

# OPINIONS

Technique • Friday, September 20, 2002

## OUR VIEWS Consensus Opinion Changes from the Registrar

The Office of the Registrar announced several changes this week, including the end of paper OSCARs and an adjustment to the school calendar for Spring. The decision to do away with paper OSCAR is a good one, despite the fact that some students still use them. The print OSCARs become virtually useless as registration progresses. It will save both money and paper to do away with them.

The move to change the start date of Spring semester from Friday to Monday shows that Tech pays attention to the needs of its students. With school beginning in early January, Tech made the decision to move the start date back, despite potential problems with the Board of Regents. This move demonstrates the care that Tech administration puts into planning our schooling. The plan also shows great foresight as the starting date will only get closer to January 1 for the next two years.

The one criticism that can be levied at this change is the lack of foresight in violating Board of Regents' policy. Tech's plan to change the format of Spring semester should have included another change that would bring us into compliance with BoR policy. Despite this problem, the changes are generally beneficial to students.

## CS 1321 alternative class

The alternative computer science course that will be offered beginning in the Spring is an advantageous step in Georgia Tech's continuing mission to promote its non-engineering curricula. Tech has long wanted to attract more students to its liberal arts and social science program while maintaining the focus on technology that makes it unique; a computer class that will teach these students skills that will be useful in their chosen fields is a concrete step toward achieving that goal. The ability to educate non-engineering majors in a unique and tech-centered way will be a great draw to Tech's programs in the future. This move also reinforces the idea that the administration does indeed listen and respond to student feedback.

This class will hopefully lead other majors to realize the importance of teaching its students computer skills that are directly relevant. While it certainly is not the province of the College of Computing to give individualized attention to each major, different subject areas require different skills. It is Tech's responsibility to ensure that these skills are learned.

The only possible downside to this plan is the potential for further division between technical and non-technical majors, a division that is already readily apparent on campus. There is no easy solution to this problem. However teachers of the course should be sure to emphasize the challenging nature of this course to make it comparable to the original CS course.

## Rankings show excellence

Georgia Tech's continuing rise in the *U.S. News and World Reports* rankings demonstrate the administration, faculty, and staff's enduring commitment to making all of our degrees as valuable as possible. President Clough should be congratulated for his hard work in improving the view of the Institute in the eyes of the world. His belief that "you shouldn't place too much emphasis on these or any other rankings" is a sound one; however, we all should be proud of Tech's accomplishments over the past few years. It is noteworthy for a university to grow its national reputation at such a constant rate.

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**Quote of the week:**  
"I would have made a good Pope."  
- Richard M. Nixon

ADAM QUEEN

## Letter does not absolve fraternity of actions

The *Technique* was very gracious in printing the article written by a non-Tech student about the "unfair" treatment of Chi Phi Fraternity. This situation does not concern outside students.

Georgia Tech's judiciary board handed down a sentence to the fraternity that was in keeping with sanctions it has given in the past. Chi Phi is not the only fraternity on campus that owns its house and has been suspended; other fraternities have complied with Georgia Tech and rented their houses out to other fraternities or sororities until they were able to return to campus.

