing the results of a survey of ethical training and awareness. It found that a large number of junior members of the American Institute of Physics view "the unethical treatment of subordinates in research as a very serious problem."

One of the problems as I see it is that there isn't a well-established procedure for reporting alleged injustices, nor is there a dedicated person for graduate students to turn to for guidance in this area.

The students I have spoken with are at a loss as to what to do. A graduate student's advisor is the first person he or she has to see to report such problems.

If the problem is with the advisor, the student has no clear idea where to turn. Many simply grin and bear it, sometimes for years.

If they do consider the problem large enough to seek outside help, they may speak to their graduate coordinator.

Then they are confronted with the truth: there is little that can be done.

After all, by the time you reach the PhD level, your research is highly specialized and there is often no acceptable alternative advisor.

So most of these problems are just dealt with quietly, which makes it hard to tell if these stories indicate a real problem, potentially isolated incidents or a figment coming from the overtaxed mind of a frazzled grad student.

Perhaps I am making these stories into more than I ought.

Or perhaps these situations are good training for the real world, and we should begin to apply real world solutions.

I think that it is time a graduate student ombudsman was brought in to provide a dedicated person for graduate students to turn to.

This person can provide neutral advice to both students and faculty members while concurrently serving as a source of institutional memory.

Personally, I believe that this role would best be filled by an emeritus professor or dean or someone with equal standing among the faculty.

And although I am loath to introduce more forms and bureaucracy to the academic process, it might also be interesting to introduce a yearly survey to all students who have taken longer than the prescribed 4-5 years for a Masters/Ph.D program, to do a pulse check of them.

If a problem is found, they can take steps to make the student aware of his or her options in order to help both the student and the graduate school.

Survey

from page 9

Noteworthy to mention from the survey are the requests for better efficiency of the Stinger and Stingerette system, enforcement of illegal parking, proper functioning of gate arms, more decks versus lots and increased benefits. These issues are currently being resolved. Next fall, there will hopefully be two new Stinger buses funding for which is still being sought. Also, Parking will implement a new Habitual Offender policy which will add a nuisance surcharge to all citations issued to an habitual offender.

Gate arms are being replaced as broken, and violators who break arms are being disciplined and required to reimburse Parking for replacement costs. In the Master Plan, most surface lots will be phased out and the space inventory replaced by strategically located decks.

As far as increasing the benefits of owning a permit, it was found from the survey that many suggestions are already available to permit holders. This led the committee and parking to believe that the student body as a whole is unaware of all the benefits of owning a parking permit.

To resolve this dilemma, Parking has created a "Parking Perks" page on their home page that lists all the benefits of having a parking permit. What do you actually get for $500? Visit **www.parking.gatech.edu** to find out!

Meagan Spencer
SGA Parking Committee Chair
SGAparking@yahoo.com