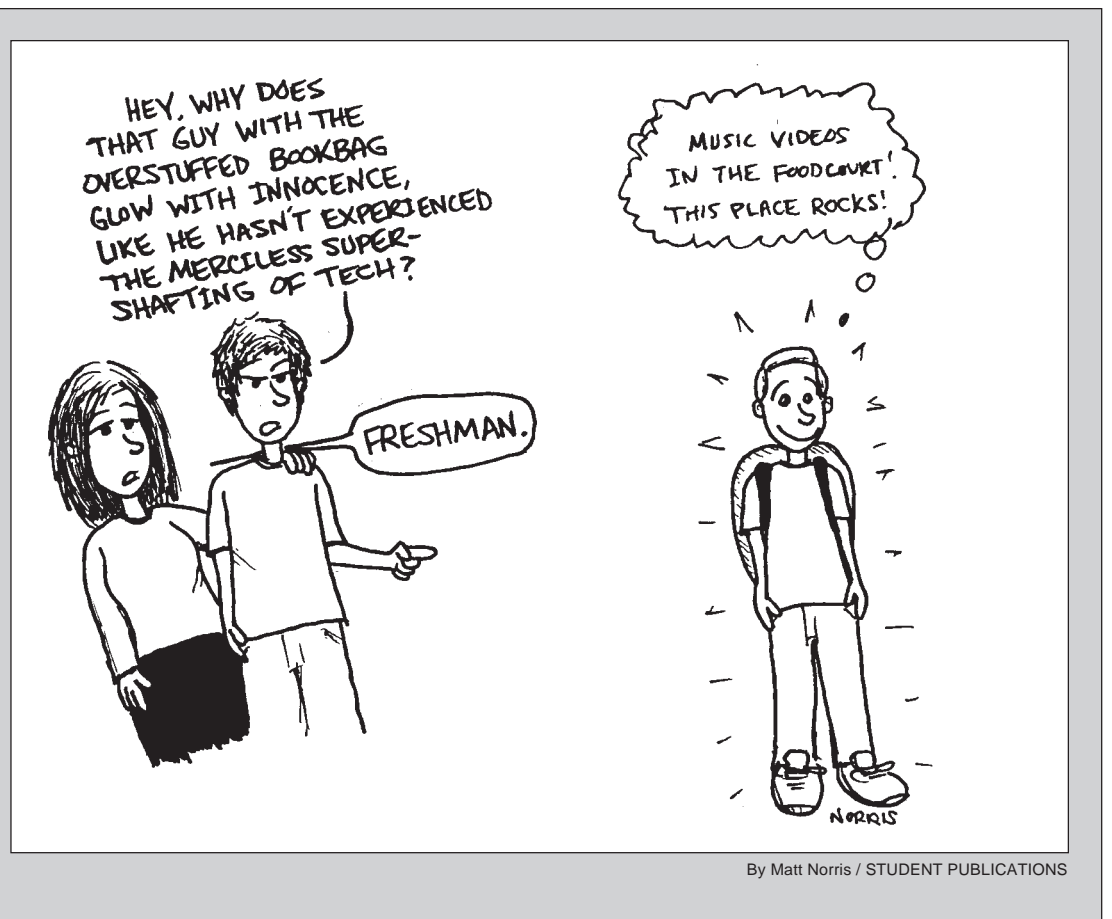
Being a member of a fraternity or sorority on this campus is a priv-

ilege, not a guarantee. Members of the Greek community are allowed to function on campus through the permission and cooperation of Georgia Tech, but those privileges are conditional. Some of the brothers of Chi Phi violated those conditions that Georgia Tech has set in place, and although not all of the brotherhood may have been involved, the fraternity, like every other fraternity or sorority, must be dealt with as a group. Every member of the Greek system at Georgia Tech is aware of the conditions and rules laid out by the Interfraternity Council, which every fraternity must obey.

Chi Phi's actions have harmed the relationship between other Greek

students and the Georgia Tech administration, as well as misrepresented the Greek community to non-Greek students on campus. Chi Phi needs to take responsibility for the actions of its members, and serve the punishment that was handed down to it. Its refusal to cooperate only causes harm, since Georgia Tech must either take more extreme measures against them to maintain authority on campus or else lose credibility by allowing an on-campus organization to act with impunity and disregard for long-established rules.

Mary Frances Hudspeth  
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By Matt Norris / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

# Criticisms about Tech often exaggerated, untrue

It's times like these that make me question my decision to come to Tech and if I actually enjoy being here. Over the past two weeks I have had a test in every class, numerous homework assignments and projects, and many meetings. I am burnt out and it's only the fifth week of school.

But then I step back from my classes and realize that I do enjoy being here. It's too bad I can't say the same for everyone else at this school.

After being at Georgia Tech for over three years, I have often heard complaints about Tech, both about academics and otherwise. I have probably heard complaints daily, maybe even hourly. And I complain myself. Often.

But I never really understand what there is to complain about. Yes, I know classes are hard, and trust me, after a year of co-oping and studying abroad, I'm having many difficulties adjusting to Tech's rigorous academic load. It's perfectly acceptable to complain about a tough exam or how your teachers all give tests in the same week (which I'm dealing with right now). What bothers me is when people complain about Tech in general – its environment, its curriculum, its student body, and its faculty.

The attitude of students on this campus was recently reflected in the *Princeton Review*, which ranked colleges in many categories. (Jen Schur wrote an editorial on this two weeks ago, so I won't delve too far into the ranks). The biggest shock was that we were ranked number two in the "Least happy" category. Most of our other rankings were in negative categories as well, and I'd like to counter those statements.



"I've noticed from alumni that after you graduate, all (or most) of the hatred for Tech goes away and only pride remains."

**Julia Trapold**  
Entertainment Editor

We ranked fairly high in the category of schools where "professors suck all life from material." Now, I'm not sure about other majors, but so far in my Industrial Engineering classes I have had at least two professors that have been excellent. And the others were good too – they definitely didn't ruin the material. While this ranking may be fairly accurate for freshman level core classes, once you enter your upper level major classes, the teaching level increases exponentially.

I also disagree with the ranking that our campus is "tiny, unsightly, or both." Our campus is in the middle of a huge city, which I absolutely love. But if you don't look up and see the skyscrapers, you don't realize that there is a city of 4 million surrounding you. Our campus is rather well designed with the buildings enclosing the campus and the various green spaces scattered around.

And "dorms like dungeons?" While I may not be too fond of dorm living, I think our freshman dorms are pretty nice. Granted, the only other dorms I have been in were at the University of Pittsburgh and Penn State, but ours are definitely much nicer than theirs. Plus, the on-campus apartments are great and rare among colleges.

Finally, we ranked number one in the category of "don't inhale."

While we may not be the biggest party school in the country, how did we pull that ranking off with the amount of strict Catholic colleges around?

One school that my friend refers to as "Footloose University," where they don't allow dancing with the opposite sex, comes to mind as a school that just might outrank us in lack of parties. I'm not sure about you, but I never have trouble finding a party.

That's it for my rebuttal of the *Princeton Review*. Now I'll move on to my own review of attitudes on campus.

The complaint I hear most often revolves around the infamous "ratio." Yes, in case you didn't know, there are about three guys to every girl. Guys complain about the lack of females on campus, and girls complain about the lack of acceptable males on campus.

My advice is to quit complaining and branch out. Meet people from other schools or around Atlanta. Or maybe you're just not looking in the right places. I know many wonderful single girls. Now wonderful single guys, on the other hand... (I'm allowed to complain too).

So quit bitching. I've just rationalized and ruled out all your complaints. Feel free to continue complaining about difficult classes,

but realize that they're meant to be challenging and it's not the school trying to screw you over. You decided to attend Tech for some reason or another, so next time you feel like bashing Tech, try to think about what made you come here. Was it because you knew a Tech degree was valuable? When you graduate, your degree will be respected by your future employers. Maybe you came to Tech because your parents went here. If they liked it enough to want you to go here too, it can't be that bad. Maybe you just came here because the Hope scholarship covered all of your tuition. If that's the reason, you definitely need to quit bitching because we out-of-staters are paying six times as much as you.

A positive thing to counterbalance the negative attitude of some of the students is the abundance of people filled with Tech pride. Now, I myself am not the epitome of school pride, but I do like my school and I'm glad to see people with school spirit. Even if you don't think you like this school, once you graduate I'm sure you'll feel differently. What I've noticed from my alumni friends is that after you graduate, all (or most) of the hatred for the school goes away and only pride remains. Hell, some of my graduated friends like Tech (or at least Tech sports) so much that they converted an old school bus into the "Ultimate Tailgating Vehicle" so they could support the Jackets in style.

In conclusion, try to realize that Tech really is a good place. After you graduate, you'll realize what benefits you've gained from going to a great institution like ours, and you'll regret that you didn't realize it while you were still enrolled.

# Is student life at Tech really that horrible?

Recently, there has been a rash of negative opinion about Georgia Tech, both in the media and from what I perceive as on-campus sources, such as student webpages. As I am approaching the end of my time here at Tech, I have begun to wonder where this opinion comes from. Is it endemic to being a college student or is there something about Tech in particular that makes all of us feel miserable from time to time?

To address a few issues in particular, yes, the food sucks, and yes, dorm rooms are awful, but isn't that part of the college experience? In my mind, overcoming these obstacles and still enjoying yourself is a sign that you are really experiencing college. How can such mundane concerns be important when there are so many things to learn and do?

Sharing a tiny room with someone is a challenge, but I would never give that experience up just to have a room of my own. I bonded with people more in Brittain dining hall than anywhere else my freshman year. My friends and I used to spend hours in the dining hall freshman year, just sitting around talking (mostly about the awful food).

Without these common experiences, I doubt that we could have become as close as we did. Each of these issues is present in practically every college in the United States. If gourmet food and spacious accommodations were what you were looking for in a college, you should have gone to Harvard or lived at



"How can such mundane concerns be important when there are so many things to learn and do?"

**Sara Cames**  
Opinions Editor

home.

Beyond the standard of living conditions, academics are a frequent complaint at Tech. Tech is hard. The classes are challenging, and the professors are a vast deal more than challenging. Whenever I feel frustrated by this, I remind myself that I came to Tech because I wanted a good education. Without the obstacle that classes represent, none of us would be able to get that education.

So we have to choose: do we want to be educated and proficient at our subjects or do we want our classes to be easy? I think the answer is obvious. Once again, the fact that each of us goes through these experiences is one way in which we begin to form friends at Tech. If that's not enough for you, remember that Tech alums are prone to hire other Tech grads because they can be assured of the rigorousness and quality of their employee's education.

I think that if we all embrace these commonalities and the thousand other Tech things that we all share (the traditions, the campus, sometimes even the language), that

will solve one of the other issues that students here usually complain about: the people at Tech. So often I hear someone complaining about how everyone here looks at the sidewalk as they go to class rather than smiling at other people.

I say, embrace it. Accept that there is a certain Tech culture of introvertedness and work with it rather than against it. While people here may be more cautious than at other schools, I have never found anyone to be outright unfriendly.

If you truly want Tech to be a more open, sunshiney place, just smiling at people as you walk to class will never accomplish it. Instead, you have to have conversations and understand people who are vastly different from you. The best way I know to begin this process is to use the things we all have in common to spark a connection.

Because I am taking a few independent study classes this semester, I have been spending a lot of time over at Emory, and my time there has allowed me to observe how another campus works. Emory students, on the whole, seem much

like us if one ignores the fact that they drive cars that no college student should be able to afford.

The problems that many people see at Tech also exist there: people walk around looking at the sidewalk rather than saying hello to those who pass them, professors seem unapproachable, and I suspect their food is just as bad as ours despite their hugely higher tuition. To me, this suggests that many of the problems we face here are just facts of college life.

So why is Tech so prevalent in the media and among our own students for being a miserable place to go to college? I think this reputation is misleading at best. One of my friends suggested to me that perhaps what we really should have been mentioned in the *Princeton Review* for is being the biggest whiners. While I have to say I agree with this statement to some extent, I don't necessarily think that is bad thing.

Talking about a problem is the first step to solving it. Tech has always been known as one of the most innovative schools in the nation. This reputation usually applies to technical research and other similar areas. All we need to do to spread this reputation to more student-focused areas is to begin to take action to solve the problems that we share. Remember, the key to fixing what we don't like about Tech lies both in criticizing the bad and praising the good. We must encourage as well as scrutinize to make Tech a better place.

## TECHNIQUE

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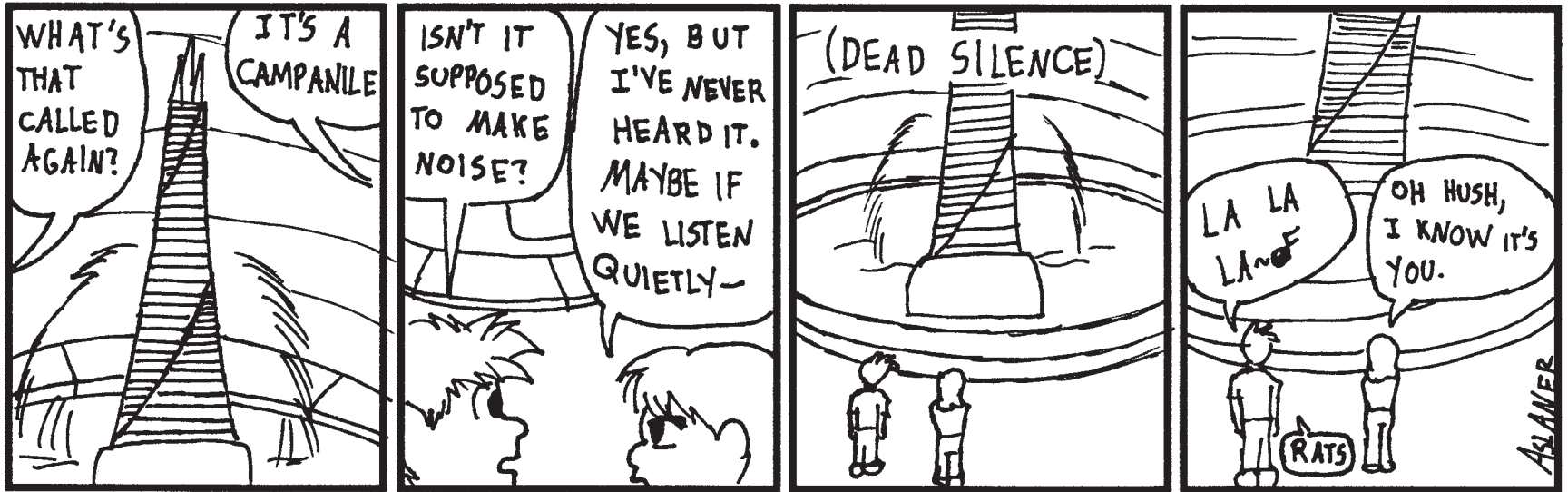
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Original Comic Freshmen

Freshmen By Billy Aslaner



# Buzz Around the Campus



**Question** of the week

**“What type of business would you like to see closer to campus?”**

Feature and Photos by Christopher Gooley



**Sam Hong**  
ECE PhD  
*“A semiconductor manufacturing company.”*



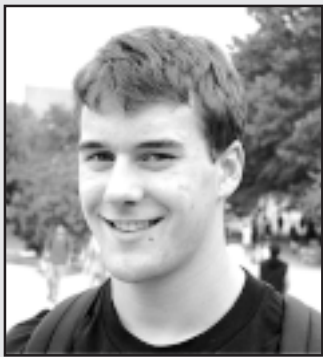
**Megan Murray**  
HTS Senior  
*“More bars.”*



**Ben King**  
EE Grad  
*“A company who makes bio-medical MEMS devices.”*



**Nayan Patel**  
AE Grad  
*“Better variety in food, like Chili's.”*



**Owen McGarity**  
ME Freshman  
*“A closer grocery store.”*



**Kelly Christman**  
ME Junior  
*“A big supermarket or shopping center, like a strip mall.”*



**Danny Karnik**  
UEC Freshman  
*“A Best Buy.”*



**Michael Montgomery**  
ME Freshman  
*“A Circuit City, so I'd still have a job.”*

# Classroom Controversies: Academic issues from a student's perspective

Sometimes I'm tempted to sit back and wonder about deep questions, such as the following: Why are we here?

But the question isn't very deep — we all know why we're at Tech. Either we're here to get a degree or to teach and support all of the people on their way to graduation. We're here because of learning.

Of course, we try our best to minimize time spent in the classroom and maximize time spent doing other things. Tech students complain endlessly about classes, exams, professors and homework. But if we didn't have those classes, exams, professors, and homework, we would all be somewhere else.

Still, we spend much of our time discussing campus issues that don't reach into the heart of why we're here. Parking dilemmas, housing shortages, roommate crises, football wins and losses — these things constitute part of our collegiate experiences, but how much energy do we spend tackling issues at the core of our academic experience?

Do we think about things like grade inflation and the infamous "curve"? Do we know what our professors think about grading issues, or do we just take these things for granted? We complain about TA's that have poor English or that our professors aren't providing "word" for exams, but rarely do we take the time to discuss these issues in any kind of forum. Tech's prestige comes from its long history of stringent academic standards and intellectual distinction. Does that mean that learning can't be an enjoyable, en-

gaging, and encouraging experience?

If we're here to learn, why are we so content to complain about

We lack a forum for students and professors to share information and opinions on academic issues



"Academic issues present us with some sticky problems; when we don't have all of the details, we have no way to address them."

**Jennifer Hinkel**  
Columnist

everything but do nothing about academic problems and classroom controversies we encounter daily?

One of the problems students face when we try to take on these issues is that we often have only a student's perspective. Lacking the viewpoint of professors and administrators, we have neither the scope nor the depth to see exactly what the issues are. Meanwhile, we're worrying about passing our classes and finding summer internships—we accept our academic fate and move on to the next semester.

We see the decisions made by administrators and professors, but we lack the information to understand exactly why the decisions are made. To intensify the problem, most of us would feel self-conscious at best (and idiotic at worst) to walk up to a professor and say "Dr. Staff, I was wondering if you could explain to me *why* this class is graded on a curve." Much less willing are we to ask a professor to provide us with "word" or suggest that an exam did not test what was taught.

where both can feel comfortable presenting their concerns.

Over the course of this year, I plan to investigate the "whys" of many academic issues already mentioned—curving, grade inflation, academic integrity, and the like—by asking professors and administrators to explain their rationale. Then, when we have a better information base on these issues, I will seek to find out what the implications are for our day-to-day classroom success, all the way from freshman chemistry through senior design projects.

Academic issues present us with some sticky problems; when we don't have all of the details, we have no way to address them. Throughout the year, this column will tackle some of the stickiest academic debates that, in some cases, will reach beyond the walls of your Tech classroom and into a national forum. Once we find out what the debates are and why they exist, we will be better empowered to address the issues.

# September 11 ceremony inappropriately apologetic

I suppose for Georgia Tech to be a full-fledged American institution of "higher learning," it must have its share of apologists among the faculty. We certainly saw that during the September 11 Remembrance Ceremony at the Campanile when one of the Georgia Tech faculty spoke of how "globalization" has led to unforeseen consequences and how we as Americans need to rethink how we operate.

Professor Richard Barke failed to mention how "globalization" has brought democracy and freedom to the doorsteps of so many oppressive regimes in the Middle East.

Every day the oppressed citizens of Saudi

Arabia, Iraq, Iran and Syria see the benefits of free societies coming to them through their televisions and over the internet (if their government permits them access). They cannot help but question what life would be like if they themselves were free.

The ruling fascist elite realize that if their citizens begin to believe in and desire freedom, they as the current rulers will lose all power. They cannot convince their peoples that their oppressive forms of government are better than the free and open societies of the West.

Therefore they must resort to branding America's form of free-

dom as evil and against the Islamic religion.

These governments can certainly not face the powers of democracy on the open battlefield, for they would suffer humiliating defeats. Therefore, they consciously choose to back terrorist organizations in this fight against freedom, as it gives them plausible deniability as to actually being involved in any sort of violent activity against the West.

As we have seen, their premise that the West will buckle and fall under terrorist assault is false. But more importantly, these leaders have shown themselves to be so despicable as to use the most dastardly methods to achieve

"We as Americans should not be ashamed of who we are or what we do. Our enemies are the ones who should be ashamed."

their ends.

In closing, the only thing that we need to rethink as Americans is taking a stronger stance against terrorism and these fascist, oppressive regimes that support them. The only apology that the United States should make is not having done it sooner.

Bottom line: we as Americans should not be ashamed of who we are or what we do. Our enemies are the ones who should be ashamed of what they have done to us and what they are doing to their own peoples.

George Stewart  
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